

COCHISE COLLEGE ADA/DISABILITIES



Empowering Students with Disabilities

A STUDENT GUIDE



Welcome!

The ADA/Disabilities Office at Cochise College provides a variety of support services to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities. We seek to empower students, foster independence and promote success in their educational goals. Our mission is to assist students in discovering and developing their full potential.

In the spirit of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Cochise College seeks to provide support services to those students who require special assistance. The College uses a reasonable accommodation process to determine a meaningful adjustment for students with disabilities to participate in the educational process.

The ADA/Disabilities Office provides a variety of services tailored to individual need and documentation of the disability. The Director of Disability Services acts as a liaison with faculty, staff, and outside agencies to assist students with special testing-taking arrangements, classroom accommodations and resource referrals.

All services are provided free of charge.

TITLE II OF THE ADA, WHICH COVERS STATE-FUNDED POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS, PROVIDES:

No qualified individual with a disability... shall be excluded from participation in or be denied benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity... 42 U.S.C. § 12132 (Supp. V)

The ADA protects individuals with a disability. To be eligible for protection under these laws, a person must meet the definition of an individual with a disability. A qualified individual must have documentation of an actual disability from a certifying professional stating that the disability substantially limits at least one major life activity. The person with the disability must be able to fulfill the essential functions or requirements of the program either with or without accommodation.

WHAT THAT MEANS!

The ADA protects those whose disability is severe enough to interfere with major life activities. Those activities include: caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working. The definition also includes those with "invisible" disabilities such as psychological problems, learning disabilities, or chronic health impairment, such as epilepsy, diabetes, arthritis, cancer, cardiac problems, HIV/AIDS and others.

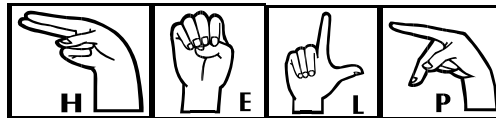
The disability must be documented. That means that a professional in the area of the disability must document the nature and severity of the disability. Professionals may include medical doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, and learning specialists. No two people with disabilities are exactly alike. Accommodations are based on what will be most helpful for the individual.



Accommodations

Accommodations ensure access to programs and services. This means that no person with a disability can be excluded from a program or service simply because he or she is disabled. It does not mean that standards are lowered. Students with disabilities are required to meet the same course requirements as any other student. It is the way in which the disabled person meets the standards that might be different. For example, a person with a serious speech impairment might be excused from giving an oral presentation. In that case, the student could do a research paper or some other activity that would satisfy the requirement. A blind or visually impaired student could be excused from in-class writing to go to a computer equipped with screen reader or voice recognition software. A student is always required to meet the essential requirements of a course.

Accommodation is not meant to make your classes “easier” nor does it guarantee that you will pass your classes. That’s up to you!



WHAT IS MEANT BY “ACCOMMODATION?”

An accommodation is the provision of an auxiliary aid or adaptation of the manner in which courses are taught. The college must provide the aids unless it would be unduly costly or fundamentally alter the nature of the course or program. Some examples of possible aids are:

- Qualified sign language interpreters
- Qualified readers, taped texts, or alternate formats such as large print or Braille versions of materials
- Acquisition or modification of equipment or devices
- Note takers
- Extended time for testing and assignments
- Oral testing
- Use of tape recorder in class
- Spelling aids, and/or calculators
- Assistive technology, e.g. software
- Making facilities accessible to students with physical disabilities

All accommodations are granted based on personal need and documentation. They can also vary from class to class. Different instructional styles may require accommodations specifically for that class. Accommodations are free to the student: however, schools are not required to pay for accommodations during a student’s personal time or those that are strictly personal in nature, such as a personal attendant. Generally speaking, tutoring is not an accommodation. If you need one-on-one tutoring other than through our writing and math labs, it will be your responsibility to find and pay for a tutor. There are community resources for students who qualify for Veteran’s and Vocational Rehabilitation. The Director of Disability Services will be happy to help you arrange for those services.



WHAT DOES “REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION” MEAN?

