



Handbook for Faculty and Staff

"We know that equality of individual ability has never existed and never will, but we do insist that equality of opportunity still must be sought."

~ Franklin D. Roosevelt

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Affirmation of Inclusion

WCC is committed to maintaining an environment in which every member of the College community feels welcome to participate in the life of the College, free from harassment and discrimination. We welcome people of all races, ethnicities, national origins, religions, ages, genders, sexual orientations, marital status, veteran status, abilities and disabilities. Toward that end, faculty, students and staff will:

- Treat one another with respect and dignity;
- Promote a learning and working community that ensures social justice, understanding, civility and non-violence in a safe and supportive climate;
- Influence curriculum, teaching strategies, student services and personnel practices that facilitate sensitivity and openness to diverse ideas, peoples and cultures in a creative, safe and collegial environment.

Access & Disability Services Mission Statement

The office of Access & Disability Services (ADS) values the diversity students with disabilities bring to WCC's campus community. Through intentional programs, services, and reasonable accommodations, ADS ensures students with disabilities equal access to Whatcom Community College and encourages the development of independence and self-advocacy skills while supporting the learning experience.

Access & Disability Services Contact Information

Laidlaw Center 134
360-383-3139
ADS@whatcom.edu

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Introduction

Faculty and staff have an important role to play in making sure every student feels welcomed. Together and individually, we can do a lot to proactively remove barriers. The ADS office partners with faculty to ensure students who have a documented disability and qualify for appropriate accommodations have access to the learning environment.

This handbook was designed to assist faculty and staff who interact with students with disabilities at Whatcom Community College. The intent of this document is to provide you with information and resources so you can best support all of our students. Students with disabilities must be afforded an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from all WCC programs and activities. This includes any course, course of study, or activity associated with WCC either on or off campus.

Accommodations will be provided, on a case-by-case basis, to afford qualified students with disabilities an equal educational opportunity. WCC provides academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, and support services which will be referred to in this handbook as accommodations. Academic standards are not compromised through this process.

Within this document you will find:

- The accommodation process
- The difference between access and accommodation
- FAQs
- The legislation which guides the ADS Office

The Accommodation Process

A student must first self-identify by contacting the Access & Disability Services (ADS) office. The student must present disability documentation from a qualified healthcare professional. The purpose of the documentation is to establish the validity of the request for accommodation and to provide information as to what accommodations are required. Accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis dependent upon the impact of the disability on the student's learning.

MyADS Faculty Portal:

The [MyADS Faculty Portal](https://shasta.accessiblelearning.com/Whatcom/instructor/) (<https://shasta.accessiblelearning.com/Whatcom/instructor/>) is an online system which allows you to manage the accommodation letters you receive from the ADS office. Log in to the system using your WCC Network username and password.

Faculty will be notified by email when a student has requested accommodations for your class. Faculty can also view the accommodation letter by logging into the MyADS Faculty Portal. If you have any questions about a specific accommodation, do not hesitate to contact the ADS office or refer to the resources provided on the [ADS webpage](http://whatcom.edu/student-services/access) (<http://whatcom.edu/student-services/access>).

Students are encouraged to request accommodations as soon as they register or prior to the start of each quarter, however, they can request accommodations at any point in time. If a student approaches you about accommodations and you have not received a Faculty Notification Letter from the ADS office, please refer the student back to our office. This may occur if a student has not yet renewed their accommodations for the quarter or the student has not gone through the initial ADS intake process. Accommodations are not retroactive.

Common Accommodations:

Testing Accommodations

It is the student's responsibility to remind their instructor of their accommodations prior to the exam. If the student will be testing in the College Testing Center, be sure to include all approved testing accommodations on the Test Referral Form before sending the exam to the Testing Center.

Note Taking

Note Taking Technology: The ADS office has purchased a limited number of note taking software subscriptions that approved ADS students can use. We currently will provide them with a subscription to Genio (formally Glean). Genio is app based, it will audio record the lecture while also allowing the student to make notes and easily mark important information to return to later. Once uploaded to their computer it will also provide them with written text of the audio component which they can read and listen to simultaneously. All students are required to sign a Recording Contract prior to using Genio. The ADS office keeps this contract on file.

Peer Note Taker: Make an announcement at the beginning of class asking for a volunteer note taker. If a student does not volunteer but you are aware of someone in the class who is taking

thorough and legible notes, ask if they would be interested (volunteer work looks good on a resume or university application!). The student with a disability is responsible for picking up note taking paper from the ADS office and giving it to the note taker.

Adaptive Equipment (digital recorder, keyboard, etc)

The ADS office is responsible for providing any equipment the student is approved for.

Ergonomic Chair

Ergonomic chairs (marked on the back - DSS or ADS) are placed in classrooms for a specific student to use. Do not allow these chairs to be removed from your classroom.

Video Captioning

When showing any video, captions should be on as the default. For assistance with captioning videos, contact ADS@whatcom.edu.

