

COLLEGE GUIDE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Welcome to Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College. It is our goal to provide students with disabilities the opportunity to complete a chosen curriculum by providing accessibility to program offerings. This information is a guide to your rights, responsibilities and procedures for obtaining and using the support services for students with disabilities. If you feel unsure about what you should do, contact the Student Support Services Coordinator or the Dean of Student Services at the campus or center nearest you.

Notice of Non-discrimination

Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College admits students of any race, religion, age, sex, color, disability, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights and privileges, programs and activities made available to students of the college.

Mission

Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College is committed to providing all students with opportunities to take full advantage of the college's educational programs and extracurricular activities. We recognize that students with documented disabilities may need assistance or accommodations in order to achieve this objective.

Confidentiality

Student information will be kept in a secured file in the office of the Coordinator of Student Support Services. A list of approved accommodations will be shared with the student's instructor(s). All other information in the student's file, especially records regarding documentation of disability, will be held in confidence and will not be released without the student's written consent as per the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Program Accessibility

All students who meet the academic standards requisite to admissions and are otherwise qualified are admitted into Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College programs and activities and are provided services upon request.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a comprehensive national mandate that ensures basic civil rights for individuals with disabilities. The ADA provides assurance of access to education programs and employment opportunities for adults with special learning needs. The ADA defines an individual with a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. These major life activities include seeing, hearing, speaking, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, learning, caring for oneself and working.

Section 504

Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973: No otherwise qualified handicapped individual shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Section 504 And Postsecondary Education

Specific provisions of Section 504 related to postsecondary education prohibit discrimination against handicapped persons in recruitment, admission and treatment after admission. According to the regulations, colleges and universities are required to make “reasonable adjustments” to permit handicapped students to fulfill academic requirements and to assure that disabled students are not effectively excluded from programs because of the absence of auxiliary aids.

Who Is Qualified?

A person qualified for postsecondary education under Section 504 is “one who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the recipient’s education program or activity. A disabled person is defined by the regulations as “any person who (I) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, (II) has a record of such impairment or (III) is regarded as having such impairment.”

Note: The definition of physical or mental impairment includes specific learning disabilities.

Provisions of Section 504

Subpart E of the regulations describes ways of making postsecondary education accessible to disabled students. These include the following:

1. Modifications “as are necessary” to ensure that academic requirements are not discriminatory. Modifications may include changes in the length of time required for completion of degree requirements, and adaptation of the manner in which specific courses are conducted. (The regulations state that academic requirements that can be demonstrated as essential to a program of study or related to licensing are not considered discriminatory.)
2. The requirement that exams given to evaluate a students’ progress actually test the student’s achievement rather than reflect the students impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills.
3. Auxiliary aids, including taped texts, interpreters for students with hearing impairments, readers for students with visual impairments, classroom equipment adapted for use by students with manual impairments, and other similar services.

YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Student Rights

1. You have the right to confidentiality.
2. You have the right to equal access to programs, classes and facilities.
3. You have the right to have reasonable accommodations provided.
4. You have the same rights granted to every student enrolled at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College.

Student Responsibilities

1. You must disclose your disability to receive services.
2. You must provide current, within the past three (3) years, documentation of your disability from a qualified professional.
3. You must request specific accommodations.
4. You must complete the required paperwork.
5. You must comply with all policies, codes and regulations of Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College. (See Student Handbook)

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Steps to Obtain Accommodations

1. Your first step is to identify yourself as a student with a disability and request specific accommodations from the Student Support Services Coordinator on the campus or center nearest you. Accommodations include a range of services, equipment and modifications, designed to allow you to do your best. Accommodations vary according to the disability. You must request specific accommodations from the Student Support Services Coordinator.
2. Your next step is to obtain documentation of your disability and provide this information to the Student Support Services Coordinator. Because reasonable accommodations are based on the current impact of a disorder or impairment, it is necessary that all documentation and testing should be no more than three years old. The Student Support Services Coordinator will consider your requests based on documentation submitted.
3. Once you have documentation, make an appointment with the appropriate Student Support Services Coordinator to discuss your particular needs.

These first steps should be taken at least three weeks prior to registration. However, if you are already enrolled, please see the appropriate contact personnel as soon as possible. Remember that it is your responsibility to inform the college of your needs and to request accommodations from the appropriate personnel. Failure to notify the college means that you will not have accommodations for your classes.

