

TRANSITIONS

to College for Students with Disabilities



This publication compares the differences between high school and college settings and looks at the information students, parents and teachers must know for students to be successful in their educational college experience.

College is Different from High School

For students with a disability, there are three major differences between high school and college.

1. Students must become self-advocates. No longer will someone else see that their needs are addressed.
2. Different laws apply in college than in the public school system.
3. The goals and responsibilities of the public school system are different than those of the college setting.

Students with disabilities entering the world of college education may find the experience **overwhelming** and **intimidating**.

When a student moves from high school to college, **reality** as he or she knows it is forever altered.

Statement of Intent

Southeast Community College, desires to create an accessible community where individuals with disabilities have an equal opportunity to pursue their educational goals, limited only by their abilities, not their disabilities.

To this end, the college will:

1. Provide direct, reasonable accommodations and support services for individuals with disabilities.
2. Encourage self-determination, independence, and personal responsibility for students with disabilities.
3. Provide resources, advocacy, collaborative services, and outreach throughout the College community.

4. Promote an open and welcoming environment around campus for individuals with disabilities.
5. Inform and educate the Southeast Community College community about disability-related laws, rules, regulations, and policies.

In college, students are expected to exercise **greater self-determination** and to be **more independent** than in high school.

For many students and their parents, this change can be **threatening and confusing**.

Some Things to Consider

Should I Disclose My Disability?

- When preparing to go to college or university, students with disabilities may need to decide whether to disclose their disability to staff and faculty of the college.
- When you tell someone something that they don't already know, you are practicing disclosure. Disclosure is a form of the word "disclose," which means to open up, to reveal, or to tell.
- The decision to disclose a disability belongs only to the person with the disability. Disclosure is a very personal choice and should be done only after careful thought. If you have a disability, there are no requirements that you disclose your disability to anyone at any time, but in order to receive accommodations at work or in college, you must disclose.
- When you disclose, you are intentionally releasing personal information about yourself for a specific purpose. Some personal information, such as identification numbers, financial records, or health information, may be important to keep private. It is important to keep in mind that your decision to disclose is personal and doing so should help you in some way.
- You are not required to share personal information about your disability. However, if you are requesting reasonable accommodations, you will need to disclose: (1) information about how your disability affects your ability to learn and perform effectively; (2) what kind of support, services and environment you will need in order to access and participate in your studies or job, and in the community.

It is **up to you to decide** how much of this sensitive information is necessary to reveal in order to get the accommodations you need.

Circumstances in which you may choose to disclose a disability include:

- *To a potential employer when requesting job accommodations.*
- *To new friends who have invited you to a concert because you need accessible seating close to the stage in order to see.*
- *To your coach because your math tutoring sessions overlap with team practice after school.*
- *To a benefits counselor if you are applying for financial benefits.*

Adapted from The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth
<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/411-on-disability-disclosure>.

The Disability Services Office

Purpose of Disability Services

- Provide services and accommodations to qualified students with disabilities.
- Serve in an advisory and supportive capacity to faculty and staff.
- Provide equal access for individuals with disabilities.
- Collaborate with faculty and staff to develop reasonable accommodations for students.

Confidentiality

- The specifics and documentation about a student's disability are confidential and are protected by law under the Family Education Records Privacy Act (FERPA), the ADA, and §504 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- Any inference about a particular student and the disability is inappropriate.

The term "qualified individual with a disability" means:

"An individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable modifications, meets the essential eligibility requirements (e.g., any academic and/or technical standards required for admission or participation in the educational program or activity) for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by a public entity."

An accommodation is an adaptation, designed to help the student display knowledge around the learning barriers caused by the disability.

Definitions

The definition of an “individual with a disability” covered by and used in §504 and the ADA:

- Is an individual who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities and
- Is qualified to be a student (In college, students must also meet the admission criteria and meet or maintain standards and requirements that are required for continued participation in a program of study or for graduation, whether they have a disability or not).

The definition of a “reasonable accommodation”

An accommodation is something provided for the student. It is an adaptation designed to help the student display knowledge around the learning barriers caused by the disability.

- Reasonable accommodations are TOOLS.
- Reasonable accommodations are NOT intended to guarantee success, but to provide access.
- Reasonable accommodations are intended to ensure that a student with a disability has an opportunity to succeed.

Academic adjustments/auxiliary aids cannot:

- Result in fundamental alterations to courses or programs.
- Substantially modify program requirements.
- Cause undue administrative or financial burden.

Documentation

- Includes a diagnosis of a specific disability
- States how the disability limits a major life activity
- Explains how the disability affects the student’s academic performance
- Suggests educational accommodations appropriate to a college setting



Visit the Disability Services Office to begin the reasonable accommodation’s process.

Student Responsibilities



Colleges have an obligation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to provide qualified students with disabilities access to their programs and services. Institutions also have an obligation to provide reasonable accommodations. HOWEVER, students also have equal, if not greater, responsibilities to be partners with educational institutions in meeting their needs.