Medical Seizure Protocol for WCC College Employees

What should I do for a person who is having a seizure on campus?

1. Remain calm.
2. Employees are required to call 911 or have another person call 911. (Student has the right to refuse transport after emergency medical personnel arrive).
3. Notify (or have someone else notify) campus safety at 360-383-3394 or 360-383-3000.
4. Look for a medical alert bracelet and if an emergency contact is given, contact the number **after** calling 911.
5. Stay with the individual having the seizure until aid arrives.
6. **All medical related incidents must be reported through the WCC [Incident Reporting Form](#) as soon as possible after the incident.**

While waiting for emergency response:

What to do:

- If safe to do so and they are standing or in a chair, ease the person to the floor.
- Clear the area around the person of anything hard or sharp to help prevent injury.
- Loosen any clothing around the person's neck if it could make it hard to breathe.
- Remove eyeglasses, if it is possible and safe to do so.
- Put something soft and flat, such as a folded jacket under the person's head.
- Make a note as to the time the seizure began and when it ended – first responders will want this data.
- Ask bystanders to stay back, but let them know the emergency is being handled.
- After the seizure, it is helpful to lay the person on their side to maintain an open airway and prevent the person from inhaling any secretions.

- After the seizure, the person may be confused and should not be left alone.
- The person will also be very tired and may want to sleep. Let them, but watch their breathing.
- Comfort the person and speak softly and calmly to them. Reassure them that help is on the way.
- Seizures can also result in loss of bowel or bladder control. Give the person some privacy after the seizure and cover them with a blanket or coat.
- Have another person stand by the door to direct emergency medical personnel to the person having the seizure.

What not to do:

- **DO NOT** try to hold the person down or restrain them in any way.
- **DO NOT** insert any objects in the person's mouth.
- **DO NOT** offer the person any food or water until they are fully alert (can identify person, place and time)

Accommodation, Access and Accessible

So what is the difference between these terms?

Accommodation

The term 'accommodation' refers to making a modification for someone to gain access. Accommodations are made when a user is unable to access material without additional assistance. (Source: [WA SBCTC course on accessibility](#))

Accommodations are determined by the office of Access & Disability Services on a case-by-case basis based on the disability and supporting documentation.

Examples: Textbooks in alternate format - braille, digital, enlarged
 Alternate testing - extended time, reader, reduced distraction area
 Peer Note taker
 Sign language interpreter or Typewell transcriber

Access

When we use the term 'access' when talking about people with disabilities, we're using it just as we do in any other context - the ability to retrieve, use, benefit from something. Specifically, the ability to access something independently or without needing to ask for a modification or alternative format. (Source: [WA SBCTC course on accessibility](#))

Examples: Show videos/films with captioning on. Students who are visual learners or non-native speakers benefit from 'seeing' what is being said.

Choose 2 different students from each class session to take notes and upload them to Canvas or your class website so all students can benefit from collaboration. Everyone participates regardless of notetaking ability, and all students can supplement their notes with the posted notes.

Accessible

This term is defined as a person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use. The person with a disability must be able to obtain the information as fully, equally, and independently as a person without a disability. (Source: [Office of Civil Rights agreement with South Carolina CTC system regarding accessibility](#)).

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I ask a student if they have a disability?

No, it is the student's right to disclose if they choose to. However, it is the college's responsibility to make students aware of the support services available. Faculty members should have a brief statement in the class syllabus indicating the availability of such services.

Please include the following statement in your syllabi:

Any student with a disability requiring auxiliary aids, services, or other accommodations should contact the Access & Disability Services office in the Laidlaw Center, email ADS@whatcom.edu or call 360-383-30139 to schedule an appointment.

2. Do I have the right to know what type of disability a student has?

Students do not have to disclose their disability to faculty or staff. Students are encouraged to advocate for themselves and to talk with their faculty about the accommodations they need and how their disability might impact their learning. If you have a question regarding the need for the accommodation, contact the ADS office.

3. What is my responsibility if a student discloses their disability?

A student may disclose their disability to you. You are then obligated to maintain confidentiality regarding the disability. It is important to remember that the confidential nature of disability-related information has been an overarching principle of nondiscrimination since the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504.

4. What can I do if I disagree with the academic accommodation requested?

If you disagree with the academic accommodation requested, contact the ADS Director with your concerns. An instructor may not forbid a student's use of an aid if that prohibition limits the student's participation in the school program. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act states: *A recipient may not impose upon handicapped students other rules, such as the prohibition of tape recorders in classrooms or of dog guides in campus buildings that have the effect of limiting the participation of handicapped students in the recipient's education program or activity.*

5. What could happen if I do not provide the accommodation requested?

If a student is denied equal access, auxiliary aids, or services, a complaint can be filed under Section 504 with the Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of

Education and/or under the ADA Titles II and III which is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Justice. Under the ADA, monetary damages may be enforced, and the student may name both an individual, such as an instructor, and the institution in the complaint. An employee can be personally liable, as well as the institution, if named in the complaint.

