

# Guide to Disability Services

# Roxbury Community College

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Roxbury Community College is committed to compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and other relevant state and federal legislation.

Roxbury Community College will always consider reasonable requests for modification of its policies and procedures to accommodate students with disabilities.

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## **Introduction**

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was the first civil rights legislation to prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities. Section 504 in particular requires that qualified individuals with disabilities shall not be excluded from, denied access to, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that receives federal financial assistance. The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 extended these rights, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, public services, public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications.

Roxbury Community College is committed to creating an educational environment that promotes opportunities for academic excellence for all students. This includes a commitment to achieving equal educational opportunity and full participation for persons with disabilities. Our goal is to ensure a comprehensively accessible college experience where individuals with disabilities have the same access to programs, opportunities and activities as all others. This policy derives from the college's overall commitment to non-discrimination for all persons in employment, access to facilities, student programs, activities and services.

Roxbury Community College strives to achieve excellence in its services and to assure that its services are delivered equitably and efficiently to all of its students. RCC will always consider a reasonable request for modification of its policies and procedures to accommodate students with disabilities.

RCC honors different learning styles as well as cultural diversity. In order to meet community needs, teacher-centered as well as student-centered techniques are used. RCC's aim is to create a sense of community for all students and to value the integrity of each student's strengths in a belief that each student is a valued member, contributing strengths and talents to the RCC community.

## Initial Process

- Students must provide medical documentation of their specific disability. Documentation needs to be current in order to reflect present functioning. Gather appropriate documentation for your disability from a licensed professional as it relates to requested accommodations. You are responsible for any costs incurred in obtaining documentation for your disability. Keep a copy of your documentation for your own records.
- Schedule an appointment with the Counselor for Students with Disabilities (Linda O'Connor, Room 3-207). Bring a copy of your documentation to your eligibility meeting.
- The Counselor for Students with Disabilities will review your documentation, verify your eligibility for accommodations, and discuss the type of services and/or reasonable accommodations you may need at this time. If the initial documentation is incomplete or inadequate to determine the extent of the disability and appropriate accommodations, additional documentation may be requested.
- Complete an Accommodation/Consent form, available from the Counselor for Students with Disabilities. You will need to resubmit this form should there be any adjustment in services.
- If appropriate, a confidential letter will be provided for the instructor of each course in which you require accommodations. The purpose of this letter is to verify that you have a disability and that you are registered with the Counselor for Students with Disabilities. It also tells your instructor(s) what types of accommodations you are eligible to receive. You are responsible for meeting with your professor(s) to discuss the content of this letter.

## Documentation Guidelines

Students must provide documentation of their specific disability in order to verify accommodation eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disability Act of 1990. Documentation needs to be current in order to reflect present functioning. Additional documentation may be requested based upon the current status of the student and his/her request(s). All documentation is confidential and is on file with the Counselor for Students with Disabilities.

Documentation must be from a qualified professional (e.g. medical doctor, psychiatrist, psychologist, neurologist or licensed professional). The medical report must be specific about the diagnosis and functional limitations, on the professional's letterhead, and signed by the professional making the diagnosis. If the disability is progressive or if changes in severity occur that affect accommodations, students must provide updated documentation to reflect the change in status.

### For Psychiatric/Emotional Disabilities:

- A specific diagnosis using DSM-IV criteria
- A review of pertinent history and date of first diagnosis
- A description of the current symptoms, fluctuating condition(s) and prognosis
- The assessment procedures used to make the psychiatric diagnosis
- Medical information that may be important to consider in a college setting such as the side effect(s) of medication, whether the student is still adjusting to medication, and the student's compliance history. State whether there are crisis episodes associated with the disability.
- Substantial limitations to the student's major life activities, as indicated by the evaluation.
- Suggestions of reasonable accommodations that might be appropriate at the post-secondary level, supported by the diagnosis.

