



# **DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES Procedures Manual**

**TARRANT COUNTY COLLEGE DISTRICT  
DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES  
Procedures Manual**

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## **DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES Procedures Manual**

### **SECTION I INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 MISSION**

The mission of the Disability Support Services (DSS) offices is to offer academic supportive services to students with disabilities, enrolled for credit and/or non-credit courses and programs.

#### **1.2 GUIDING LEGISLATION**

##### Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504

Qualified disabled students shall not, on the basis of disability, be denied admission to, excluded from participation in, denied benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination in any program or activity that benefits from federal financial assistance. *29 U.S.C. 794; 34 CFR 104.41-.47*

##### Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act specifies that a qualified individual with a disability is one who, with or without reasonable modifications to rules, policies or practices, the removal of architectural communication, or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by a public entity. (ADA 42 U.S.C. Sec. 12111). NOTE: This Act specifically includes infection with HIV which causes AIDS, past drug addiction and alcoholism, but SEC. 104(A) excludes current illegal drug users.

##### Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

All student records are governed by FERPA which assures primary educational privacy rights to students including (a.) the right to inspect and review education records, (b.) the right to seek to amend education records, and (c) the right to have some control over the disclosure of information from education records.

Unless identified as "Directory Information", FERPA protects academic records. While medical information is not protected by FERPA, information used to determine appropriate educational placement and achieve educational goals is protected. Thus, documents submitted by persons receiving or requesting disability services is protected information and will be kept confidential unless a release of information is provided by the student or unless the release is specifically allowed under the law.

In accordance with FERPA, disability-related information may be shared on a limited basis within the academic community on a "need to know" basis pertaining to a specific and/or an emergency situation. The "need to know" is determined in each instance by the Coordinator of Disability Services and is very limited.

## **SECTION II IMPLEMENTATION**

All employees of Tarrant County College adhere to the College's obligations under federal law by sharing responsibility in providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and are guided by the policies as shown at (<http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/220502/>), and by the procedures outlined in this Disability Support Services Manual.

The law does not require accommodations that alter academic standards or to substantially change program requirements.

The responsibility for managing the accommodations to individuals with disabilities has been assigned to a Disability Support Services (DSS) Coordinator on each campus. The Coordinator reports to the campus Vice Presidents for Student Development Services. A Disability Services Advisory Committee provides recommendations concerning the services provided to students.

### **2.1 Tarrant County College Rights**

- ◆ To determine the appropriateness of documentation and requests for accommodation(s) on a case-by-case basis, using the professional judgment of the DSS Coordinator;
- ◆ To request additional information to determine eligibility for services;
- ◆ To share relevant information regarding the student's disability with those who have a legitimate educational interest;
- ◆ To deny a request for accommodation or withdraw an accommodation when a student fails to meet the College's academic and institutional criteria.

#### **Responsibilities**

- ◆ To reduce or eliminate physical, academic and attitudinal barriers;
- ◆ To assure that every student receives an equal level of service and expertise from the College, regardless of campus or type of enrollment, by systematizing intra-campus communication and support;
- ◆ To serve as an advocate for students with disabilities and to ensure equal access;
- ◆ To consult with faculty regarding academic accommodations and compliance with legal responsibilities;
- ◆ To develop written policies and guidelines regarding procedures for determining and accessing "reasonable accommodations";
- ◆ To provide services that are based on the institution's mission and/or service philosophy;
- ◆ To prohibit discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities.
- ◆ To assure the safety and confidentiality of all documentation related to student's disabilities.

### **2.2 Student Rights**

- ◆ To have equal access to educational programs, services and activities;
- ◆ To request reasonable accommodations;
- ◆ To comply with Guidelines for DSS Service Users

- ◆ To be permitted to discuss problems related to his/her accommodation/s with the DSS Coordinator and, if necessary, to seek redress through appropriate administrative channels.

### **Responsibilities**

- ◆ To meet with the DSS Coordinator during an initial intake appointment to discuss the nature and impact of his/her disabilities
- ◆ To provide notice for all accommodation requests and a current semester schedule twenty (20) business days prior to the first day of classes during a long semester;
- ◆ To provide appropriate documentation of disability;
- ◆ To initiate all requests for services and/or accommodations through the DSS office;
- ◆ To provide for his/her own personal, independent living needs and other personal disability-related needs.

