



STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

FACULTY RESOURCE GUIDE

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February 3, 2021

Department of Student Access and Counseling

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Faculty Resource Guide

As a TVCC faculty member you play a very important role in promoting access for students with disabilities. Students who request accommodations are encouraged to collaborate with their instructors to ensure that they have the accommodations they need to provide them with equal access to their education.

During the fall and spring semesters, TVCC serves over 300 students with various disabilities including, but not limited to, students with learning disabilities, visual impairments, hearing impairments, physical impairments, mental health disabilities, and other health related impairments. Accommodations provided to students are determined on an individual basis by qualified staff.

The information on the accommodation website is intended to provide faculty with more in-depth information concerning working with coordinators and with students with disabilities. TVCC staff members are also available to faculty and staff for consultation and presentations on disability related topics. For questions regarding a specific student's accommodations, please contact the campus Access Coordinator listed on the student's faculty advisement letter or Melinda Berry at mlberry@tvcc.edu.

TOPICS COVERED BY THE FACULTY GUIDE

Roles, Rights & Responsibilities

The number of students with disabilities attending postsecondary education continues to increase with each passing year. Faculty and staff need to be well-informed about the roles, rights and responsibilities postsecondary institutions have towards supporting students with disabilities. These roles, rights and responsibilities are supported by several federal laws which support students with disabilities and allow them the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of a postsecondary educational experience.

From the Office of Civil Rights:

"OCR enforces Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (Title II), which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. Every school district and nearly every institution of postsecondary education in the United States is subject to Section 504 or Title II. Entities covered by these civil rights laws have an obligation to comply with legal requirements and to carry out their programs and activities in a manner that does not discriminate on the basis of disability.

Institutions of postsecondary education must provide an appropriate academic adjustment based on students' disabilities and individual needs when necessary to avoid discrimination. In providing an academic adjustment, a postsecondary institution does not have to eliminate or lower essential requirements, or make modifications that would result in a fundamental alteration of the programs or activities being offered or impose an undue burden on the institution."

FACULTY ROLES

- Make Reasonable Accommodations
- Provide Access to Classroom & Materials
- Maintain Confidentiality

While it is the instructor's responsibility to ensure that the learning environment is accessible, students with disabilities must request accommodations, when needed. Instructors will find it useful to include a statement on their syllabus which informs students about the steps they need to take to receive classroom accommodations.

In certain situations, reasonable accommodations may require modification of standard classroom approaches. The following are examples of accommodations that may be necessary to ensure equal access to education:

- Provide necessary accommodations for exam taking or provide the exam to the campus coordinator where the student can receive the accommodations needed.
- Provide alternative ways to fulfill course requirements.
- Allow assistive technology such as audio recorders, electronic note takers, and laptop computers to be used in the classroom.
- Consider alternate ways of assessing student's knowledge of the course content which allows the student's academic abilities to be measured.

Confidentiality in the accommodation process must be maintained by all parties. Letters of accommodation should be filed in a safe place, and faculty should refrain from discussing students' disabilities and necessary accommodations in the presence of fellow students or others who do not have an "educational need to know."

Designated staff are always available to answer questions and serve as a resource for faculty seeking assistance in providing accommodations to students.

FACULTY RIGHTS

Faculty members have the right to:

- Maintain academic standards for courses
- Determine course content and how it will be taught
- Confirm a student's accommodations and ask for clarification about a specific accommodation (listed on the student's accommodation letter) with the Director of the campus coordinator.
- Deny a request for accommodation – if the student has not been approved for such accommodation or if the student does not provide their accommodation letter to the instructor
- Award grades appropriate to the level of the student's demonstration of mastery of material
- Fail a student who does not perform to passing standards
- Faculty members do not have the right to:
 - Refuse to provide an approved accommodation for a documented disability
 - Challenge the legitimacy of a student's disability
 - Review a student's documentation, including diagnostic data

FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES

Faculty members have the responsibility to:

- Understand the laws and college's guidelines regarding students with disabilities
- Refer students to campus coordinators when necessary
- Provide requested accommodations and academic adjustments to students who have documented disabilities (and provide their accommodations letter to instructor) in a timely manner
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records concerning students with disabilities except when disclosure is required by law or authorized by the student
- Provide handouts, videos and other course materials in accessible formats upon request

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

Assistive technology solutions (ATS) is the use of technology to provide equal access to information.

