

STUDENT  
HANDBOOK

DISABILITY  
SUPPORT  
SERVICES

METROPOLITAN  
COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE

# Disability Support Services

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## **Introduction**

Metropolitan Community College (MCC) has been serving students with disabilities since the late 1970's. We currently serve the largest number of students with disabilities of all the post-secondary schools in Nebraska. The Disability Support Services Staff at MCC is committed to providing access for students with disabilities. This handbook provides information about processes and procedures and contact how to contact the staff.

Students with disabilities are strongly encouraged to meet early with a Disability Support Services (DSS) counselor in addition to meeting with an academic advisor.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this handbook is to connect students with disabilities to services that are available at Metropolitan Community College. The process for obtaining services and determining classroom accommodations is outlined in the "Getting Started" section. General procedures and specific policies for documentation are provided regarding reasonable academic accommodations or adjustments for students with disabilities. Documentation requirements for verifying disabilities are provided in a step-by-step process.

## **Mission**

The mission of Disability Support Services at Metropolitan Community College is to foster an accessible environment where we value students on the basis of ability, not disability. This is accomplished by providing qualified students with the tools and support to ensure access to all programs and activities.

## **Federal Regulations/Disability Legislation**

Assurance of equal educational opportunity is established by federal law, specifically the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 including Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (as amended, 2008). By federal law, a person with a disability is any person who:

***has a physical or mental impairment; has a record of such impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities such as self-care, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, or learning.***

### **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Amendments Act of 2008**

Federal statutes govern the rights of individuals with disabilities;

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) states that no “otherwise qualified person” with a disability can be excluded from, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity within an institution that receives federal financial aid.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (as amended, 2008) defines a person with a disability as any individual who (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; (2) has a record of such an impairment; or (3) is perceived by others as having such an impairment.

Taken together, Section 504 and the ADA (and ADAAA) require institutions of higher education to provide equal access to educational opportunities to otherwise qualified persons with disabilities.

## **Rights and Responsibilities**

### ***Qualified students with a documented disability have the right to:***

- Equal access to all of the resources available to MCC students
- Access to reasonable and appropriate accommodations, auxiliary aids and services
- Delivery of reasonable accommodations in a timely manner, upon request
- Assurance that information regarding their disability will be handled in a confidential manner in accordance with federal and state laws and College policy

### ***Students with a documented disability have the responsibility to:***

- Disclose in a timely manner any disability for which they are requesting accommodations, auxiliary aids or services
- Provide current documentation of disability
- Follow published College procedures for requesting and obtaining appropriate accommodations and services
- Meet the qualifications and standards of enrollment
- Notify a DSS counselor immediately when experiencing a delay in or absence of services
- Notify the DSS counselor of a schedule change or any alteration of their disability.
- Comply with all relevant regulations and student conduct guidelines as described in the College catalog
- Contact a DSS counselor each quarter they are enrolled
- Discuss academic accommodations with faculty for each class

***Metropolitan Community College has the right to:***

- Maintain the College's academic and student conduct standards
- Require satisfactory documentation of disability from a qualified professional
- Establish the fundamental nature, the essential functions and criteria and the required student outcomes of MCC courses, programs and activities
- Deny a request for an accommodation (and any specifically requested accommodation) that is inappropriate or unreasonable as supported by documentation, poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others, requires a fundamental alteration of a program and/or imposes an undue or unnecessary financial burden on the College
- Consult with the student and team members to select an educational accommodation when more than one choice is available

***Metropolitan Community College has the responsibility to:***

- Provide information regarding policies and procedures to students with disabilities
- Ensure that all of the resources and facilities available at the College are accessible to qualified individuals with disabilities
- Provide appropriate and reasonable educational accommodations in a timely manner to qualified students with documented disabilities who request them in accordance with College policies and procedures
- Maintain confidentiality of information in accordance with federal and state laws and College policy
- Uphold the College mission of dedication to the personal and professional goals of lifelong learners by helping to provide accessible education for all qualified individuals

# **The Accommodation Process**

## **Testing Accommodations**

If accommodations are needed for the basic skills assessment – COMPASS or ASSET – please contact the DSS counselor at the campus where you plan to take the assessment. You should speak with the counselor before you make your appointment with the Testing Center.

## **Getting Started**

Contact a Disability Support Services (DSS) counselor at MCC to make your initial appointment. This may happen before or after you meet with an academic advisor to gain information about the academic programs offered at MCC, ask registration questions or obtain general information about MCC.

- Make an appointment with the counselor at the campus/center you plan to attend
- Provide documentation
- Review of documentation at appointment with student and counselor
- Approval of documentation and determination of accommodations
- Academic accommodation letter for faculty developed
- Communicate with your instructors

The student is responsible for making contact with the Disability Support Services (DSS) office to schedule an appointment, provide documentation of disability and discuss their educational goals with the counselor.

