

**TRINITY VALLEY COMMUNITY
COLLEGE**

**STUDENT ACCESS
AND
ACCOMMODATION
HANDBOOK**

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY COMPLIANCE

Section 504 Coordinator

The District designates the following person(s) to coordinate its efforts to comply with Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973:

Student Access and Counseling

Melinda Berry, Director
Baugh Technology Center
TC 324
Cardinal Drive, Athens, TX 75751
903-675-6224

Facilities

Assistant Vice President of Facilities
Management
Administration Building
100 Cardinal Drive, Athens, TX 75751
903-675-6360

Title IX Coordinator

The District designates the following person to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 as amended: Director of Human Resources

Human Resources, Admin. Building
100 Cardinal Drive, Athens, TX 75751
903-675-6215

Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator

The District designates the following person(s) to coordinate its efforts to comply with the Disabilities Act of 1990:

Student Access & Counseling

Melinda Berry
Baugh Technology Center
TC 324
100 Cardinal Drive, Athens, TX 75751
903-675-6224

Facilities

Assistant Vice President of Facilities
Management
Administration Building
100 Cardinal Drive, Athens, TX 75751
903-675-6360

The ADA Compliance Committee was formed in 1992 to ensure the College's compliance:

Student Contact Person

Melinda Berry
Baugh Technology Center
TC 324
100 Cardinal Drive, Athens, TX 75751
903-675-6224



ACCREDITATION

TVCC is accredited by the SACSCOC to award associate degrees and certificates. Contact the SACSCOC at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097, telephone 404-679-4500, at <http://www.sacscoc.org> for questions about the accreditation of TVCC. The SACSCOC is to be contacted only if there is evidence that appears to support the College's significant non-compliance with a requirement or standard. All other inquiries about TVCC, such as admission requirements, financial aid, educational programs, etc., should be directed to the College at 100 Cardinal Drive, Athens, Texas 75751 or by calling 903-675-6200. TVCC received initial accreditation to award associate degrees from the SACSCOC in 1952, and received its last reaffirmation of accreditation in 2015 with no sanctions or negative actions.

APPROVAL

Programs and courses offered by Trinity Valley Community College are approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

TVCC MISSION STATEMENT

Trinity Valley Community College is a learning-centered college that provides quality academic, workforce, college preparatory, student support, and community service programs that prepare and empower students for success and promote and enhance life-long learning for all communities served.

THE COLLEGE WITH OPPORTUNITIES

TVCC is an equal opportunity institution which provides educational and employment opportunities on the basis of merit and without discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin or disability. Questions or problems related to Title IX activities should be directed to the Director of Human Resources, 100 Cardinal Drive, Athens TX 75751 (903) 675-6215. Questions or problems related to ADA Section 504/508 issues should be directed to the Director of Student Access and Counseling, (903) 675-6224.

PHILOSOPHY/OBJECTIVE

Trinity Valley Community College welcomes the student with academic potential who has a special need as a part of the student body. This institution is committed to assisting qualified students as completely as possible within the College community. Trinity Valley Community College provides equal opportunities for academically qualified students with disabilities and ensures access to a wide variety of resources and programs. The passage of Section 504, Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the "Americans with Disabilities Act" of 1990 requires that the College make certain special arrangements for students with disabilities, such as moving classes to accessible locations when necessary, allowing use of tape recorders, sign language interpreters or other educational auxiliary aids, making special test arrangements, etc. This does not mean that less should be required of the student with a disability than of others, but only that reasonable accommodations should be made to ensure that students with a disability have access to an education. The College will make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with a diagnosed physical and/or learning disability who have been admitted to the College and request accommodations.

Trinity Valley Community College Student Success Services serve as liaison for students with disabilities. The program provides reasonable accommodations and assistance to the academically qualified student who has a physical/learning disability which substantially limits one or more of his/her life activities. All students are expected to abide by the Student Code of Conduct as outlined in the Student Handbook. Accommodations are decided based upon documentation and need on a case-by-case basis.

The following list of services may be available when appropriate:

- Classroom notetakers
- Peer, professional and computer tutoring
- Study skills training
- Interpreters
- Readers/scribes
- Media aids
- Handicapped parking
- Special arrangements for taking tests (prior notice is necessary)
- Specialized and modified equipment
- Wheelchair access
- Pre-admission guidance and assistance with registration
- Specialized counseling
- Career planning
- Liaison and advocacy to faculty, staff, and administration
- Referral for diagnostic evaluation and community resources
- Other services are available on an individual basis
- Support Agencies: Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services Texas Commission for the Blind

THE LAW: SECTION 504

WHAT IS THE LAW?

