

Oakland Community College

Disability Accommodations Guidelines

How disability services are determined

Oakland Community College (OCC) is committed to removing barriers to education that may be experienced by students with disabilities by providing appropriate academic support and accommodations. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulate the provision of services and accommodations for students with disabilities in higher education. The purpose of accommodations is to provide equal access to learning.

Students with disabilities must be "otherwise qualified"

Although these federal laws protect qualified students with disabilities from being denied the opportunity of participating at the college level, no law requires colleges or universities to accept or accommodate everyone who has a disability. The ADA indicates that applicants with disabilities must:

- Be able to satisfy the standards required by the university or college for all students. For example, if all students must have a certain high school GPA to be admitted, then the student with a disability must also have that GPA.
- Be able to perform the "essential academic and technical standards of the program with (or without) reasonable accommodations." For example, if the students at OCC are required to take certain courses in order to meet the graduation requirements, then the student with a disability should be able to also meet those requirements, either without support, or with the appropriate educational supports and accommodations.
- When provided with reasonable accommodations, students with disabilities must be able to maintain college level qualifications as referenced in the OCC College Catalog.

Reasonable accommodations provide access to the college educational programs and services

Under the ADA, students do not have to disclose a disability. However, disclosure is required at OCC for students to receive accommodations. Signed comprehensive medical documentation or test evaluations that indicate the nature of the disability and functional limitations of the individual are required. Guidelines for the documentation can be obtained from the Accessibility Compliance Center and Educational Support Services (ACCESS) offices. The ACCESS managers will review the documentation, determine eligibility for services, and then coordinate the accommodations, auxiliary aids, academic support, and/or referrals as deemed appropriate, necessary, and within the current resources of the College.

The Americans with Disabilities Act defines what accommodation requests are "not reasonable"

Accommodations are not required or given if they would cause the college to compromise the essential elements of the curriculum, or if they weaken the academic standards.

Accommodations are also not reasonable if the accommodations create a safety hazard for the requesting student and/or other students in the class. Post-secondary education does not offer Special Education or curriculum modification.

The Americans with Disabilities Act also states that colleges need not provide accommodations if it would create an "undue burden"

OCC is committed to providing whatever accommodations are necessary and possible, given the resources of the College. However, sometimes the funds or resources might not be available if the accommodation is extremely expensive, or if the accommodation would change the fundamental nature of the program or create a problem that is considered an "undue burden."

Oakland Community College students who experience disabilities have rights

Students with disabilities have the right to equal access in all courses, programs, services, jobs, activities and facilities, and to be treated with due respect in the college environment.

Medical and counseling information is kept confidential

The student receiving services or accommodations decides what information is to be kept confidential and what is to be released to specific individuals. A federal law, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), regulates release of student information. Consent forms are available for students who would like to disclose specific information about their disability or needs to professors, administrators, or parents/spouse. FERPA allows the ACCESS Managers to communicate basic information with other college personnel on an as-needed basis. Accommodation information is provided to instructors of each class for which an accommodation is needed.

Oakland Community College students who experience disabilities also have responsibilities

Students who receive support from the ACCESS Offices have the responsibility to:

- Meet the qualifications to be admitted to the College and follow the Student Code of Conduct.
- Be proactive and self-directed when needing an accommodation.
- Demonstrate and/or document (from an appropriate professional) how the disability limits participation in courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, or facilities.
- Complete all forms that are required for services.
- Maintain communication with the ACCESS Office, tutors, and other relevant OCC personnel as indicated in the student's individualized accommodation plan.
- Keep all appointments with faculty, counselors, tutors, and the ACCESS Office.

Resolving disagreements

Any disagreement concerning eligibility for services or specific accommodations should first be addressed with the ACCESS manager. In the event that a resolution cannot be attained, the student may request a review of the disagreement by submitting a formal appeal in writing to the Dean of Learning Resources, Ms. Mary Ann Sheble.

Oakland Community College is committed to equal opportunity for all students and employees.

Oakland Community College does not discriminate, and will not tolerate discrimination, on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability as those terms are defined under applicable law, in the administration of any of its education programs, activities, or with respect to admissions and employment.

Approved: Chancellor's Cabinet 12/14



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