To initiate your services each quarter you need to contact your counselor. You may also want to review your accommodations with your counselor to ensure appropriate academic adjustments are in place for your classes.

## Timelines

Requests for accommodation require a varying amount of time to provide for students, based on the type of accommodation and the availability of the service or technology. It is the responsibility of the student to make their request before each quarter. Without sufficient notice of a request, timely provision of services may be delayed. Listed below are the guidelines for how long it may take to arrange a specific accommodation.

- Textbooks in alternate format: 8 weeks
- Exam Reader or Scribe: 2 weeks
- Providing note taking services: 2 weeks
- Sign language interpreter services (dependent on availability of qualified interpreters): 6 weeks
- Assistive technology: 4 weeks
- Modification of classroom materials: 4 weeks
- Modification of Equipment/  
Classroom Facilities: 2 weeks

## Documentation

**Documentation provided to Disability Support Services should include the following:**

1. A diagnostic statement identifying the disability, date of the current diagnostic evaluation and the date of the original diagnosis.
2. A description of the diagnostic criteria and/or test(s) used, along with specific test results.
3. A description of the current functional impact of the disability in the educational environment.
4. Treatments, medications, assistive devices or services currently prescribed or in use.
5. A description of the expected progression or stability of the impact of the disability over time
6. Recommendations for effective academic accommodations to equalize the student's educational opportunities at the postsecondary level.
7. The credentials, address, phone and fax numbers of the diagnosing professional(s).

**All documentation should meet the following guidelines:**

**(from Ahead Best Practices)**

<http://www.ahead.org/resources/best-practices-resources/elements>

Credentials of the evaluator(s)

- Licensed or otherwise properly credentialed professional who has appropriate training and relevant experience
- no personal relationship with the person being evaluated

Diagnostic statement identifying the disability

- Clear diagnosis statement that describes how the condition was diagnosed, information on the functional impact, and details the typical progression or prognosis of the condition

Description of the diagnostic methodology used

- Criteria, evaluation methods, procedures, tests and dates of administration, clinical narrative, observation and specific results.
- Diagnostic methods must be congruent with the disability and the current professional practices in the field. May include: Formal instruments, medical examinations, structured interviews, performance observations.

#### Description of the current functional limitations

-Information on how the disabling condition currently impacts the individual provides information for identifying possible accommodations. Quality documentation will be thorough enough to demonstrate whether and how a major life activity is substantially limited – sense of the severity, frequency and pervasiveness of the condition.

-relatively recent documentation is recommended in most circumstances, but in the case of conditions that are permanent or non-varying, accepting older documentation can be acceptable.

#### Description of the expected progression or stability of the disability

Documentation of the expected changes in the functional impact of the disability over time and context. Is the disability cyclical or episodic? Are there known or suspected environmental triggers that require planning for varying functional impacts? Information on interventions for conditions that are not stable and timelines for re-evaluation are helpful

#### Description of current and past accommodations, services and medications

Description of current and past medications, auxiliary aids, assistive devices, support services and accommodations to include their effectiveness.

Discussion of side effects of medications that may impact physical, perceptual, behavioral or cognitive performance.

#### Recommendations for accommodations, adaptive devices, assistive services and other strategies and support services

Recommended accommodations and strategies related to functional limitations and a clear explanation of their relationship

## **Confidentiality**

Students who request services or accommodations must disclose the nature of their disabling condition and provide documentation of disability to the campus Disability Support Services (DSS) Counselor. This disclosure is considered confidential, and is released to other MCC employees with the consent of the student on a "need to know" basis. There are limits to the confidentiality of student records as outlined in the College's "Procedures under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act" document.

## **FERPA**

The regulations in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) <http://www.mccneb.edu/sos/ferpa.asp> apply to all Metropolitan Community College students.

## **Contacts for Disability Support Services:**

### ***Elkhorn Valley Campus & Fremont Center:***

Christine Tarr, M.A.  
Student Services  
402-289-1315  
[ctarr@mccneb.edu](mailto:ctarr@mccneb.edu)

Melinda J. Classen, M.S.  
Student Services  
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402-457-2580  
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Stephanie Albers, M.A.,  
Student Services  
Bldg. #10  
402-457-2766  
[smdeters@mccneb.edu](mailto:smdeters@mccneb.edu)

### ***Fort Omaha Campus:***

### ***Sarpy County Center:***

Deb Eppenbaugh, M.S., LMHP  
Student Services  
402-537-3805  
[deppenbaugh@mccneb.edu](mailto:deppenbaugh@mccneb.edu)

Chris Holst, M.S.  
Student Services  
Connector Bldg.  
402-738-4505  
[dcholst@mccneb.edu](mailto:dcholst@mccneb.edu)

### ***South Omaha Campus:***

Brandy Lintz, M.S.  
Student Services  
Connector Bldg.  
402-738-4099  
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### ***Coordinator of Interpreter Services:***

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