ATS services include:

- Assistive technology assessments
- Accessible computer workstations
- Assistive software & equipment
- Alternative format materials
- Audio books
- Equipment loan

Although most of the assistive technology made available to students is used outside of the classroom setting, there are a few technologies that may require an instructor's participation or awareness.

Some examples are:

FM System (Assistive Listening System)

This device is used by students with hearing loss. It is made up of a transmitter (microphone with a battery pack) worn by the instructor, and a receiver (headset or FM loop attached to a battery pack) worn by the student. The auditory signal is transmitted wirelessly using an FM frequency. Since the device amplifies only the instructor's voice, the Deaf/Hard or Hearing student may ask that the instructor repeat any questions asked by other students in the room. For discussion based classes the student may need to pass around the transmitter with a handheld microphone attachment or use a conference table adapter.

Transcribing Class Lectures & Discussions

Students who are deaf or have a higher degree of hearing loss may not be able to hear the content being presented, or discussed, in class. Sometimes a sign language interpreter is not an option and as an alternative transcription may be used to allow the student to be able to follow the audio content of the class.

The transcriptionist will meet the student in the classroom. They will set up

two laptops or a machine that has a stenographer keyboard and a display screen that the student can view. Essentially the transcriptionist will do a live transcription of what is being said in the classroom (similar to the closed-captions you may see on TV).

The student and transcriptionist may need to sit in a specific location to be close to power outlets and so the student can view the display and follow along with the presentation.

In certain situations the transcriptionist may not be able to be in the classroom and a remote-set-up will be utilized (a microphone will transmit the lecture to a transcriptionist at a remote location for live transcription via the internet) or recording of the lecture will be made that will be transcribed at a later time.

Conversion of Reading Materials and Exams to Alternative Formats

Students with various disabilities, including learning disabilities, visual impairments, limited motor skills, and processing disorders may rely on being able to obtain their material in alternative formats to be able to access the information. Alternative formats include but are not limited to: audio books, large print, Braille, and electronic text with text-to-speech software.

The alternative format conversion process can be tedious and time consuming. Students are encouraged to work with their instructors to identify the reading materials they need at least 30 days prior to the date the items are needed (additional time is needed for Braille conversion). Instructors may be asked to submit exams up to 2 weeks in advance of the exam dates to allow staff time to complete the conversion process.

Other ATS examples an instructor may see being used in class include:

Braille Notetaker

This device looks much like a small laptop computer. It is used by students with visual impairments to take notes by typing them and later converting the notes into Braille or audio format.

Optical Devices

Students that are low vision may use a variety of optical equipment or devices to facilitate their ability to read standard print handouts or to view items at the front of the room (overhead, board). A student may ask for preferential seating or lighting adjustments to improve visibility with their equipment.

Some examples of optical devices include:

- Monoculars – hand held telescopes that allow a student to see better at a distance
- Portable Video Magnifiers – consists of a camera and a screen (or a cable that links to a computer screen) that enlarges items on a table top. Some models also allow enlargement of items at a distance.
- Prism glasses/optics – attachments to standard glasses to improve long distance visibility
- Handheld magnifiers

Assistive Software & Hardware in Computer Lab classes

Some students may require the use of adaptive software or hardware to be able to access computer workstations during computer lab classes or to gain access to the computer based content and facilitate interaction with the computer workstation.

- Many Open Access Lab classrooms already have computers available that have adaptive software available and are wheelchair accessible.
- Labs hosted by specific departments may need to obtain the appropriate software, equipment or may need to modify the room layout to make their labs accessible.

WEB ACCESSIBILITY FOR COURSE WEBSITES

Course websites may need to be modified to ensure accessibility, or some content may need to be presented in an alternative format if not accessible by the student with the assistive software or hardware.

Extending Time on Canvas:

- Click on “Quizzes”
- Open Quiz you want to extend time in
- Click “Moderate Quiz”
- Find the individual student you want to target
- Enter the extra minutes in the “Extra time on every attempt” box

COMMON IN-CLASS ACCOMMODATIONS

Preferential seating

This accommodation is provided to students for many different reasons. A student with a visual impairment may request preferential seating at the front to better see the slides, overheads, or chalkboard. Students with hearing impairments may request this to better hear the instructor or to accommodate their Sign Language interpreter. A student with anxiety may request preferential seating at the back of the room for easy access to the door should they have a panic attack. Students with limited mobility may need access to a specific row or wheelchair accessible table.