Once your documentation has been received and the appropriate paperwork completed, your requests will be reviewed by the Student Support Services Coordinator. Copies of approved accommodations will be given to your instructors and to you. During the term, if you realize that an accommodation is not working or that you need additional support, please bring that to the attention of the appropriate personnel as soon as possible. Feel free to discuss with your instructors any questions or concerns about your accommodations. It is recommended that you take a copy of your accommodations to your instructors for verification.

General Guidelines for Receiving Auxiliary Aids and Services

Once the accommodation, in the form of auxiliary aids and services, is formally approved, the Coordinator of Student Support Services will send a letter to the student's instructor(s) listing the approved accommodation(s) for that particular student via the college email system.

The student is encouraged to make an initial contact with the instructor at the first of class and set up a time to discuss the accommodations. Accommodations are valid beginning on the date of the letter. The Student Support Services Coordinator will make arrangements for electronic textbooks, readers and scribes, software, sign language interpreters, electronic recording devices, adaptive listening devices, etc., as necessary. Instructors will coordinate all in-classroom accommodations, such as note takers and testing accommodations.

TYPES OF AUXILIARY AIDS AND SERVICES AVAILABLE

The following list of auxiliary aids and services is not meant to be an exhaustive list of possible options. Instead, the list represents common auxiliary aids and services students more frequently used by students with disabilities at MGCCC. This list can and will vary. All decisions regarding auxiliary aids and services are made on a case-by-case basis.

Interpreter Services

Sign language interpreters for hearing impaired students can be provided for any instructional and/extracurricular event on campus. Generally, a minimum two-week notice is required to ensure availability of an interpreter. All requests for services and notices of absences must be sent by the student to the Student Services Coordinator who will in turn notify the interpreters.

Role of Interpreter

The interpreter functions as a facilitator of communication between hearing impaired and hearing individuals. Interpreter conduct is governed by Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Code of Ethics. Understanding the role of the interpreter will help avoid problems and conflicts during an assignment.

Scheduling

Request for interpreting services must be submitted to Student Support Services personnel at least five full working days before the assignment; the more notice, the better. Returning students who request sign language interpreter services are expected to pre-register at the earliest possible date. Late requests are considered only if interpreters are available.

1. The College will provide sign language interpreting for spoken language only. Reading and writing standard English is an essential part of the curriculum for all MGCCC classes.
2. The College will provide one sign language interpreter in each of the student's face-to-face classes which meets for 2 hours or less, per the industry-accepted national standard.
3. The College will provide a team of two sign language interpreters in each of the student's face-to-face classes which meets for more than 2 hours, per the industry-accepted national standard.
4. The College will provide a single sign language interpreter for no more than 5 hours per week to allow the student to receive academic tutoring in the learning lab and/or meet with instructors outside of class. These sessions, limited to one hour in length, will be scheduled with the instructor/instructional assistant and verified by the appropriate Student Services Coordinator in advance.
5. The College will provide sign language interpreters for school-sponsored activities that require verbal interaction.

- a. The student's request for a sign language interpreter for extracurricular activities must be approved by the appropriate Support Services Coordinator in advance.
- b. The student will be required to provide all pertinent information about the event in writing, including, but not limited to, dates, times, documentation of club membership, documentation of participation in the event, etc.

Coursework Material

The College will provide access to written class material, including digital textbooks, notes, etc., to the student only.

Cancellations

If it is necessary for the student who has a scheduled sign language interpreter to be absent from a class and/or event, the student must give notice to the Student Support Services Coordinator at least 24 hours in advance. Students may be responsible for charges incurred due to a failure to notify in a timely manner. Repeated last-minute cancellations or unplanned absences may result in the discontinuation of services.

Testing Accommodations

Students requesting testing accommodations should meet with the instructor well in advance of the day of the test to make arrangements for these accommodations.

Extended time for testing

The amount of extra time offered for testing is the nationally accepted standard: time and a half. The Coordinator of Student Support Services will provide the instructor with the appropriate testing limits through the accommodation request letter. The instructor and the student will arrange the place and/or time for the testing. The Student Support Services Coordinator will support and assist as necessary

Testing in a quiet environment outside the normal classroom

Alternate testing outside of the normal classroom determined by the student's documentation. The Student Support Services Coordinator, the instructor and the student will arrange testing in appropriate distraction -free location. Testing may occur in the proctoring center, the Student Support Services Coordinator's Office area or other appropriate areas on campus.