## **2.3 Faculty Rights**

- ◆ **Classroom Behavior** - All college students, whether or not disabled, must adhere to the College's Code of Conduct. Infractions of this code should be directed to the Vice President of Student Development Services. The Vice President will consult with the DSS Coordinator regarding students with disabilities who violate the Code.
- ◆ **Written Agreements** - Faculty members may request a written agreement before allowing any student to tape or otherwise record a class.
- ◆ **Challenge of Accommodations** - A faculty member has the right to challenge an accommodation request if he/she believes the student is not qualified and/or if the accommodation would result in a fundamental alteration of the class. Faculty members must consult with the DSS Coordinator, not the student, if there are questions or concerns about designated accommodations.

### **Responsibilities**

- ◆ **Instructor Notification Form** - Faculty should not provide academic adjustments for a disability without a notice from DSS certifying that the student is qualified to receive services and identifying the nature of the accommodations.
- ◆ **Referral to Disability Support Services** - If a student notifies a faculty member that he/she has a disability or takes documentation to the instructor, it is the faculty member's responsibility to refer the student with his/her documentation to the DSS Office. If a student is not performing up to standards and the instructor thinks the student may have a learning disability, he/she should refer the student to the DSS Coordinator.

## **2.4 Classroom Procedures Syllabus Statement**

Each course syllabus and Instructor Class Requirement (ICR) will contain the reasonable accommodation statement below:

"In order to provide accommodations for eligible students, the instructor must receive an Instructor Notification form from the Disability Support Services Office. If you have a disability for which you would like to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Disability Support Services office."

## **Confidentiality**

The confidentiality of records and certain other information for students with disabilities are protected under FERPA and civil rights legislation. At no time will the faculty/staff make any statements or take any action implying that the student is any different from the general student population. Examples of unacceptable actions include the following:

- Do not ask the student to come to the classroom and then leave with the test in hand.
- Do not place the student in the hall or any other obvious place to take an examination. Do not ask the student for any additional documentation about his/her disability that is not supplied by the DSS office.
- Do not discuss the student's needs or accommodations with anyone except the student or a representative of the DSS office.
- Do not make comparisons between students and their needs.
- Do not use a grading standard that is any different from the rest of the class.
- Do not give students with disabilities an advantage over other students; the law requires equal access or equal opportunity provided through the recommended accommodations.

## **SECTION III FACILITIES**

### **3.1 Access to Facilities**

All facilities of the Tarrant County College District are ADA compliant. This includes all other buildings and locations under the direct control of the District. The College makes every effort to assure compliance when courses are offered at other sites in the community. Students who encounter an issue of physical non-compliance should immediately contact the DSS Coordinator or, if attending an off-campus or distance learning class, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Development Services.

### **3.2 Disability Support Services Offices**

A DSS office, under the direction of a coordinator, is located on each campus. It is staffed to provide services appropriate to the number of students to be served.

### **3.3 Telephone Communication Devices for the Hearing Impaired**

Telecommunication devices for persons who are deaf, hard-of-hearing and/or have speech impairments are provided in each DSS office and each campus library. These devices are available to students and to the public. Those who need to communicate with another office or location should contact the DSS office for direction and assistance

### **3.4 Off-Campus Facilities and Services**

Students attending classes or required activities at an off-campus facility are entitled to the same accommodations as those who remain on campus. Students must identify themselves to the DSS office and provide documentation to establish eligibility just as they would if the class or required activity were on campus.

Students who are concurrently enrolled in a combination of on-campus, off-campus, and/or Distance Learning should register with the DSS office on the campus where the majority of their courses are held. If a dominant or "home" campus cannot be identified based on enrollment,

the student may request services through the DSS office on the campus that he/she considers to be the home campus.

### **3.5 Participation in Student Activities**

The College is not responsible for providing accommodations for out-of-classroom activities that are not related to achieving a degree or credits for a degree. Decisions to attend extracurricular activities are voluntary and services to students with disabilities are the responsibility of the activity host. The DSS Coordinator is available as an information resource regarding the appropriate response to the need for accommodations by students attending an on-campus extra-curricular event.

### **3.6 Parking**

Handicapped parking spaces are available adjacent to all Tarrant County College buildings. A permanent disability permit is issued by the Texas Department of Public Transportation and is recognized universally at all TCC facilities.

Applications for disabled parking identification are available in the Health Center. The applications must be returned to the County Tax Assessor-Collector with the appropriate fees. The Tax Assessor-Collector issues the disabled parking permits.

The Health Center on any TCC campus may, however, issue a temporary handicap sticker (not to exceed three months) for those who need temporary accommodations because of an accident or illness that necessitates special parking privileges.

