POLICY MEMORANDUM
EQUAL ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Ensuring equal access to electronic and information technology ("technology") is the responsibility of each department affiliated with The University of Georgia ("UGA"), much in the same way that it is the responsibility of each department to ensure such access to facilities and courses. Whereas physical accessibility guidelines for buildings and classes are contained in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Pub. L. 101-336) ("ADA"), ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (Pub. L. 110-325) ("ADAAA"), and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Pub. L. 93-112) ("Rehab. Act"), technology considerations are covered primarily in Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

 Departments should read the summary of 508 law located at:
http://www.section508.gov/index.cfm?fuseAction=stdsSum and understand that these rules have been adopted by the Georgia Board of Regents and so apply to UGA. http://www.usg.edu/siteinfo/accessibility.

Specifically, technology needs to be accessible, regardless of level of ability, as outlined in Section 508. Additionally, any individual who is a member of the public who is seeking information or services from UGA must have access to and use of information and data that is comparable to that provided to the public without disabilities. This includes, but is not limited to, computer labs, web sites, online study or courses, and technology. Accessibility to all technology utilized in any area of UGA experience cannot be unreasonably limited as a result of a disability.

In practice, this requires every department at UGA to reasonably accommodate those limitations on technology access experienced by individuals due to disabilities either at the time of the adoption of the particular technology where such limitations can be anticipated or later at the time an otherwise unanticipated limitation is identified.

Accordingly, all colleges, departments, and operation units must incorporate appropriate disability considerations into all new technology acquisitions, and must develop reasonable accommodations for the use of any existing technology in a timely manner after a disability-based limitation on such use is identified.   This can be accomplished by:

- Using web page design standards that improve accessibility for all, including those with disabilities;
- Using hardware and software products that promote universal design and access; and
- Designing and implementing work and study environments that accommodate all users.

While the Rehab. Act and ADA provide a minimum standard for accessibility, it is the goal of UGA to go beyond such minimums when possible in order to provide a welcoming environment to all, whether disabled or not.

For general information and support, please go to the UGA Web Accessibility Group site found at: http://wag.uga.edu

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