Reader

If indicated by the student's documentation, the Coordinator of Student Support Services and the instructor will arrange for a qualified person to read exams to the student. The reader will read the information directly from the exam. The reader will not be allowed to paraphrase the questions, define terms, explain the question, or offer any other type of assistance unless otherwise directed by the instructor.

Scribe

If indicated by the student's documentation, the Student Support Services Coordinator will arrange for a qualified person to write the student's verbal answers. The scribe will write verbatim the information presented by the student. The scribe will not be allowed to read questions or offer any type of assistance unless otherwise directed by the instructor.

Note-Takers

MGCCC uses volunteer student note takers. The instructor will ask a student in the class to provide class notes either using note taking paper (available through the Student Support Services Coordinator's office), or the instructor will provide a copy of notes for the student.

Alternate Formats

Materials made available to qualified students in alternate formats upon request. Students requesting alternative formats for exams, syllabi, class handouts, test, etc. should contact the Coordinator of Student Support Services at least 30 days prior to the beginning of the semester to allow ample time to create the alternative formats.

Electronic Recording Devices

If indicated by the student's documentation, an electronic recording device can be used to record classroom lectures. The Student Support Services Coordinator will notify the instructor that the student will be using an electronic recording device in class to record lectures. It is the student's responsibility to provide the electronic recording device.

Service and Emotional Support Animals

Service and emotional support animals are welcomed on all campuses of MGCCC. For more information on services and emotional support animals, see policy statements 724.1 and 724.2.

Tours

Upon request, the Coordinator of Student Support Services will provide campus tours for a student who needs to evaluate or determine his/her route in navigating between classes.

Course Substitutions

With reasonable accommodations, students with disabilities must fulfill all requirements to participate in MGCCC programs. Therefore, students with disabilities are not excused from course prerequisites, GPA requirements, or degree requirements. In some limited circumstances, however, a substitution of course requirements may be appropriate. Such an accommodation is made only when the student's documentation clearly indicates that the student's disability makes completion of the requirement impossible AND the accommodation does not fundamentally alter the nature of the program. A student requesting a course substitution on the basis of qualifying disability must present documentation of the disability which supports such a request to the appropriate dean. The final decision to substitute a course is made by the appropriate dean.

Assistive Software

Dragon NaturallySpeaking and other types of assistive software are housed in the Student Support Services Coordinator's office for the use of qualified students.

Other Assistive Devices

Other assistive devices available for qualified students include the following: Large screen monitor, Adapted Keyboards, Motorized Scooters, and Document Cameras.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Counseling

Additional career, technical, and academic counseling provided through Enrollment Services.

Financial Support

Financial assistance for those who qualify is available through the Financial Aid Office. There may be other financial assistance available for those who qualify.

Academic Support

The college also offers a variety of classes, which may be of assistance to qualified students, such as developmental courses in mathematics, English and reading, and study skills.

The Learning Resource Centers (LRC) are available at multiple MGCCC locations and include the library, the media center, and the learning lab. The LRC provides services and resources that support the aims and objectives of the college, the individual needs of the students, and the courses and teaching methods of the faculty to all students.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If a student believes college personnel has discriminated against him/her because of a disability, he/she has the right to seek a review of such concerns. Students may choose to submit an informal complaint or a formal grievance. If a student makes an informal complaint, he/she may later pursue a formal grievance if not satisfied with the resolution of the informal process.

Informal Procedure

It is recommended, but not required, that the student speak first about the concerns to his/ her department chair, Coordinator of Student Support Services, or the appropriate dean. That person will review the grievance immediately and act quickly to facilitate satisfactory resolution for all concerned parties.

Formal Procedure

A student who wishes to file a general grievance must provide a written statement explaining the basis of the complaint to the immediate supervisor of the employee within thirty working days of the incident. If the issue is not resolved with the area supervisor, the student may then appeal to the appropriate dean. Within ten working days, the dean will arrange a meeting with appropriate college personnel or committee to hear the student grievance. The student will present his/her position and supporting facts.

If the subject of the grievance is the actions of the dean, or if the dean has previously advised the student informally on the matter, the grievance would be filed with the appropriate vice president. Within ten working days after the hearing, the dean will make a decision on the merits of the student complaint and will provide a written response to the student. In the event the student is not satisfied with this decision, he/she may appeal his/her case, first to the appropriate vice president and then to the college president.

A student who makes use of the grievance procedure shall not be retaliated against for doing so.

ADA CONTACT PERSONNEL

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