Notetaking, Copies of Overheads, Recording Lectures

Students may require assistance obtaining materials presented in class because of limitations resulting from their disability. These accommodations include requesting copies of the overheads presented in class, the ability to record lectures, taking pictures of the board, use of a computer, and a peer notetaker. For most students with disabilities these accommodations are meant to supplement the student’s own notes. Examples of students that may require these accommodations are students with learning disabilities or physical impairments. An exception would be Deaf students or students that are hard of hearing that completely rely on note takers since they are unable to watch their Sign Language interpreter and take notes at the same time. The student’s accommodations letters describes these requests as follows:

- Copies of Power Points – Copies of lecture materials provided to student. This includes materials such as instructor’s overheads and PowerPoint presentations.
- Pictures of board – Student may take photographs of the board, PowerPoints, and other overheads as needed. If there is a concern about the student taking photographs, please contact the student’s Coordinator to discuss.
- Recording lecture – Student may audio record lecture. If there is a concern about the student recording lecture, please contact the student’s Coordinator to discuss.
- Notetaking technology – Use of technology, such as a laptop or tablet to assist with notetaking.
- Peer notetaker – Use of copies of notes from a peer notetaker.

More information about Auxiliary Aids and Services for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities from the Office of Civil Rights (OCR).

When students are approved for these accommodations Coordinators discuss and share specific guidelines for using this accommodation:

- Guidelines for Recording Lectures
- Guidelines for Sharing Lecture Materials
- Peer Notetakers

MODIFIED ATTENDANCE & DEADLINES AS AN ACCOMMODATION

Federal law requires colleges and universities to consider reasonable modification of attendance policies and deadlines if needed to accommodate a student’s disability. In making this determination, two questions must be answered:

- Does the student have a documented disability that directly affects his/her ability to attend class on a regular basis or submit work on time? Disability Resources will make this determination based on a review of documentation from the student’s physician or other qualified provider and provide verification in a letter the student presents to the instructor.
- Is attendance an essential part of the class? Would modification of attendance policies or deadlines result in a fundamental alteration of the curriculum? Instructors make this determination in consultation with the campus coordinator or Melinda Berry.

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has provided the following guidelines to assess if attendance is an essential part of a class:

1. Is there classroom interaction between the instructor and students and among students?
2. Do student contributions constitute a significant component of the learning process?
3. Does the fundamental nature of the course rely on student participation as an essential method for learning?
4. To what degree does a student’s failure to attend constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of other students in the class?

5. What do the course description and syllabus say?
6. Which method is used to calculate the final grade?
7. What are the classroom practices and policies regarding attendance?

Disability Resources requires that students with a disability-related need for flexibility in attendance and deadlines meet with their instructors to discuss the extent to which modification in attendance policies and deadlines may be reasonable for a particular class. Following this meeting the student and instructor should have a clear understanding of what accommodations can be made for disability-related absences. To facilitate this discussion the Modified Attendance & Deadline Agreement should be reviewed and completed to clearly set out expectations.

Trinity Valley Community College views class attendance as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments. Instructors are expected to provide notice of the dates on which major exams will be given and assignments will be due on the course syllabus. However, some students with disabilities may be approved for an accommodation of modified attendance and/or deadlines due to a disability-related need which may require the development of a Modified Attendance & Deadline Agreement. Generally these students have disabilities which are chronic or episodic in nature which may cause difficulties with regular class attendance and completing work. This might include, but is not limited to, students with diabetes, epilepsy, cancer, mental health disabilities, migraines and conditions requiring on-going or specialized medical treatment.

Determining How Many Disability-Related Absences are Reasonable

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) provided the following guidelines to be used in considering whether attendance is an essential element of a course:

1. Is there classroom interaction between the instructor and students and among students?
2. Do student contributions constitute a significant component of the learning process?
3. Does the fundamental nature of the course rely on student participation as an essential method for learning?
4. To what degree does a student's failure to attend constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of other students in the class?
5. What do the course description and syllabus say?
6. Which method is used to calculate the final grade?
7. What are the classroom practices and policies regarding attendance?