The qualified student has the responsibility to:

- Be a self-advocate for his/her needs
- Be independent and in charge of his/her own life
- Self-identify to the College Disability Services Office as a person with a disability
- Formally request accommodations and services by registering with the Disability Services Office (see “documentation” sidebar)
- Provide documentation from a qualified professional
- If evaluations are needed in order to provide documentation, it is the student’s responsibility to arrange for and pay for the evaluation
- Work with faculty to set up academic adjustments/ auxiliary aids

A student has the right to:

- Not be discriminated or retaliated against by SCC because of disability
- Participate in and enjoy the educational programs and services offered by SCC
- An accessible education
- Appropriate accommodations
- Have information about his/her disability kept confidential
- Expect that other units of the College will work cooperatively with the Disability Services Office and the student in providing accommodations and addressing legitimate needs
- Choose not to access services through the established channel (the Disability Services Office)



Responsibilities in a Nutshell

Issue	High School (IDEA)	College (ADA/§504)
Identifying students with disabilities	School System	Student must initiate
Requesting services	School and Parent	Student
Obtaining disability documentation and establishing need for accommodation	School	Student
Providing accommodations	School	College
Advocating to obtain services	Parent and Student	Student
Deciding what courses to take	Student and Parent/Educator team	Student

Advocacy

High School

The student's parent serves as the primary advocate.

College

The student must assume the responsibility for his/her own advocacy.

Laws that Apply

High School

- Individuals With Disabilities Act (IDEA).
- Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Subpart D).
- Civil Rights Restoration Act.

College

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Subpart E).
- Civil Rights Restoration Act.

Enforcement of Laws

High School

IDEA – a funding law enforced by the U.S. Department of Education (U.S. DOE).

College

ADA/§504 - A civil rights law enforced by the Office of Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Justice (U.S. DOJ) and also the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

System Goals: Mandatory vs. Voluntary

High School

A student covered by IDEA has a legal entitlement to an education regardless of disability.

Education must be offered in the least restrictive environment.

Public schools are mandated to provide special/regular education services to ensure that the student has a free, appropriate public education.

The school is to do everything it can to help the individual succeed.

College

An individual has a civil right to have access to the educational programs and services of an institution.

A college education is not an entitlement.

Institutions are obligated to provide access to, and opportunity to participate in the programs and services available. To facilitate access, the institution is obligated to provide reasonable accommodations.

Institutions have no obligation to guarantee an education. A college education is a voluntary opportunity; it also includes costs (e.g. tuition, fees, room, board, etc.).

Institutions are not obligated to ensure that the individual succeeds.

Which Students are Covered?

High School

IDEA covers K-12 students for whom a disability has been documented until age 21 or until graduation.

IDEA lists specific disabilities that bring an individual under its coverage.

College

ADA/§504 does not have a specific listing of disabilities or covered age range.

Institutional Responsibilities

High School

The school district has almost all the responsibility for the student and his/her education.

The High School is required to:

- Identify students with disabilities.
- Provide (and pay for) assessment of learning disabilities.
- Classify disabilities according to specified diagnostic categories.

College

The student and the institution each have responsibilities.

The College must inform students of:

- Their rights and responsibilities.
- The location of support offices.
- Procedures for requesting accommodations.

The College must also provide appropriate reasonable accommodation at no cost to the student.

Individual Education Plans

High School

Education plans are required for each student covered by IDEA and/or §504.

An IEP or a §504 Plan determines services and accommodations.

Parents, teachers and counselors are involved, and the plan requires the parent's signature.

College

The "§504 Plan" developed at a high school will NOT be binding at a college or university.

IDEA and §504 plans do not apply.

Accommodations & Services

High School

Public schools provide non-academic personal services.

Examples:

- Appropriate services are provided by the school health service.
- Teachers and parents actively remind the student of responsibilities and assist in setting priorities.
- Parental care, guidance and involvement in the educational program is expected.
- Teachers and parents usually decide what the student is involved in, including extracurricular activities.

"Effort counts." Courses and/or expectations are usually structured to reward a "good-faith effort."

Subjects may be waived for a student before graduation, if they were specifically related to the student's disability.

College

The College has no obligation to provide services of a personal nature.

- The student meets with Disability Service personnel to discuss the disability and accommodations needed.
- The student interview and supporting information provided by the student is used to determine the eligibility for accommodations.
- If the student is qualified, the institution must determine whether a reasonable accommodation is possible.
- Work with the student to identify appropriate reasonable accommodations.

Make reasonable adjustments in teaching methods which do not alter the essential content of a course or program.

After careful consideration, occasionally course substitutions may be possible; waivers are not possible.

Ensure that off-campus and contracted program facilities also comply with Section 504 (Subpart E) and ADA.

Privacy Issues

High School

- Student has little or no privacy.

- A team of school personnel and the student's parents are involved in planning the student's educational and extracurricular program.