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states:

“No otherwise qualified individual in the United State...shall, solely by reason of...handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

WHO IS PROTECTED UNDER THE LAW?

A disabled person” means “any person who (i) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person’s major life activities; (ii) has a record of such an impairment, or (iii) is regarded as having such an impairment.”

A “qualified person” is defined as one who meets the requisite academic and technical standards required for admission or participation in the postsecondary institution’s programs and activities. Section 504 protects the civil rights of individuals who are qualified to participate and who have disabilities such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Blindness or visual impairments
- Cerebral palsy
- Chronic illnesses, such as:
 - AIDS
 - Arthritis
 - Cancer
 - Cardiac diseases
 - Diabetes
 - Multiple sclerosis
 - Muscular dystrophy
 - Psychiatric disorders
- Deafness or hard of hearing
- Drug or alcohol addiction (Section 504 covers former users and those in recovery programs and not currently using drugs or alcohol.)
- Epilepsy or seizure disorders
- Mental retardation
- Orthopedic handicap
- Specific learning disabilities
- Speech disorder
- Spinal cord or traumatic brain injury

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

What is the ADA?

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is the civil rights guarantee for persons with disabilities in the United States. It provides protection from discrimination for individuals on the basis of disability. The ADA extends civil rights protection for people with disabilities to employment in the private sector, transportation, public accommodations, services provided by state and local government, and telecommunication relay services. The significance of this legislation is no less than that of the civil rights acts in the 1960's for minorities.

Who should request accommodations?

A person that should request accommodations would be anyone with a physical or mental impairment (or who has a history of such a condition, or who is perceived by others to be disabled) that substantially impairs or restricts one or more major life activities, such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working. The term physical or mental impairment includes, but is not limited to:

- Speech
- Hearing
- Visual and mobility impairments
- Cerebral palsy
- Epilepsy
- Muscular dystrophy
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Heart Disease
- AIDS
- Mental retardation
- Emotional illness
- Specific learning disabilities such as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, dyslexia, minimal brain dysfunction and developmental aphasia.

Does the ADA Affect Students at Postsecondary Institutions?

Postsecondary institutions that receive federal monies have been required to comply with a similar disability nondiscrimination law -- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The ADA upholds and extends the standards for compliance set forth in Section 504 to employment and promotion practices, the planning of meetings, and communications.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are very different, leading to miscommunication between college and high school staff who have studied only the statutes applying to their institution. For example, in high school, a student classified as learning disabled in a specific area (i.e., reading comprehension), may also receive special services in another area (i.e., math). In college, a student is only eligible to receive accommodations that are directly associated with the specific identified disability. In other words, accommodations listed in individual education plans (IEPs) developed at a high school are not binding on a college or university.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

High School

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Civil Rights Restoration Act

College

- Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Civil Rights Restoration Act

Responsibilities of High Schools

- Identify students with disabilities
- Provide assessment of learning disabilities
- Classify disabilities according to specified diagnostic categories
- Involve parents or guardians in placement decisions
- Provide certain nonacademic services
- Place students in programs where they can benefit (in any way) by placement committee with parent participation and approval
- Structure a large part of the student's weekly schedule
- Modify educational programs
- Prepare Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs)
- Provide a free and appropriate education
- Provide appropriate services by school nurse or health service

Responsibilities of Colleges

- Protect a student's right to privacy and confidentiality
- Provide access to programs and services
- Inform students of office location and procedures for requesting accommodations
- Accept and evaluate verifying documentation
- Determine (via documentation) that an impairment causes a substantial limitation on a major life activity
- Determine for students who are otherwise qualified for participation in the program or service whether a reasonable accommodation is possible
- Make reasonable accommodations for students who meet the above criteria
- Provide reasonable access to program and service choices equal to those available to general public
- Suggest reasonable adjustments in teaching methods that do not alter the essential content of a course or program
- Assure that off-campus and contracted program facilities also comply with Section 504 (Subpart E) and ADA
- Inform students of their rights and responsibilities

Colleges are not required to: Reduce or waive any of the essential requirements of a course or program ; conduct testing and assessment of learning, psychological, or medical disabilities; provide personal attendants; provide personal or private tutors (but tutoring services normally available to persons without disabilities must be accessible to persons with disabilities who are otherwise qualified for those services); or prepare "Individual Education Plans" (IEPs)

ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

For information about accommodations and services for students with disabilities at the branch campuses of TVCC, please contact:

TVCC – Athens 100 Cardinal Drive Athens, TX 75751 (903)675-6224
Melinda Berry, Director Student Access and Counseling

TVCC – Terrell
1200 East I-20
PO Box 668
Terrell, TX 75160 (972) 563-4932

Pre-Admissions Guidance

Prospective students with disabilities are encouraged to arrange a visit to the campus prior to admission in order to become acquainted with the facilities and services offered by Trinity Valley Community College which will enable them to fully participate in regular classroom instruction.