The accommodation should be provided unless the accommodation threatens the integrity of the course as offered. It is important that the student and course instructor discuss the issue so that the student can then make an informed decision regarding alternatives. Requests for accommodations for absences due to a disability should be considered on an individual and course-by-course basis.

Accommodating Class Absences & Deadline Extensions

When a class is missed due to a disability related absence, a general rule for

determining a reasonable time frame for a makeup or postponement of an assignment (such as a paper, exam or quiz) is the time equivalent to that which was missed. In certain courses, it may be appropriate to consider an alternative assignment, reading or project to make up for missed class discussion or activity. Other examples of how disability related absences or missed assignments may be accommodated may include the ability to submit or make up missed assignments or assessments that have been impacted by the disability-related absence without grade penalty. To help facilitate the discussion, and set parameters between an instructor and a student a Modified Attendance & Deadline Agreement should be completed by the student and instructor for each course to clarify expectations and set guidelines.

- The Modified Attendance & Deadline Agreement should be completed at the beginning of the semester or as soon as the student presents the accommodations letter to the instructor.
- This agreement should be established before absences and missed deadlines have become an issue. Instructors are only required to provide approved disability-related accommodations after receiving an Accommodation Letter and a discussion between the student and professor has taken place.
- The method and timing of notification of absences and making up any materials, exams, assignments, etc. missed due to the absence should be mutually agreed upon and detailed in the Modified Attendance & Deadline Agreement.
- When a student is absent due to their disability, they are responsible for the course content, lecture notes and information presented that day. The student needs to arrange how they will obtain this information.
- The student is not required to present the instructor with medical documentation verifying his/her disability-related absences, but may be required to document other non-disability related absences as per the syllabus requirements.
- In most instances, communication with Disability Resources and the provision of additional documentation is not needed to verify the student's absence(s). However, if the absences meets or exceeds the number of absences agreed upon in the Modified Attendance & Deadline Agreement, Disability Resources should be informed. This will allow Disability Resources to be of assistance in answering questions about the accommodations from both the student and the instructor.
- If the student requests a change to the number of absences initially agreed upon due to a change in their disability, the student should be referred to their Coordinator to discuss. Additional documentation or an update from the student's treating physician may be needed by Disability Resources to determine if a modification to the agreement or other accommodation may be appropriate.

(Adapted from University of Washington Disability Resources for Students, Disability Related Absences Agreement and similar agreements from other colleges and universities)

REFERENCES & RESOURCES:

- Questions and Answers on Disability Discrimination under Section 504 and Title II. Retrieved July 1, 2015, <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/qa-disability.html>
- *Maczaczjy v. New York*, 956 F.Supp. 403, 11 NDLR ¶ 59 (W.D.N.Y. 1997) (upholding requirement of in-person residency; participation by phone constituted fundamental alteration of program)
- *University of Illinois*, 30 NDLR 104, Case No. 05-04-2078 (OCR Region V 2004) (OCR found no fault with an instructor's announced policy of failing any student who missed in excess of ten classes; evidence adduced that policy was applied to nondisabled students as well)
- *Seattle University (WA)*, Case No. 10-03-2050, 27 NDLR ¶ 321 (OCR Region X 2003) (law school articulated legitimate educational rationale for requiring classroom attendance)
- *Metropolitan State College (CO)*, Case No. 08-98-2013, 15 NDLR ¶ 92 (OCR Region VIII 1998) (upholding accounting department's refusal to relax attendance policy after engaging in deliberative process and concluding such would result in fundamental alteration based of program)
- *Cabrillo Community College (CA)*, Case No. 09-96-2150 (OCR Region IX 1996) (essentiality of attendance decided on case-by-case basis in light of class requirements and methodology; when attendance is not essential, college should consider taping classes for students whose disabilities prevent attendance)
- Project Shift: Faculty Development. Retrieved August 4, 2015, <http://www.projectshift-refocus.org/faculty.htm>

GENERAL INFORMATION

Faculty impart knowledge to students and evaluate whether students have learned the material by creating assignments and exams that allow the student to demonstrate mastery based on course goals, objectives and the nature of the curriculum. Having an understanding of a disability and the limitations caused by that disability are essential when teaching to and interacting with students whose learning styles are different from their peers.

ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH SPECIFIC TYPES OF DISABILITIES

Students with Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Often called “hidden disabilities”, students with Learning Disabilities (LD’s) and/or Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) make up the majority of students registered with DR. Examples of LD’s include Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Math Disorders, and Nonverbal Learning Disorders. Students are diagnosed after a battery of testing with results that indicate lack of achievement at age and ability level and a severe discrepancy between achievement and intelligence.

Examples of limitations faced by these students are:

- Inability to change from one task to another
- Difficulty scheduling time to complete short and long-term assignments
- Difficulty completing tests without additional time
- Difficulty following directions
- Difficulty concentrating in lectures
- Problems with grammar
- Impulsiveness
- Difficulty delaying resolution to a problem
- Poor self-esteem
- Difficulty taking notes
- Slow reading rate
- Poor comprehension and retention of material read
- Difficulty with basic math operations
- Difficulty with reasoning

When preparing your lectures, and then presenting the materials, consider the following:

- Link previous lecture to current lecture
- Outline main points on overhead
- State class objective
- Write key terms on overhead
- Leave overheads up longer than you think necessary for you to copy
- Identify patterns of organization
- Make lectures interactive
- Make notes available on the internet
- Maintain student attention by varying delivery approach
- Move around the room
- Summarize or draw conclusions at the end of the lecture

Commonly used accommodations for students with LD’s:

- Extended time for testing
- Use of a computer with a spell-checking program
- Writing on the test, rather than using Scantrons
- Use of a calculator
- Copies of overheads, handouts, lecture notes
- Readers for exams
- Preferential seating

Accommodations for students with ADHD may include:

- Reduced distraction environment for testing
- Extended time for testing
- Preferential seating near the front of the class
- Notetaking support

Students with Visual Disabilities

There are two categories of visual disabilities: blindness and low vision. Between 70 and 80 percent of all persons in the United States identified with visual disabilities actually have some residual and functional vision, and may use a term such as low vision. To be diagnosed with low vision, visual acuity has to be 20/70 or less in the better eye after the best possible correction, or have a constricted visual field (peripheral vision) of 30 degrees or less. To be diagnosed as legally blind, visual acuity has to be 20/200 or less in the better eye after the best possible correction or have a visual field (peripheral vision) of 20 degrees or less.

Academic limitations can be the result of constricted peripheral vision, progressive loss of vision, and/or fluctuation of visual acuity. Visual disabilities may result in difficulties with the following activities:

- Mobility around campus and in the classroom
- Ability to take notes in class
- Ability to see classroom visual aids, writing on chalkboard, etc.
- Reading standard print materials
- Finding transportation
- Obtaining textbooks in an alternative format and in a timely manner (audio, large print, Braille)

Some examples of accommodations used by students who are blind or have low vision include:

- Large print or Braille handouts, signs, equipment labels
- TV monitor connected to microscope to enlarge images
- Directions, notices, assignments in electronic format
- Printed materials on colored paper or materials in high contrast
- Computers with enlarged screen images
- Seating where the lighting is best
- Audio, Braille, electronic formats for notes, handouts, texts
- Describe visual aids (text or audio descriptions)
- Raised-line drawings and tactile models of graphic materials
- Computers with optical character readers, voice activated computers, voice output, Braille keyboards and printers
- Extended time for testing
- Use of a reader and/or scribe for exams
- Use of tinted glasses for indoors/outdoors

Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Communication access is the most common barrier between students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and their hearing peers and instructors. Some of these students use American Sign Language and not spoken English. They often identify with other people of similar upbringing and prefer to be called Deaf with a capital D. People who became deaf later in life may call themselves Deaf or hard-of-hearing based on the degree of hearing loss they experience.

Examples of disability related limitations include:

- Listening to and understanding lecture information
- Taking notes in class
- Working effectively in group projects or class discussions

Commonly used accommodations are:

- Interpreters, real-time transcription, assistive listening systems, note taking assistance
- Face student when speaking
- Written copies of any oral instructions (directions, assignments, lab instructions)
- Visual aids, visual warning systems
- Repeat questions and statements from others
- Electronic mail for communicating
- Captioned videos and transcripts of audio recordings

Students with Health Related Disabilities

Chronic illnesses include conditions affecting one or more of the body's functions. These conditions can include, but are not limited to, the respiratory, immunological, neurological and circulatory systems. There can be several different impairments and they can vary significantly in their effects and symptoms. In general, these conditions can vary in severity and length of time, and can be very unstable.

