

A Guide for Students with Disabilities



COCHISE COLLEGE

Creating opportunities...changing lives



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Welcome To Cochise College Office of Disability Services

In the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Cochise College provides support services to students who may need reasonable accommodation or adjustment in order to achieve academic success. Our mission is to assist students in discovering and developing their full potential.

Cochise College uses an interactive and dynamic process with the student in determining what accommodation/modification would be most effective for the student. The Director of Disability Services serves as a liaison with faculty, staff, and outside agencies to assist in that process.

Title II of the ADA 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 people with disabilities from being discriminated against based solely on their disability.

To be eligible for protection under the ADA, a person must meet the definition of an individual with a disability. The ADA defines disability “As a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such impairment.” Examples of major life activities may include 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.



A “qualified individual” with a disability 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 also be able to fulfill the essential functions or requirements of the program either with or without accommodation.

Eligibility for Disability Services

To be eligible to receive an accommodation from Disability Services a student must be enrolled in Cochise College and have a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. The disability must be verified by appropriate documentation. 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. An appointment must then be made with the Director of Disability Services in order for the student to complete the intake forms necessary to request services and accommodations.



What is an Accommodation?

An accommodation is an adjustment in the work or academic environment that enables a **qualified** person with a disability to apply for a job, perform the essential functions of a job, or **meet the technical standards of an educational program**. 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 accommodations are:

- Sign Language Interpreters
- 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 in-class assignments
- Oral testing
- Tape recording of class lectures
- Spelling aids, and/or calculators
- Assistive technology, e.g. software
- Making facilities accessible to students with physical disabilities

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 has a disability. It does not mean that standards are lowered. Accommodations are not meant to make your classes “easier,” nor does it guarantee that you will pass your classes. That’s up to you! Students with disabilities are required to meet the **same course requirements** as any other student. It is the way in which the student with a disability meets the standards that might be different. For example, a student with a distinctive speech impairment might be excused from giving an oral presentation. However, the student could be required to do a re-



search 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.**

Accommodations are granted on a case by case basis according to the individual student's disability and the need for an accommodation. Accommodations are free to the student; however the college is 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. Also, tutoring is not an accommodation. If a student needs one-on-one tutoring other than through the college's tutoring centers, it is the student's responsibility to find and pay for a tutor. There are community resources for students who qualify for Veteran's and State Vocational Rehabilitation. The Director of Disability Services will be happy to make the appropriate referrals.

The "Reasonable Accommodation" Process

Students need to meet with the Director of Disability Services and present verification of a disability. Together they will discuss which accommodations would work best for the student. Consideration is given to the student's preference; however the Director of Disability Services does evaluate what accommodations are recommended by the documentation. Students will be given a letter to take to all their instructors stating what accommodations they have been granted.



When an Accommodation is “Unreasonable”

- When the standards of the course, program or service would be fundamentally 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 with an accommodation.
- An undue (excessive) financial hardship would be caused for the College.
- If the student would pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others.

Documentation (Verification) 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 or mental condition. The person should be a physician, psychologist, psychiatrist or learning specialist, etc.
- Documentation should clearly identify the need for a specific accommodation.



Where to Get Documentation

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

Does Documentation Ever Expire?

As a rule, documentation should be no older than three years prior to requesting an accommodation from Disability Services. However, there are exceptions depending on the type of disability or the age of the student at last testing.

Confidentiality

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) controls access to student education records. Cochise College will make a reasonable effort to extend to students and their parents the rights granted by the act.

Disclosure of a disability is a confidential matter. The Director of Disability Services is the only person who has access to official documentation. However, a student may sign a release form giving the Director of Disability Services permission to speak with others about their disability. The only time information would be released without a student's permission would be if there is a threat to harm another person or themselves. A situation such as this would supersede a student's right to confidentiality.

Also, when students request certain accommodations such as special equipment, furniture, or sign language interpreters, etc., other students will be aware that an accommodation is being granted.