### For Blind/Visual Disabilities:

- A detailed summary of vision related disability
- A summary of assessment procedures and evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis and a summary of evaluation results including standardized scores
- Medical information relating to the student's needs and the status of the individual's vision (static or changing) and its impact on the demands of the academic program.
- A summary of appropriate treatment, e.g. corrective lenses or ongoing visual therapy.
- Suggestions of reasonable accommodations that might be appropriate at the post-secondary level, supported by the diagnosis.

### For Deaf/Hearing Disabilities:

- A detailed summary of audiometric procedures and/or audio logical testing indicating the nature and the degree of hearing loss, and any speech recognition/discrimination evaluations, if appropriate
- A summary of assessment procedures used to make the evaluation and a narrative summary of results.
- A current diagnosis of the hearing impairment. Include level of severity and date and age of onset of hearing loss.
- Pertinent history.
- Narrative of whether the hearing loss is stable or progressive.
- Whether assistive devices such as hearing aids or FM systems are used and how effective they are.
- A description of the student's functional limitations in an educational setting and how the hearing loss may affect class participation.
- Suggestions of reasonable accommodations that might be appropriate at the post-secondary level, supported by the diagnosis.

## For Physical Disabilities:

- The most recent date of assessment (or reassessment), if the condition is progressive or if the student expects a change in condition.
- Specific diagnosis of disability
- A review of pertinent history and the date of first diagnosis.
- Description of the current symptoms, fluctuating conditions/symptoms and prognosis.
- A summary of the assessment procedures used to make the diagnosis.
- Medical information which may be important in a college environment, including any medication and whether there are side effects of the prescribed medication, and whether there are crisis episodes associated with the disability
- Substantial limitation to this student's major life activities
- Suggestions of reasonable accommodations that might be appropriate at the post-secondary level, supported by the diagnosis.

## For Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder:

- Documentation that includes a diagnostic interview with a summary of relevant historical, medical, academic, employment, and psychosocial information establishing symptoms indicative of ADD or ADHD throughout childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Information should consist of more than a self-report and may be gathered from resumes, transcripts, report cards, teacher comments, tutoring evaluation, and/or psycho-educational testing. Checklists and surveys can supplement the diagnostic profile but are not adequate for the diagnosis of ADD or ADHD. Include the assessment procedure used to make the diagnosis.
- A statement of the presenting attentional problem should be provided, including evidence of current impulsive, hyperactive, or inattentive behaviors that significantly impair functioning in two or more settings.
- Medical information that may be important to consider, such as medication history or currently prescribed medication.
- Suggestions of reasonable accommodations that might be appropriate at the post-secondary level, supported by the diagnosis.

## For a Learning Disability:

- A summary of a comprehensive interview
- Documentation must include three assessments: a comprehensive assessment of aptitude, a comprehensive academic achievement battery, and an assessment of specific areas of information processing. Include evidence that evaluator has ruled out alternative explanations for academic problems such as poor motivation, emotional problems, etc.
- Provide actual test scores. Include standard scores or percentiles, with clear, specific evidence of a diagnosed learning disability. Assessment instruments need to be selected based on valid and reliable use with an adult population. Appropriate cognitive assessment instruments include the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-III (WAIS III) or WAIS-R, the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery-III (WJIII) or WJR: Tests of Cognitive Ability, and the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale: Fourth Edition.
- Suggestions of reasonable accommodations that might be appropriate at the post-secondary level, supported by the diagnosis.

## For Head Injury:

- A clear statement of diagnosis, and if it substantially limits two or more major life activities such as walking, seeing, hearing, learning, working.
- Date of Diagnosis
- Medical information relating to the student's needs and the status of the individual's condition (static or changing)
- Statement of impact and limitations on academic performance in a college classroom. Include medical history related to current use of medication and the impact of the student's ability to meet the demands of the academic program.
- A summary of cognitive and achievement measures used and evaluation results including standardized scores or percentiles used to make the diagnosis.
- Assessment instruments need to be selected based on valid and reliable use with an adult population. Appropriate cognitive assessment instruments include the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-III (WAIS III) or WAIS-R, the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery-III (WJIII) or WJR: Tests of Cognitive Ability, and the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale: Fourth Edition.
- Suggestions of reasonable accommodations that might be appropriate at the post-secondary level, supported by the diagnosis.