When a student meets with the Director of Disability Services and presents documentation of a disability, they discuss which accommodations should be given. Consideration is given to the individual’s preferences. The Director of Disability Services evaluates what accommodations are supported by the documentation, and the two parties come to an agreement as to which accommodations will be granted. Accommodations are meant to level the playing field for students with disabilities, not to give them an unfair advantage over other students. When a decision is reached, students will be given a letter to take to all faculty teaching the chosen classes stating that the student has been granted accommodations and listing them. At no time is the student required to provide documentation to anyone other than the Director of Disability Services.

WHEN WOULD AN ACCOMMODATION NOT BE CONSIDERED “REASONABLE?”

- When the standards of the course, program or service would be substantially altered.
- If a student is not “otherwise qualified” (with or without accommodations) to meet the academic standards required for admission or participation in an educational program, course, service or activity.
- When the effects of the disability cannot be overcome even with reasonable accommodation.
- An undue (excessive) financial hardship would be caused for the institution.
- If the individual would pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others even with accommodations.

QUALIFICATION FOR SERVICES

HOW DOES A PERSON QUALIFY FOR SERVICES?

- Student must be enrolled at Cochise College and have a mental or physical handicap that substantially limits a major life activity.
- Student must request services by making an appointment with the Director of Disability Services.
- Student must provide detailed documentation of the disability from a qualified professional.
- Student must complete forms for requesting services.



WHAT IS DOCUMENTATION OF A DISABILITY?

- Documentation of a disability is written proof that a disability exists. It provides justification for appropriate accommodations.
- Documentation must be from a person who is qualified to interpret testing or assess a physical condition. The professional could be a physician, psychologist, psychiatrists, learning specialist etc.
- Documentation should clearly identify the need for accommodations.
- Documentation determines the eligibility for specific accommodations.

WHERE CAN I GET DOCUMENTATION?

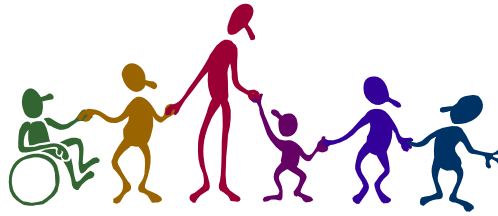
- Private physicians and psychologists.
- State and Veteran's Vocational Rehabilitation Offices.
- High school Special Education programs

HOW OLD CAN DOCUMENTATION BE?

Generally speaking, documentation should be no older than three years. However, there are exceptions depending on the type of disability or the age of the student at last testing.

WHO HAS ACCESS TO MY DOCUMENTATION?

The Director of Disability Services is the only person who has access to official documentation. A student may sign a release form in the disabilities office if he or she would like to give the Director of Disability Services permission to speak with instructors about the disability. The only time information would be released without a student's permission would be if there was a threat to harm another person or themselves that would override the student's right to confidentiality.



CONFIDENTIALITY

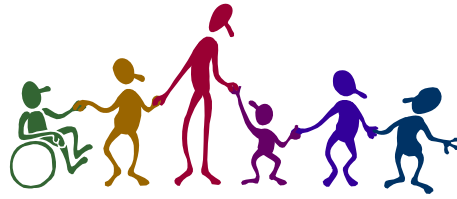
Disclosure of a disability is a confidential matter. Students are not required to disclose specific disability information to anyone other than the Director of Disability Services. You do not have to disclose a disability to anyone if you do not wish to ask for an accommodation. As an adult learner, it is your responsibility to seek services on your own. All communication regarding your disability is confidential and can only be discussed with those persons with a legitimate need to know. If you wish your instructor or another staff member to know about your disability, you may disclose it to him or her yourself or sign a release of information form in the ADA/Disabilities Office.

Sometimes students ask for special equipment or furniture, or perhaps need an interpreter in class. In those cases, other students will be aware that a special accommodation is being granted. Those situations are unavoidable in identifying a person as being disabled and needing accommodation. Care is taken to keep a disability confidential whenever possible, but may not apply in all situations.

You should only disclose what you feel comfortable telling. It is not necessary to give anyone a full explanation of why you are being accommodated. You will, of course, need to explain your disability to the Director of Disability Services to receive services, but no one else need know the details of your situation.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Schedule an appointment with the Director of Disability Services at least 2 weeks prior to the beginning of classes.
- Provide documentation of disability. Generally, the documentation should be current within the last three years.
- Notify the Director of Disability Services if you have dropped or added classes so that the accommodation letters to faculty are delivered in a timely fashion.
- Report any accommodation problems immediately.
- Arrange for services such as Interpreter for the Deaf and Books on Tape well in advance. These services may take several weeks to arrange or provide.
- Attend class regularly. Note takers will not be allowed to take notes for an unexcused absence from class. Note takers are not a substitute for attending class.
- Remember that you are responsible for any equipment that is loaned to you during the semester. Students who do not return equipment by the due date will have a hold placed on their registration and grades for that semester.