College

The College is obligated to protect a student's right to privacy and confidentiality.

- The Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA) does not allow institutions to release information to the parents without permission of the student.
- Students may disclose, to whom and when they choose, information about the disability. Students must "own" their disability in order to enjoy a level playing field.
- Instructors receive information that applies to the accommodations a student needs, but not about the disability itself.

Faculty Rights and Responsibilities

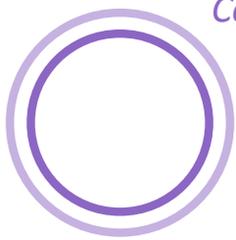
Each member of the faculty plays an important role in the implementation of accommodations to students with disabilities. Providing accommodations is NOT negotiable; the way the accommodations are provided may be negotiable, and in keeping with that role...

Faculty have the right to:

- Expect students with disabilities to attend and participate in class
- Expect students to observe the code of conduct
- Expect that students will adhere to the academic integrity policy
- Determine the curricula for their courses
- Determine student progress and assign grades
- Provide input regarding the accommodations employed in their classrooms
- Question accommodations that would fundamentally alter the academic standards or compromise the mastery of essential competencies
- Receive a letter of notification about accommodations a student is entitled to receive
- Provide timely notification of specific needs

Faculty have the responsibility to:

- Provide an atmosphere in which all students can learn course material
- Include a Reasonable Accommodation statement on the syllabus for each course taught
- Meet with students who provide a notification letter to discuss their needs
- Coordinate with the Testing Center to arrange the delivery of exams and quizzes in a timely manner
- Refer students to the Disability Services Office for possible accommodations if the student has not already contacted the Center
- Provide accommodations in a fair and timely manner
- Contact the Disability Services Office with questions or suggestions regarding the appropriateness of an accommodation
- Assist students who need volunteer note-takers by making an announcement at the start of the term, or by identifying students who have demonstrated good note-taking ability in other classes
- Grade students based on their performance, without counting off for reasonable accommodation
- Select course textbooks early
- Make academic adjustments in instruction as appropriate
- If Internet resources and other technologies are used, then these resources also must be as accessible to students with disabilities as they are for other students.



Contact the **Disability Services Office** for more information on reasonable accommodations.

ADA Notification Statement for Course Syllabi

The College is committed to making reasonable efforts to assist individuals with disabilities in their efforts to avail themselves of services and programs offered by the College. To this end, Southeast Community College will provide reasonable accommodations for persons with documented qualifying disabilities. However, it is the student's responsibility to request accommodations.

For additional information and assistance contact the Disability Services Office:

Beatrice, Jackson Hall, Room J406, **402-228-8242**

Lincoln, Career Advising Center - Room J2, **402-437-2620**

Milford, Assessment Office, **402-761-8202**

Good teaching strategies that also are commonly used as accommodations for students with disabilities:

- Study guides
- Guided lecture questions
- Key terms identified
- Visual aids
- Facing the class
- Learning style adaptations
- Providing spatial awareness for the blind
- Liaison with interpreter

The Process at a Glance

Requesting Reasonable Accommodations

1. Obtain a copy of the Reasonable Accommodation request form.
2. Complete, sign and date the request form.

- Attach copies of material documenting disability.
- Submit form and materials to the Disability Services Office on the campus where you will attend classes.

Acceptable Sources of Documentation

Materials for documenting a disability are accepted from a licensed physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, licensed mental health provider, audiologist, speech pathologist, physical or occupational therapist, or other health care provider qualified to diagnose a disabling condition.

3. Disability Services will respond to the Request for Accommodations.

The request will be reviewed and the Reasonable Accommodation checklist will be completed by the assigned advisor.

When the individual and advisor meet, the advisor will inform the individual about qualification status— verbally and by written documentation.

If an individual qualifies:

At this time, the individual may suggest ideas for reasonable accommodation. SCC will make every reasonable effort to offer an accommodation within approximately ten (10) school days.

If the accommodation is accepted, the individual and advisor will complete the Reasonable Accommodation Agreement form.

Students must contact Disability Services every quarter they attend, to access new or request continuing accommodations.

If an individual qualifies but does not accept the offered accommodation:

The individual has the right to appeal an offered accommodation they may think is unacceptable.

If an individual does not qualify:

The individual has the right to appeal the decision.

Accommodations are only in effect for the term in which the student is enrolled.

Students must notify their disability services advisor each term they wish to use accommodations.

A qualifying disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially **limits** one or more of the **major life activities** of a student; or having a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment.

Major life activities include but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working.

Documentation should be:

- Current
- Specific
- Descriptive of the extent/severity of the impairment
- Descriptive of the functional impact of the disability
- Supportive of the need for specific accommodations

Documentation is used to:

- Verify the presence of a disability
- Describe the extent and severity of the impairment
- Describe how the disability affects the individual's ability to function in the educational environment
- Support the need for specific accommodations or auxiliary aids