## Services

- Advising recommendations that reflect your specific requirements as a student with a disability
- Students are advised to register as soon as possible during Early Registration to improve, but not guarantee, a student's chance of getting selected courses. You should take advantage of this opportunity if you have scheduling needs associated with your disability.
- Reduced course load
- Extended time for test taking
- Reader and/or scribe
- Adaptive computer lab and other assistive technology. The Lab is equipped with print-to-voice and voice-to-print software, a scanner, a talking calculator, tape players (including a tape player for RB&D tapes), an adaptive mouse, and Internet access. You are responsible to become familiar with the use of this equipment before the semester begins.
- Enlarging equipment
- Permission to tape lectures
- Note-taker services
- Tape player for Books-on-Tape. You are responsible for picking up and returning equipment.
- Use of assistive technology to read printed handouts, or taped versions of handouts. You must allow sufficient time for materials to be taped, although every effort will be made to provide this service in a timely manner.
- Interpreter services through the Massachusetts Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing to ensure quality services depending on your specific interpreting needs. Your request must be submitted at least four weeks in advance of the beginning of classes. This will allow time to schedule appropriate interpreters. A delay in requesting services may result in a greater the possibility that interpreters will be unavailable.
- Disability Parking with a plate/placard available through the Registry of Motor Vehicles. The permit allows students to park in the designated parking spaces.
- Lab assistant
- Tutoring

## Rights and Responsibilities

- Students have the rights to
  - Appropriate confidentiality of all information related to your disability.
  - Equal access to courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities
  - Appropriate reasonable accommodations according to your disability determined on an individualized basis using required documentation
  - Respectful treatment by all personnel
  
- Students have the responsibility to
  - Disclose the disability and provide appropriate documentation to the Counselor for Students with Disabilities
  - Complete the Accommodation Form
  - Meet with faculty to discuss disability-related needs and accommodations
  - Request services in a timely manner
  - Report any concerns regarding accommodations as they arise
  - Treat all personnel with respect
  
- The Counselor for Students with Disabilities has the right to
  - Request current and appropriate documentation of your disability
  - Discuss a student's need for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids with the professional who provides the written verification of disability (with the student's signed consent).
  - Deny a request for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary if the documentation does not meet guidelines
  - Refuse a specific accommodation if
    - It constitutes a substantial change or alteration to an essential part of an academic program or course
    - It poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others
    - It poses undue financial hardship on the college
    - The request is made with insufficient time to make the accommodation
    - The faculty member has not been notified by the student

- The Counselor for Students with Disabilities has the responsibility to
  - Maintain the student's confidentiality with respect to their disability
  - Provide information to students regarding policies and procedures
  - Support reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, adaptive equipment and/or other auxiliary aids for students with disabilities on an individualized basis upon request and with appropriate documentation
- Faculty has the right to
  - Determine course content and general methods of teaching
  - Make informed decisions about how to best adapt their teaching and assessment methods to accommodate all students
  - Ensure that the standards in their courses are not lowered or compromised
  - Ensure that a student has demonstrated mastery of the essential requirements of a course in order to obtain an appropriate grade
  - Fail any student if he/she does not demonstrate mastery of essential course requirements
  - Question a specific accommodation request if it is either inappropriate for their course, or if the nature of the request would alter the essential requirements of a course
  - Determine through consultation with knowledgeable professionals the most appropriate ways to adapt their course to the needs of a particular student, without violating the confidentiality of a specific student
- Faculty members are responsible for:
  - Acknowledging that students who are registered with the Counselor for Students with Disabilities have provided adequate and appropriate documentation of their disability from a registered health care professional. Accommodations are based on this documentation.
  - Respecting confidentiality with regards to the specifics of the student's disability.
  - Learning about RCC policies and procedures
  - Cooperating in the coordination of services
  - Understanding that some students with disabilities have academic or behavior problems that are not related to their disability. Faculty members are not obligated to treat such problems differently than they would for a non-disabled student.
  - Enforcing the Code of Student Conduct equally for all students.