ATTENDANCE

- Missing class means missing valuable information
- Excessive absences can lead to being dropped from class.
- Class participation may be a significant part of your grade.

At times, a disabling condition can make class attendance difficult. When this happens, it is important to contact your instructor and the Director of Disability Services to let them know why you cannot be in class. However, it is **important** to note that too many absences may result in your being dropped from the class. Classes such as science labs are very difficult to make up. Some instructors calculate class participation into the final grade, so missing class will have a negative effect on your grade. If you must miss class, it is still your responsibility to ask for missed notes and assignments and get the work turned in as soon as possible. For extended absences, you may be required to provide proof, such as a doctor's note, that you were unable to attend class. You may be required to do alternative assignments for extended absences. Absences that are not disability related cannot be accommodated. For example, if your car breaks down and you can't get to class, this absence would not entitle you to any special consideration because of a disability. Students who know they will be missing many classes should consider taking an online class if possible. These classes do not require attendance in a classroom. Online classes do have assignment due dates just as any other class.

SCHEDULING CLASSES

Remember to schedule classes realistically. College classes require a great deal of study time. Consider taking fewer classes if you know that your health will make it difficult to keep up with all of your assignments. If you are a person who uses a wheelchair or braces it is wise to take into account how far apart in distance your classes are and how long it will take you to get to your next class. Perhaps you just need a break between classes to rest. Smart scheduling will help you keep from being overwhelmed.

Know your strengths and weaknesses. If writing is a challenge for you, try to schedule a few classes that do not require a lot of writing along with one or two that do. Schedule time each week to go to the Writing Lab for help with your assignments. Cochise College also has a Math Lab for students who need tutoring in Math.

INSTRUCTOR NOTIFICATION

After the reasonable accommodation process is complete, you will be given an accommodation letter to take to your instructor to let him/her know that you qualify for accommodations and what the accommodations will be. There are three copies of the notification letter. One copy is for the instructor, one for the ADA office and one for you. All parties must sign them all. It is your responsibility to make sure one copy is returned to the ADA Office for your file.



WHAT IF MY INSTRUCTOR FORGETS MY ACCOMMODATION?

Sometimes mistakes happen. An instructor who has more than students may not always remember which one should go to the Testing Center for an exam. If this happens, it is appropriate to remind the instructor that you were granted the accommodation.

I AM SUPPOSED TO HAVE AN ACCESSIBLE TABLE, BUT SOMEONE ELSE IS SITTING THERE- WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Take your instructor aside and remind him or her that you need the table. The instructor should take the lead in making sure accommodations are provided in the classroom.

WHAT IF I HAVE PROBLEMS WITH ACCESS TO A BUILDING OR PARKING?

Notify the ADA office right away with any problems of this sort. Cochise College makes every effort to make all facilities accessible.

WHAT IF I HAVE AN ACCOMMODATION AND I AM STILL HAVING PROBLEMS?

- ✓ Inform the Director of Disability Services that you are having problems as soon as possible.
- ✓ Arrange for tutoring help. The Writing and Math labs can be invaluable in helping you get past a crisis point.
- ✓ Your instructor has office hours available each week to help you. Call for an appointment.
- ✓ Ask for help with study skills and time management. The disabilities office has materials that will help you get on the right track.
- ✓ If tutoring and extra effort are still not working, consider dropping the class. If you are receiving financial aid, talk to a financial aid counselor before dropping the class.
- ✓ If possible, consider dropping down one level to a class that will help you get a better foundation in the subject. **Consult the schedule for the last day to change levels.**
- ✓ Attend class! Many times problems can be attributed to poor attendance. When you attend class regularly, you have an opportunity to ask your instructor to clarify concepts that might be difficult to understand on your own. Tutoring helps, but it is not a good substitute for the classroom experience.
- ✓ Make sure all your assignments are turned in and tests taken. Just one zero on a test can make a big difference in your overall grade.
- ✓ If your instructor allows you to rewrite a paper or retake an exam, do it! This is your opportunity to make up for a failing grade.