## **SECTION IV ACCESS TO SERVICES**

### **4.1 Qualifications for Services**

Eligibility for services is dependent upon appropriate documentation of disability. All qualifying Tarrant County College students are provided academic support services, regardless of location/medium of instruction or type of student.

Requirements to provide documentation for continuing education students are the same as those of students enrolled in credit classes.

### **4.2 Requests for Services**

A Request For Accommodation form must be submitted to and certified by the DSS office in order for a student to be eligible for accommodations.

### **4.3 Documentation Requirements**

The student is responsible for adhering to the guidelines for a specific disability by providing documentation for the disability.

The DSS Coordinator is assigned the responsibility of collecting and holding disability related documentation. Required documentation must be on file before an evaluation for accommodations will be completed and before any accommodations are provided. All documentation, whether maintained in paper or electronic media, is confidential in accordance with federal and state laws. DSS documentation can be accessed only by those specifically authorized. Documentation should include the following:

- A statement by a professional whose license or credentials are appropriate to describe or diagnose the disability, provided on professional letterhead,

indicating the disability for which special accommodations are being requested and including supporting documentation no more than three years old.

- Identification of the nature and extent of the disability;
- Specific information on the functional limitation as related to the college academic environment;
- Description of the current course of treatment including medical side effects;
- Prognosis for the disability;
- Recommended reasonable accommodations.

**The *Individualized Education Plan, 504 Plan, or General Education Initiative* from a secondary school will not be accepted in lieu of the above requirements.**

#### **4.4 Intake Interview**

Students requesting accommodations must make an appointment each semester and meet with the DSS Coordinator. If interpreter services or special equipment is needed during the interview, the students should notify the Coordinator at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the interview to arrange accommodations. The following topics will be addressed:

- Documentation required to support the request for services; **Documentation must be on file before accommodations will be provided;**
- Discussion of the request, the nature of the disability, and past experiences;
- Collaborative determination of eligibility for auxiliary aids and services, and individual needs to minimize the impact of the disability;
- Discussion of procedures to implement accommodations;
- Introduction to the staff, overview of the campus, and review of student's right to equal access to the College and its programs.

#### **4.5 Temporary Disabilities and Medical Conditions**

Students who are recovering from surgery, injury, or severe illness may be eligible for temporary accommodations from DSS.

Documentation is also required for temporary disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are determined based on the nature of the medical condition.

#### **4.6 Instructor Notification**

Each student's instructor will be provided written notification that the student has documentation of a disability on file at the DSS office. This notification will also include accommodations for which the student is eligible.

#### **4.7 Early High School/Dual Credit Enrollment**

Otherwise qualified high school students enrolled in the Early High School/Dual Credit Program are eligible for services on the same basis as all other students. Documentation submitted must meet the college criteria whether the class is held on a TCC campus or at a high school site. Faculty must not extend accommodations until authorized by the College. The TCC Campus DSS Coordinator will authorize appropriate accommodations.

#### **4.8 Distance Learning Enrollment**

Students enrolled only in Distance Learning classes (ITV/CDI, VCT) qualify for services on the same basis as on-campus students. Students enrolled only in Distance Learning courses should contact the DSS office at the campus that they consider to be the "home" campus.

Distance Learning students may mail required documentation of disability to the Disability Support Services Office. It is the student's responsibility to schedule an appointment with the DSS Coordinator to request services and accommodations, review documentation, and establish accommodations. In certain situations, it may be possible to conduct the interview and review electronically or by telephone.

All Distance Learning students have the prerogative of testing at any TCC campus or any approved proctored site. The Disability Support Services Office will collaborate and/or mediate, as needed with testing sites if accommodations are required. It is the student's responsibility to identify an appropriate remote proctored testing site.

#### **4.9 Enrollment at Multiple Locations**

Students who are concurrently enrolled in a combination of on-campus, off-campus, and/or Distance Learning should initiate intake with the DSS office on the campus where the majority of their courses are held. If a dominant, or "home" campus cannot be identified based on their enrollment, students can request services through the DSS office on the campus they consider to be the "home" campus.

Students who receive services at more than one location must notify their home campus if services are also needed at a location other than the home campus. It is the responsibility of the "home" campus DSS office to collaborate and/or mediate, if needed, with the service provider at the other location/s regarding student needs, accommodations, or concerns. Students are responsible for identifying themselves to the DSS office at the additional location and to the instructors of each class.

#### **4.10 Timeliness and Quality Services**

It is imperative that students adhere to the following procedures to assure that necessary accommodations are available before classes begin.