The College will make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with a diagnosed physical and/or learning disability who apply for admission. It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of the guidelines, procedures and policies outlined in the official College Catalog and Student Handbook. This Handbook for Students Requesting Accommodations is mainly to inform the student of procedures on applying for accommodations through Trinity Valley Community College.

Assistance with Registration Process

The student should make Student Success Services aware of his/her needs and request the assistance needed. Notification before the beginning of any semester is necessary for adequate scheduling of services. Any type of reasonable accommodation or assistance to increase the opportunity for success will be provided, if at all possible.

If a reasonable accommodation in the registration procedure or instructional environment is requested, the student must obtain a Request for Accommodation Form (RAF) from Student Access and Counseling. Current medical and/or psychological documentation which verifies their disability will be required with the RAF.

It is recommended that when applying for assistance with Student Access and Counseling students will give **four weeks prior** to the beginning of the initial semester of enrollment, in order to allow time to provide adequate coordination of services. Furthermore, when a student applies for subsequent semesters it is recommended that two weeks prior to the beginning of the first day of class be given for processing.

Liaison and Advocacy to Faculty, Staff and Administration

Students with disabilities may request that instructor/staff be informed of accommodations which may be provided in the classroom or to assist classroom instruction. A confidential form, The Faculty Advisement Form will be prepared and distributed by the Director or the Coordinator.

A Request for Accommodations Form must be completed prior to the beginning of each semester in the Student Access and Counseling office or the Terrell campus coordinators office.

Appropriate documentation of physical or psycho/educational evaluation or Rehabilitation Agency referral must be submitted before any accommodations can be arranged. This evaluation and/or referral must clearly document the disability

and support the need for accommodations. Reasonable accommodation requests and documentation may be subject to review by the ADA Compliance Committee.

Disability Documentation Guidelines

Before special accommodations can be offered, the student requesting such accommodations must provide appropriate documentation that such services are required because of a disability that substantially limits some life activity. TVCC reserves the right to determine eligibility and appropriate services based on the quality, recentness, and completeness of the documentation submitted. A diagnosis of a disorder/condition/syndrome in and of itself does not automatically qualify an individual for accommodations under the ADA. The documentation must support the request for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids.

All documentation is considered as confidential and will not be shared without the student's written permission. TVCC does not provide testing for disabilities. Testing evaluations and other documentation should have been administered within the past three (3) years to be considered current. Documentation older than five (5) years is generally considered to be out-dated. Students that submit documentation that is not current or is inadequate may be required to have updated testing completed before accommodations will be granted.

In general, all documentation must be completed by an appropriate professional and contain:

- A diagnosis of current disability.
- The date of the diagnosis.
- How the diagnosis was reached (names of evaluation instruments and criteria, if appropriate to diagnosis).
- How the disability affects a major life activity. Functional limitations due to the disability and the level of severity of the disability.
- The areas of educational impact.
- Prescriptive treatments and/or medications and the impact on the disability.
- The credentials of the diagnostician.
- Specific suggestions for reasonable accommodations appropriate to the postsecondary education level. Recommended academic accommodations.

The following are some elements that are required in documentation in order to recommend reasonable classroom accommodations:

Learning Disabilities

- Qualified professional must conduct the evaluation (i.e., school psychologists, neuropsychologists, learning disabilities specialists, medical doctors, LPC).
- Evaluation must be comprehensive and substantiate the Learning Disability and/or specific diagnosis.
- Actual test scores from standardized instruments must be provided.
- An interpretive summary must be provided. Must include recommendations for reasonable academic accommodations appropriate to postsecondary education.
- All reports should be on letterhead, typed, dated, signed, and legible.
- If the data available to the evaluator shows that a learning disability is not present, the report should specifically state so.

A school plan such as an Individual Education Plan or a Section 504 Plan is not sufficient documentation by itself, but it can provide some valuable information. Some of the important information which should be contained includes an IQ score, an assessment of academic achievement and information processing, and relevant test scores. DARS records or records from other appropriate agencies or medical institutions can be informative also.