TEST ANXIETY

First of all, remember that not all anxiety is bad. Anxiety in small doses motivates us to do well. Research shows that the one thing that creates the most anxiety is not being prepared for the test! There are several things you can do to lessen anxiety.

- ✓ Make sure you take good notes in class and review them often.
- ✓ Know the difference between just reading the text and studying.
- ✓ Good writing and organization skills are as important as knowing the material. Make sure you take the classes you need to improve those skills.
- ✓ Highlight important facts so that you know what to emphasize in your studying. Get tutoring help before the test.
- ✓ Many students underestimate the time needed to learn the material. A good rule of thumb is to spend 3 hours studying for every one hour in class.
- ✓ Make up a practice test from all the material.
- ✓ When you first get the test, quickly read over the whole test to get a feel for what kinds of questions you will be answering.
- ✓ Answer all the questions you know first. If you get stuck on a question, skip it and come back to it later.
- ✓ If you are running out of time, go back and try to answer the questions that are worth the most points.
- ✓ If you feel yourself getting anxious, stop, sit back and take a few slow deep breaths to calm yourself. Oxygen is food for the brain: it will help you think better.
- ✓ Take all the time allotted for the test. Sometimes an answer will come to you if you just take a few extra minutes to think about it.
- ✓ Remember that it's just one test! You will have other opportunities to do better on other tests.



MAKING ACCOMMODATIONS WORK FOR YOU

Books on Tape:

Time management can make the difference between success and failure. Some accommodations such as books on tape can be an enormous help for people with learning or vision impairments, but there is a downside to using them. Listening to tapes is time consuming. Most students find it helpful to try to jot down some notes as they listen to the tapes. Learning by listening may take a while to get used to if you have not done it before. Allow plenty of time to listen to a tape several times until you are sure you have understood the material.

Assistive technology:

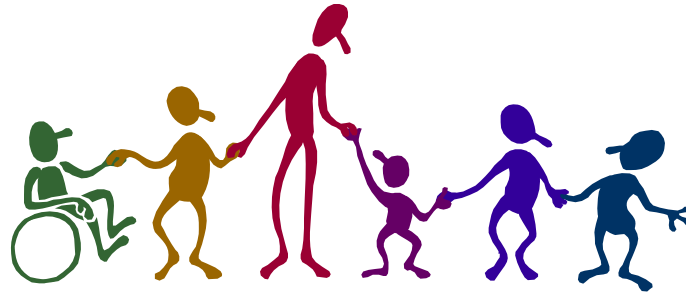
The current trend in accommodation is to rely on technology such as computers and software designed for persons with disabilities. These applications, though quite useful, are not very helpful for persons with no computer skills. It would be wise to take a computer or keyboarding class during your first semester. Students who need voice recognition software or speech output software can often receive training from Vocational Rehabilitation to further enhance their skills.

Note takers:

In certain circumstances, note takers may be provided as an accommodation. A note taker will not be allowed to take notes for you if you do not attend class for an unexcused absence. A note taker doesn't take the place of class attendance. If you are unsatisfied with your note taker or if notes are not getting to you in a timely manner, please contact the ADA/Disabilities office immediately.

Interpreters:

Cochise College provides sign language interpreters for those who need them. Whenever possible, let the interpreter know if you will be absent from class. Failure to notify an interpreter of your absence twice during the semester could result in suspension of services until you meet with the Director of Disabilities to discuss your situation. You will also need to request an interpreter several weeks before classes begin so that arrangements can be made to have someone available for your first class. Interpreting services for events outside of the classroom must be arranged through the ADA Office.



CAMPUS RESOURCES

	<u>Sierra Vista</u>	<u>Douglas</u>
➤ ADA/Disability Office	515-5337	417-4023
➤ Admissions	515-5336	417-4046
➤ Advising	515-5483	417-4713
➤ Bookstore	458-0262	417-4097
➤ Career Services	515-5458	417-4756
➤ Cashier's Office	515-5416	417-4076
➤ Financial Aid	515-5417	417-4045
➤ Library	515-5320	417-4082
➤ Registration	515-5415	417-4046
➤ Transcripts	515-5415	417-4726
➤ Testing	515-5447	417-4091