## Grievance Procedures

There may be disagreement on a decision regarding accommodations, or problems that may arise during the process of receiving accommodations. If a student wishes to challenge a decision of accommodations, or has a complaint about accommodations they are receiving, they should notify the Counselor for Students with Disabilities (Linda O'Connor, Room 3-207) promptly. If no resolution can be achieved within 10 business days, the student should contact the Dean of Student Success (Mark Garth, Room 3-207A) located in the Academic Building.

If still unable to resolve the matter, or if the student disagrees with the outcome, a formal written grievance can be filed with the campus ADA Compliance Office located in the Human Resources Department in the Administration Building. The Acting ADA Compliance officer is Alane Shanks, Room 2-210.

## Faculty Guidelines for Students with Disabilities

By law, students with disabilities are not required to self-disclose or register with the Counselor for Students with Disabilities. However, they must do so if they are seeking academic accommodations or adjustments. In order to determine eligibility for an academic adjustment/auxiliary aid, students must register with the Counselor for Student with Disabilities and provide documentation of the disability. The documentation must be current, provide a clear diagnosis by the appropriate medical professional and specify the functional limitations related to the disorder. A decision of appropriate academic accommodations is then made. Determination is made on a case-by-case basis. Once eligibility to receive services is determined, students must follow established policies in regards to timeliness of requests and completing necessary request forms in order to properly coordinate accommodations each semester.

## Faculty Notification

If a student with a disability is registered for your class and is requesting an accommodation, the student will provide you with a confidential faculty notification letter provided by the Counselor for Students with Disabilities. This letter will state in general terms that the student is documented with the Counselor for Students with Disabilities and will list the appropriate accommodations required. If a student approaches you about needing accommodations, but does not have the letter, you should refer him or her to the Counselor for Students with Disabilities immediately.

## Confidentiality

Disability-related information should be treated as medical information and handled under the same strict rules of confidentiality. A student's documentation is filed securely with the Counselor for Students with Disabilities. It is not kept with any other student records on campus. As such the information can only be shared on a limited 'need-to-know' basis within the institutional community. It may be shared only when there is a compelling reason for the individual seeking information to know some specific aspect of this confidential information.

Faculty Disclosure Letters contain only general information, and not specifics of the disability. A student may choose to disclose more with faculty, but are not obligated to do so.

# Possible Accommodations and General Suggestions

Accessibility is a broad term that includes such considerations as adequate light and sound amplification, material format and presentation and a range of other physical or psychological barriers. Suggestions for helping students with disabilities include, but are not limited to the following:

Prepare a detailed syllabus early and include a disability statement. This will give students with disabilities some lead time in acquiring accessible books and materials, planning their study and time management strategies, etc. The syllabus should include information on course objectives and requirements; the material to be covered in class on specific dates; and exam dates, due dates, grading procedures, and a textbook list. Also provide information on how to get in touch with you outside of class. You may want to include a statement on your syllabus that reads: "If you have a disability and feel you will need accommodations in order to complete course requirements, please contact the Counselor for Students with Disabilities, Room 207 (Academic Building, TLC), at (617) 427-0060 Ext. 5006."

Order textbooks early to allow time for reformatting in alternative formats. Discuss with possible publishers the availability of audio versions of the text or textbooks on disc or CR Rom. If all faculty members made this a potential criterion, publishers would need to give it more serious consideration.

Alternate test formats. Potential formats include multiple choice, essay, oral. For example, while you may find it effective to have a section on an exam involving labeling various aspects of a diagram/graph/picture, such an assignment would be inappropriate for a student with a visual disability.

Provide handouts and in-class exercises and examination in accessible formats. The Counselor for Students with Disabilities may assist in preparing materials.