Those situations are unavoidable in identifying a person as having a disability. Great care is taken to keep a disability confidential, but may not always be possible.

Instructor Notification of Accommodations

Upon completion of the reasonable accommodation process the student will be given accommodation letters to be signed by the Director of Disability Services, the student, and the instructor. These accommodation letters will state exactly what accommodations the student will be granted. The letter(s) will **not** state the nature of the disability to be accommodated. There will be three copies of the accommodation letter(s). One copy will stay with the instructor, one copy will be kept in the student's file in the Disability Services Office, and the final copy is for the student's reference.

Student Responsibilities When Requesting an Accommodation

- Schedule an appointment with the Director of Disability Services at least 2 weeks prior to the beginning of classes for each semester.
- Provide documentation of disability.
- Please arrange for services such as sign language interpreters, alternative formatted text books, and/or note takers well in advance of the start of classes as these accommodations may take several weeks to arrange.



- Students requesting note takers, or sign language interpreters, please **attend class regularly**. Note takers will not be allowed to take notes for an unexcused absence from class. Sign language interpreters are only required to stay 15 minutes after the start of class if the student is late or absent.
- Students are responsible for any equipment that is loaned to them during the semester. Students who do not return equipment by the due date will have a **hold placed on their registration and/or grades until said equipment is returned or replaced**.
- Notify the Director of Disability Services if you have dropped or added classes so that the accommodation letters to instructors are delivered in a timely fashion.
- **It is the student's responsibility to pick up their accommodation letters from the Cochise College Office of Disability Services and deliver them to their instructor(s) to be signed. It is preferable that this be done before, or soon after, the start of classes so that accommodations are available when needed. Accommodations are not retroactive!**

Grievance Procedure

If a student becomes dissatisfied with services from the Cochise College Office of Disability Services he/she may confer with the Director of Disability Services regarding the filing of a complaint in compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.



If the student feels, after consultation, that the issue has not been resolved, he/she may submit a signed statement within five days of the conference with the accused or his/her supervisor to the Dean of Student Services or a designee. The written statement should specify the time, place, nature of grievance, and corrective action desired.

The Dean of Student Services or designee may elect to hold an administrative hearing to review the grievance

Hints for Being a Successful Cochise College Student

If you have an accommodation and are still having problems:

- Inform the Director of Disability Services that you are having problems immediately.
- Arrange for tutoring help. The Writing and Math labs can be a valuable resource.
- Instructors have regular office hours. Call for an appointment.
- Ask for help with study skills and time management.
- If tutoring and extra effort are still not working, consider dropping the class. If you are receiving financial aid, talk with 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 course 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 substitute for the classroom experience.
- Make sure all your assignments are turned in and tests taken.
- If your instructor allows you to rewrite a paper or retake an exam, do it! This is your opportunity to improve a grade.

Test Anxiety

Remember!!! 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 one can do to lessen anxiety.

- Make sure to 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 to take the classes needed to improve those skills.
- Highlight important facts in order to know what to emphasize while studying. Get tutoring help before the test.
- Many students underestimate the time needed to learn the material. A good rule is to spend 3 hours studying for every one hour in class.
- Make up a practice test from all the material.



- Quickly read over the whole test to get a feel for what kinds of questions are being asked.
- Answer easier questions first. If stuck on a question, skip it and come back to it later.
- If running out of time, go back and try to answer the questions that are worth the most points.
- If feeling anxious, stop, sit back and take a few slow deep breaths to calm yourself. Oxygen is food for the brain: it helps us think better.
- Take all the time allotted for the test. Sometimes an answer will come by taking a few extra minutes to think about it.
- Remember that it's just one test! There will be other opportunities do better.

Cochise College Resources

	Sierra Vista	Douglas
Disability Services	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
Testing Center	515-5447	417-4091
Transcripts	515-5415	417-4726

**COCHISE COLLEGE
ADA/DISABILITIES OFFICE**

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4190 W. Highway 80 • Douglas, AZ 85607-6190
(520) 417-4023

SIERRA VISTA CAMPUS

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