- 1) Written Request for Accommodations:** At least twenty (20) business days prior to the first day of class, students must submit a Request for Accommodations form. Failure to submit a request 20 days in advance with the required documentation may cause a delay in providing an accommodation. Every effort is made to avoid delays; however, it normally requires twenty (20) business days to certify eligibility and arrange for services.
- 2) Schedule of Classes:** Students must provide a copy of their Class Schedules to the DSS office no later than twenty (20) business days before their first class begins.
- 3) Change of Schedule:** Students must notify the DSS office of any changes to their Class Schedules, including any change of class, instructor, location, day/time.
- 4) Supplemental Services:** If a student needs additional service time for a conference with the instructor, for team assignments, or to attend a co-curricular event assigned by the instructor, a separate and timely request must be made to the DSS Coordinator.

- 5) Cancellation of Services:** When services are not required for a particular class meeting, students are responsible for notifying both the services provider and the DSS office in a timely fashion; if the services is provided by an agency, the DSS office will then be responsible for notifying the agency.

Instructor Cancellations: When a class has been cancelled by the instructor, students are responsible for notifying both the service provider (if any) and the DSS office immediately; however, if the service is provided by an agency, the DSS office will notify the agency.

Student Tardiness/Absence: When students fail to appear for services, the service providers are required to wait 20 minutes for a 50 minute class and 30 minutes for all other classes. Note Interpreters must be paid the two hour minimum when the student does not show.

- 6) Failure to Notify:** Students who fail to notify the DSS office in a timely manner of the need to temporarily cancel services, must notify the DSS Coordinator as soon as possible of the reason for the failure to cancel. Students may be subject to suspension of services when the no-show behavior occurs the second time in a semester unless a “good cause” can be shown.

## **SECTION V PROBLEM SOLVING**

### **5.1 Reconsideration of Accommodations**

A student may request reconsideration of a prescribed accommodation with the DSS Coordinator. Normally, these requests should be made within the first two weeks of class.

Decisions on reconsideration requests will be made on a case-by-case basis using the prescription provided by the licensed evaluator, the essential elements as documented in *Core Competencies, Learning outcomes, etc.* of each class, and the impact of the disability on the student.

### **5.2 Faculty Liaison**

Students are encouraged to be self-advocates and are provided guidance only when required. Most faculty-student issues can be resolved between the two parties. In the event of communications problems or failure to resolve a problem, the DSS Coordinator may act as liaison.

### **5.3 Grievance/Appeal Procedures**

Students who cannot resolve problems concerning their disability accommodation may file a grievance by following the following procedures.

- 1) Students are encouraged (but not required) to discuss problems or concerns with the faculty or staff member directly involved. The simplest, quickest, and most satisfactory solution will often be reached at this level.
- 2) If a solution cannot be achieved at that informal level, students should discuss the matter with the DSS Coordinator, who will work with campus and/or district administration toward a resolution.

Students who are not satisfied with the resolution may file a complaint with the College District compliance officer for Title IX, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The office may be accessed as follows:

Ricardo Coronado, Ph.D.  
Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources  
1500 Houston Street, Fort Worth, Texas 76102  
Telephone - 817-515-5234; Email - ricardo.coronado@tccd.edu

## **SECTION VI ACADEMIC POLICIES**

Students with disabilities are subject to the same academic policies as the student body as a whole unless the need for an accommodation is approved.

### **6.1 Course Substitution**

Requested course substitutions not related to students' disabilities are subject to substitution guidelines and practices allowed to all other students. Consideration for course substitutions based on disability must be documented by the diagnosis and recommendations of a licensed professional who is qualified to prescribe needed accommodations for college students.

Substitutions for the Associate of Arts degree are allowed for courses in the TCC Common Core Curriculum only when the substituted course also meets core requirements. Substitutions for the Associate in Applied Science degree and/or Certificate of Completion must not adversely change the basic requirements of the AAS degree or Certificate.

Requests for course substitutions are initiated through the TCC Counseling Center. The course substitution form must be reviewed by the DSS Coordinator who will verify the recommendation made by the licensed professional and submit the form along with the documentation to the appropriate academic officer for a decision.

### **6.2 Absences**

The College is not required to accommodate absences from classes due to a disability; however, each request will be considered on an individual basis. Students are responsible for notifying the faculty member on the Instructor Notification Form that excessive absences are a possibility. If a portion of the grade is dependent on class attendance, the student can discuss it with the faculty member and make an informed decision about any alternative that may be available.