Help Recruit a Notetaker. If a student requires a notetaker, lab assistant or other in-class assistant, someone already in the class is preferable. You may be requested to make an announcement in class, via the Faculty Notification Letter, for volunteer notetakers. The Counselor for Students with Disabilities will arrange for the notes to be photocopied.

## Classroom and Testing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

General Classroom Accommodations include:

- Before the lecture:
  - Write key terms or an outline on the board, or prepare a lecture handout
  - Create study guides
  - Assign advance readings before the topic is due in the class session
  - Give students questions they should be able to answer by the end of each lecture.
  
- During the lecture
  - Briefly review the previous lecture
  - Use visual aids such as overheads, diagrams, charts, graphs
  - Allow the use of tape recorders
  - Emphasize important points, main ideas, key concepts
  - Face the class when speaking
  - Explain technical language, terminology
  - Speak distinctly and at a relaxed rate, pausing to allow students time for note taking
  - Leave time for questions periodically
  - Administer frequent quizzes to provide feedback for students
  - Give assignments in writing as well as orally
  
- Grading and Evaluation
  - Consider a variant grading system with multiple grades for various tasks weighted differently
  - Provide extended time for exams
  - Encourage the student to see the Counselor for Students with Disabilities to arrange for a reader/scribe if appropriate. The time for this service may not coincide with the time you are administering the test.

- Specific accommodations include
- Psychiatric and Emotional Disabilities
  - Flexibility in attendance requirements in case of health-related absences
  - Incomplete or a late withdrawal in place of failures in case of prolonged illness.
  - Student is required to make up missed assignments and tests
- Blind or Visual Disabilities
  - Reading lists or syllabi in advance to permit time for transferring into alternate format
  - Text books ordered in the preferred medium of the student
  - Seating in the front of the class without glare from windows
  - Note taking devices such as pocket Braille computers
  - Handouts in the medium that the student prefers
  - Clear black print on white or pale yellow paper for students with visual impairments
  - Testing accommodations: taped tests, reading of tests, scribe, extended time, separate place, enlarged print, computer word processing software with speech access
  - Materials presented on the board or on transparencies read out loud
  - Lab assistance
- Specific Accommodations for Deaf or Hard of Hearing Disabilities
  - Seating in the front of the classroom
  - Written supplement to oral instructions, assignments, and directions.
  - Visual aids as often as possible
  - Speaker facing the class during lectures
  - Speaker repeating the questions that other students in the class ask
  - Note taker or tape recorder for class lectures
  - test accommodation: proofreading of essay tests, access to word processor, interpreted directions
  - unfamiliar vocabulary written on the board or a handout
  - Cooperate with sign language interpreters or CART (computer-aided real time) reporters. Allow the interpreter to determine his or her best placement for most effective communication with the student.
  - excess noise reduced as much as possible to facilitate communication.

- Physical Disabilities
  - special seating in classrooms
  - note takers, use of tape recorders, laptop computers, or photocopying of peer notes
  - test accommodations: scribes, access to word processors
  - extra time for assignments due to slow writing speed
  - lab assistance
  
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
  - Seating at the front of the class
  - Assignments in writing
  - Experience difficulty following through with several directions at once; provide written directions
  
- Learning Disabilities
  - Extended time to complete assignments
  - extended time for in-class assignments to correct spelling, punctuation, grammar and a word processor with spell check if it does not compromise the content of the course
  - calculator for a student with a disability in the area of math processing. (The SAT is now allowing the use of a standard four function calculator as an accommodation)
  - note takers, use of tape recorders, laptop computers, or photocopying of peer notes
  - test read to student; scribe to record answers
  
- Head Injury Disabilities
  - Seating at the front of the class
  - Assignments and directions in writing as they may experience difficulty following through with several directions at once and organizing multi-step tasks
  - benefit from structure using lists, schedules

There are many very good websites for additional information on disability-related issues, including

[www.heath.gwu.edu](http://www.heath.gwu.edu)

[www.ROSSCENTER.UMB.edu](http://www.ROSSCENTER.UMB.edu)