Examples of chronic medical conditions include:

- Cancer
- Chemical dependency
- Chronic fatigue syndrome
- Diabetes
- Dysautonomia
- Epilepsy/seizure disorder
- Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
- Multiple chemical sensitivities
- Multiple sclerosis
- Renal disease/failure

Academic difficulties can include:

- Mobility around campus and in the classroom
- Taking notes in class
- Concentration/attention
- Time management
- Anxiety
- Missing classes due to symptoms or treatment of medical condition

Most commonly requested accommodations are:

- Note taking assistance, audio-taped class sessions
- Flexible attendance requirements
- Extra exam time, alternative testing arrangements
- Assignments in electronic formats
- Communication through electronic mail
- Absences due to symptomology and doctors appointments

Students with Mental Health Disabilities

Mental Health disabilities may not be apparent, but they can have a dramatic impact on interpersonal and school behavior that affects the learning process. These disabilities cover a wide range of conditions that may be chronic or reoccurring. With appropriate treatment many mental health related disabilities can be effectively controlled or improved. However treatment, which often combines medications and psychotherapy and may effectively stop acute symptoms or halt the downward spiral in some individuals, sometimes causes additional limitations as a result of prescribed medications.

Examples of some mental health disabilities are:

- Major depression
- Bipolar disorder
- Severe anxiety disorders
- Sleep disorders
- Eating disorders
- Substance-related disorders

Academic difficulties can include:

- Concentration
- Cognitive (short term memory difficulties)
- Distractibility
- Time management
- Impulsiveness
- Fluctuating stamina causing class absences
- Irritability
- Feelings of fear and anxiety about exams

Accommodations can include:

- Preferential seating, near door
- Prearranged or frequent breaks
- Audio recorder, note taking assistance
- Text, assignments in alternate formats
- Personal and private feedback
- Permit use of computer software
- Extended test taking time
- Separate, quiet room for testing

Students with Physical Disabilities

The phrase “physical disability” is used to describe a wide range of physical limitations and diagnoses, the most common of which would be someone that uses a wheelchair or other mobility device. Some limitations may be very severe and noticeable, while other are almost hidden or non-apparent. The most common barrier to academic success for a person with a physical disability is access. Access takes many forms, from a class assigned in an inaccessible building to the person’s own limitations preventing them from taking class notes. As with all other disabilities and impairments, it is important to treat students with physical disabilities fairly. Students with physical disabilities typically are very knowledgeable of both their limitations and abilities and are accustomed to communicating their needs to others.

Examples of physical disabilities include:

- Wheelchair users
- Amputees
- Speech impairments
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Multiple Sclerosis

Some limitations of students with physical disabilities are:

- Difficulty writing, such as class notes and on exams
- Sitting in a standard desk
- Participating in labs where lab tables and equipment are hard to reach
- Transportation
- Classrooms or buildings that are not wheelchair accessible

Possible accommodations include:

- Relocating a class or lab to an accessible building/space
- Audio recorder or notetaking assistance
- Accessible seating or table in the classroom
- Scribe for Scantrons and/or essay exams
- Additional time for completing exams

Students with Autism

College campuses are seeing an increase in the number of students who are diagnosed with Autism. Autistic individuals understand and respond to the thoughts and feelings of others in different ways compared to other individuals. Please note that no two students with Autism are alike in terms of how they respond to others and experience the educational environment.

Below are some examples of what one may encounter when working with Autistic students:

- The social behavior of persons with Autism may be naive and peculiar.
- Some Autistic students expect all people to be good, and it may be jarring for them to learn that some people may try to exploit them.
- They may not understand jokes, irony and metaphors.
- Autistic students may talk “at” rather than “to” people, disregarding the listener’s interest.