ADD/ADHD

- Evaluation must be conducted by a qualified professional (Psychologist, Medical Doctor, Psychiatrist, LPC, Diagnostician).
- Documentation must indicate that ADD/ADHD substantially limits some major life activity, including learning.
- Evaluation must be comprehensive and substantiate ADD/ADHD. The evaluation should include evidence of early impairment; evidence of current impact, diagnostic interview, and all other alternative diagnoses or explanations need to be ruled out.
- Relevant testing information must be provided. Neuropsychological and psychoeducational assessments are important in determining the current impact of the disorder on the individual's ability to function in academic settings. Checklists and/or surveys can serve as supplements to the diagnostic profile but in and of themselves are not adequate for the diagnosis of ADD/ADHD. In addition, the report should indicate the degree to which the problem has been impacted by medication. If the condition is medically controlled, the report should specifically state that it is controlled.
- A specific diagnosis utilizing DSM-IV criteria.
- An interpretive summary should be provided.

Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Acceptable documentation of a hearing impairment should be completed by a medical specialist or an audiologist and should state specifically the degree of hearing loss or impairment, along with recommendations for the most appropriate postsecondary academic accommodations. A certificate of deafness from DARS is also acceptable.

Blind or Visually Impaired

Documentation of blindness or visual impairment should be done by a medical specialist (ophthalmologist). A statement from the Texas Commission for the Blind is also acceptable.

Mobility Impairment

Documentation should be a current medical evaluation completed by a medical specialist (orthopedist, physical therapist, neurologist). Records from DARS should also be included.

Traumatic Brain Injury

Documentation should be completed by a neurologist or neuropsychologist and include recommendations for appropriate reasonable accommodations in a postsecondary academic setting.

Psychological Disorders

Documentation should be a comprehensive and current psychological/psychiatric evaluation conducted by a qualified professional and must include:

- A specific diagnosis utilizing DSM-IV-R criteria.
- Historical information
- Diagnostic interview
- Psychological assessment with actual test scores from a standardized instrument.
- A description of current functional limitations in the academic environment.
- Documentation must indicate that the disability substantially limits some major life activity, including learning.
- Relevant information regarding medications and current treatment.
- Alternative diagnoses or explanations should be ruled out.
- An interpretive summary should be provided.
- Accommodations appropriate for the postsecondary educational setting with accompanying rationale must be provided.

The report should address whether the individual currently poses a threat to herself/himself or to others. Records from DARS or other appropriate agencies or medical institutions can be provided as well.

Speech Impairment

Documentation of a speech impairment, along with recommendations for appropriate postsecondary academic accommodations, should be completed by a speech pathologist or medical specialist.

CAREER PLANNING

The Career Planning and Placement Center located in the Workforce Career Center, provides career planning information for students including exploration of career options, computer-based interest assessments, occupational information, senior colleges and transfer information. Placement services available include: job search information, referrals for part-time and full-time employment, and a resume writing service.

COMMUNITY REFERRALS

Texas Rehabilitation Commission and Texas Commission for the Blind are common referral sources for diagnostic evaluations and assistance. Contact counseling for additional referral resources.

OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Reasonable accommodations for students covered by the ADA for any instructional event on campus for which accommodations are required, or for any off-campus event sponsored in whole or in part by the College, will be made upon advanced notification made five working days prior to such event.

DISABILITY DISCLOSURE

Students who request accommodations must make their disabilities known to the Student Access and Counseling office or the campus coordinator. If the student fails to disclose his/her disability, or fails to present the appropriate documentation to validate the disability, this institution has no obligation to provide any requested accommodations and/or services. All requests for accommodations must come directly from the student.

It is the responsibility of the student to make a request for accommodations in a timely manner before classes begin each semester; retroactive accommodations are usually granted.

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), all information pertaining to a student's education record will remain confidential, unless the requested information falls within the FERPA guidelines. A release form must be signed by the student designating who else their information can be released to.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Continuing Education & Workforce Education division of TVCC offers non-credit courses and activities on a schedule different than the regular credit class schedule. Students who need accommodations for Community Service classes and activities must contact that office at least two weeks prior to the event in which they will participate.

Community Service activities are also offered at TVCC branch locations. For more information about Community Services activities, call (903) 675-6212.

ADULT EDUCATION

Students who participate in the Adult Education programs and who need accommodations for disabilities should contact the college at least two weeks prior to participation. The contact should be made with the Adult Education director, in Athens at (903) 675-6288.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR SCHEDULED STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Reasonable accommodations for students covered by the ADA for any on-campus event for which accommodations are required, or for any off-campus event sponsored in whole or in part by the College, will be made upon advanced notification made ten (10) working days prior to such an event. Students desiring such an accommodations should contact the college staff member responsible for the activity. The college staff member with supervisory responsibilities may seek the assistance of the Student Access and Counseling office to coordinate the reasonable accommodation.

HANDBOOK UPDATED 5/9/2022 BY MELINDA BERRY, DIRECTOR OF STUDENT ACCESS
AND COUNSELING