6. Does the student receive “special privileges” under this legislation?

Providing accommodations is not giving students special privileges, but rather lessens the impact of their disability to the greatest extent possible.

Institutions are not mandated to make changes in requirements that would result in a major or substantial change in essential elements of the curriculum. The institution has the right to set academic standards, but the institution must prove that a requested accommodation would create a substantial change. The burden of proof lies with the institution.

It is important that students be treated with equity. The legislation does not intend that institutions pass students because they have a disability, and it is important to expect the same academic performance from the student with a disability as from a student without a disability.

7. Does the student with a disability need to ask for accommodations in a certain time frame before classes?

Students are encouraged to request accommodations as soon as they register for a class but they can request at any time. However, accommodations cannot be set up retroactively.

8. What if I am unsure how to handle a situation involving a student with a disability?

Talk with the student first when appropriate. They are often the best source of information regarding their disability and accommodation. However, the ADS staff are happy to facilitate conversation between the student and instructor/staff member.

All students regardless of ability are to be held accountable to the [Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) which can be found on the college website under Student Conduct or policy 620.

9. Do I also have to provide these services to international students with disabilities who

need auxiliary aids or services?

International students are entitled to the same protection from nondiscrimination on the basis of disability as are U.S. citizens. However, if a student has limited English skills due to being a non-native speaker, and not due to a disability, this would not qualify them as a person with a disability under the law.

10. Who pays for the accommodation?

Each institution is responsible for the provision of appropriate auxiliary aids and services at no cost to the student. Each institution may determine which department pays for a particular accommodation. The institution cannot place a limit on its expenditure for auxiliary aids or services or refuse to provide auxiliary aids because it believes that other providers of these services exist. The institution may work with an outside agency, such as Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, to assist in obtaining an item or service.

11. What are my responsibilities concerning field trips and outside programs?

The legislation is very explicit about this. Persons with disabilities are entitled to participate in the most integrated settings possible. If an instructor conducts field trips or special programs, accommodations must be offered. If an institution offers transportation to students going on a field trip, it must offer accessible transportation for students with disabilities. For example, if a student who uses a wheelchair is enrolled in your class, and you decide to use a college van to take the students to a museum, you must offer accessible transportation to the student with a disability. The student may accept or refuse the accessible transportation.

12. Do I have to provide academic accommodations if the student is taking the class for an audit?

The legislation states that any student with a disability shall be given equal access to programs or services offered to all students. Whether the student is taking a class for a degree, certificate, to transfer to another institution, or for personal enrichment, accommodations need to be provided.

Legislation

Legislation impacting higher education institutions

Federal laws include Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 amended, both of which cover colleges and universities. In 1994, Washington State passed legislation, adding new sections to 28B.10 RCW, that expresses the same intent as Section 504 and ADA.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Title V of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is generally regarded as the first national civil rights legislation for people with disabilities. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity offered by an entity or institution receiving federal funds. Since 1977, all institutions receiving federal funding have been required to provide appropriate and reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities.

Section 504 states:

No otherwise qualified person with a disability in the United States...shall, solely on the basis of disability, be denied access to, or the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity provided by any institution receiving federal financial assistance.

The Americans with Disabilities Act Amended (ADAA)

The ADA is a federal civil rights statute designed to remove barriers which prevent qualified individuals with disabilities from enjoying the same opportunities that are available to persons without disabilities.

Washington State Law

Under Washington State Law (28B.10 RCW), "...institutions of higher education are obligated to provide services to students with disabilities." The definition of disability follows the federal guideline. "Reasonable accommodations" include certain "core services" which are outlined in the statute. It establishes a grievance procedure for students to follow if they believe discrimination has taken place.

Institutions that receive federal funds are covered under Section 504. The ADA does not supplant Section 504, but, in those situations where the ADA provides greater protection, the ADA standards apply. Washington State law does not confer any new or expanded rights but is intended to provide a clearer, more succinct statement of those rights than existed previously.

This document has been developed for Whatcom Community College administration, faculty and staff. The information is to assist Whatcom Community College to remain in compliance with the mandates of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amended (ADAA) of 1990, and House Bill 2327.

This document is a collection of information from the Washington Association on Postsecondary Education and Disabilities (WAPED) and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Rehabilitation Services (OSERS), Project #H078-C-30046.

This document is available in alternate format upon request.

Non-Discrimination Statement

Whatcom Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender presentation, ancestry, ethnicity, family status, immigration status, citizenship, socioeconomic status, genetic information or age in its programs and activities.

The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Executive Director for Human Resources, by phone 360.383.3400 or HR@whatcom.edu, 237 W. Kellogg Road, Bellingham, WA 98226.

For Title IX compliance: Title IX Coordinator, by phone: 360.383.3400 or email: TitleIX@whatcom.edu, 237 W. Kellogg Road, Bellingham, WA 98226.

WCC publications are available in alternate formats upon request by contacting the Access & Disability Services office by phone: 360.383.3139 or email: ADS@whatcom.edu, or Washington Relay: 711.