- Autistic students may talk too loud, stand too close and maintain poor eye contact.
- The individual usually does not accurately convey the intensity of his or her emotions until they are full blown, such that the reaction may appear to be far more intense than the situation warrants.
- Although Autistic individuals may crave social interaction, his or her unusual manner may rebuff others, leaving them feeling misunderstood and isolated.
- Difficulty “fitting in” with other college students (many students with Autism know they are different, there are some students that may have a desire to be “typical”).
- Social immaturity (interest in relationships can be appropriate for their physical developmental level, but their social developmental level may lag behind).
- Lack of structure (students may not know what to do with much more free time than in high school)
- Experience difficulty with classes that are not within their interests (often have preoccupations and they may not see the relevance of “core curriculum” classes).
- Difficulty dealing with ambiguity and lack of problem solving skills.
- Difficulty getting a job after college (poor interviewing skills, limited knowledge of how to look for a job, lack of references).

When interacting with a student with Autism:

- Use clear, specific language (avoid slang or regional terms).
- Give specific directions.
- Find out the students strengths and limitations and advise accordingly.
- Get to know the student so he/she will feel comfortable coming to you with problems.
- Help connect students to academic advisor or other professional who can be a resource.
- Set explicit guidelines for classroom behavior.
- Parents may be more involved in their student’s lives compared to other students.
- Communicate with the student’s Access Coordinator in Disability Resources if you observe any behavior or interactions that you are unsure of how to approach.

GRIEVANCES

Trinity Valley Community College is committed to providing an educational and work climate that is conducive to the personal and professional development of each individual. To further that commitment, the university has developed procedures for students to pursue grievances within the university community. Faculty may have a role in these grievance procedures if the student feels that he has been discriminated in the class environment based on the student's disability.

Student/Instructor Disagreement

If the student and the classroom instructor disagree on the accommodation request, they should first try to resolve the matter together. If a resolution cannot be reached, Disability Resources staff can facilitate discussion which should involve the student and the instructor. If that discussion does not resolve the dispute, the matter follows student grievance policy of the College's Student Rules.

Discrimination

Students believing that they have been subjected to discrimination based on a disability may use one or more procedures to resolve their grievance. Contact the ADA Coordinator at 903-675-6224 or mlberry@tvcc.edu.

General information and options for reporting can be found at the Department of Civil Rights and Equity Investigations reporting page.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are the rights and responsibilities of a student with a disability?

Students with disabilities have the right to equal access to courses, programs, activities, services, and facilities offered at Trinity Valley Community College. Students are also entitled to reasonable accommodations. All information about the student's disability is to be kept confidential. Students have the responsibility to provide acceptable documentation of disabilities and to register with their respective campus's disability Coordinator if they would like to receive accommodations. If students deem it necessary to receive accommodations for a particular class, students have the responsibility to inform the instructor, confirm delivery from the coordinators the faculty advisement forms that verify their approved accommodations, and to participate in the discussions about how their needs can be met.

What are the rights and responsibilities of an instructor when working with students with disabilities?

An instructor has the right to confirm a student's request for accommodations and to ask for clarification about a specific accommodation in relation to course structure and accommodation delivery within that course structure. Instructors do not have the right to refuse to provide an accommodation or to review a student's documentation including diagnostic data. Instructors have a responsibility to work with campus coordinator's in providing reasonable accommodations, keep all records

and communications with students confidential, and to refer a student to the campus coordinator who requests accommodations but is not currently registered. Instructors do not provide accommodations for students without notification from the campus coordinators.

Why does an instructor have the responsibility to make reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities?

An instructor has the responsibility to make reasonable accommodations because accommodations make it possible for a student with a disability to overcome barriers enabling the student to communicate what he or she knows in the same way that glasses do not strengthen vision but help a person to see. The instructor also has a legal responsibility to provide appropriate accommodations. For more information go to the Americans With Disabilities Act website www.ada.gov.

How are appropriate accommodations for a student determined?

To determine appropriate accommodations for a student, the student must submit acceptable documentation to the campus coordinator. The Coordinator reviews the information and determines appropriate accommodations based upon the substantial limitations of the student and the essential elements of the course.

If an instructor feels that a particular student may have a substantially limiting disability, to where should he or she refer the student?

If an instructor feels that a particular student may have a substantially limiting disability, he or she should direct the student to contact their campus coordinator.

What if a student with a disability is disruptive in class?

A student with a disability who is disruptive in class should be treated as an instructor would treat any student who is disruptive in class

What if a student with a disability is failing?

It is important for instructors to remember that providing reasonable accommodations to a student with a disability does not guarantee success in the course. Students with disabilities may not master the course material, just like any other student. Students with disabilities have the same right as other students to fail as part of their educational experience.

