

Disability Services Policy & Procedures Handbook

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An Equal Opportunity Institution

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Cowley College Disability Services Program is committed to assisting individuals living with a disability in achieving their educational goals by providing appropriate accommodations and services based on individual, documented need. We encourage independence and self-advocacy among the students we assist.

“Students, who self-identify at the time of application or admission, seek assistance early and use appropriate accommodations are more likely to achieve academic success.”

(Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability, Vol. II, #2&3, P.21, Spring/Fall, 1995)

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Disability Services Office at Cowley College is to ensure that students living with a disability have equal access to all program activities offered at the college. The ultimate goal is to eliminate any barriers that exist on campus due to the presence of a disability.

STUDENT HANDBOOK

This handbook outlines the policies and procedures for accessing specific accommodations and services provided by Cowley College. The Disability Services program is a part of the Student Affairs Department. The student's responsibilities and the Disability Services program responsibilities are outlined for each accommodation and service. Failure to follow the outlined procedures may result in services being delayed.

LEGAL GUIDELINES

The Disability Services program operates under the following regulations:

... "no otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States... shall, solely by reason of handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance..."

Rehabilitation Act, Section 504, 1973

... "no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of public entity..."

American with Disabilities Act, 1990

INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been prepared as a reference guide when auxiliary aids and services are needed by students living with a disability. The suggestions presented here are not meant to substitute for interaction between students and the staff or faculty, but rather to facilitate communication and discussion.

Every student living with a disability will have a different level of functioning even within the same disability category. The degree of limitation and the compensation skills of each student living with a disability will vary widely. It is helpful to consider that each student living with a disability comes to Cowley College with an educational history and some knowledge of what educational accommodation will be most effective for him or her. The information in this handbook is a general guide on how to support students who approach learning in diverse ways.

SERVICES WE PROVIDE

The Disability Services Program coordinates services for students who have a documented permanent or temporary disability. The staff serves as the liaison between the Cowley College faculty, staff and the student population. Services are provided at no cost to enrolled students on an individual basis and with respect to privacy in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1988.

Types of disabilities that may qualify for services from the Disability Services Program include but are not limited to:

- ❖ visual
- ❖ physical
- ❖ deaf/hard of hearing
- ❖ speech
- ❖ specific learning disabilities
- ❖ HIV/AIDS
- ❖ psychological
- ❖ traumatic brain injury
- ❖ medical
- ❖ seizure disorders
- ❖ substance abuse
- ❖ ADD/ADHD
- ❖ other identified and documented disabilities

Types of services may include but are not limited to:

- ❖ Alternate format texts
- ❖ Interpreters (deaf or hard of hearing)
- ❖ Modified testing
- ❖ Mobility assistance
- ❖ Note taker
- ❖ Reader
- ❖ Tape recorder
- ❖ Assistive technology

SERVICES WE DO NOT PROVIDE

The Disability Services Office does not offer....

- ❖ Reduced standards in courses
- ❖ Exemptions to graduation requirements
- ❖ Personal care assistance
- ❖ Services which fundamentally alter the requirements of the courses

HOW TO ACCESS SERVICES AND ACCOMMODATIONS

FOR ACCOMODATIONS IN COURSE ASSESSMENT PLACEMENT TESTING: Students who have had testing accommodations in the past are encouraged to request accommodations for the Cowley College assessment tests. It is important that students are placed accurately into courses and that placement results are accurate to the students' true abilities. Students who desire placement testing accommodations must schedule an intake meeting with the Student Accessibility Coordinator prior to the date of the testing. All documentation must be on file with the Disability Services Office and the intake session with the Student Accessibility Coordinator must take place before testing accommodations will be provided.

FOR ACCOMODATIONS IN SPECIFIC COURSES: Students living with a disability should contact the Cowley College Disability Services office as soon as they enroll for classes to schedule an intake conference. Prior to the conference, students must obtain a copy of their disability documentation. A Release of Information form and the guidelines for documentation requirements are available from the Disability Services office or from the college webpage at http://www.cowley.edu/student_services/needs/. At the intake conference, students will bring a copy of their disability documentation, confer with the Student Accessibility Coordinator to request accommodations, and review the process to receive accommodations. The Disability Services office is not bound by nor limited to the recommendations found in the documentation, but will use the documentation as a guide for determining reasonable accommodations on a case by case basis. The Student Accessibility Coordinator will then assist the student in determining the appropriate accommodations for each course and develop their personalized plan of assistance.

Students with physical disabilities
Limited accessibility....

1. Obtain a physician's statement documenting the disability and suggested accommodations.
2. Provide this statement to the Student Accessibility Coordinator.

Students who have received Special Education academic services or have completed Vocational Rehabilitation Screening...
(This could include learning disabilities, ADD/ADHD, etc.)

1. Contact their local Special Education cooperative or Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for
 - A. A comprehensive psychological report including aptitude and achievement testing administered within the last three years.
 - B. IEP (Individualized Educational Plan/Program)
2. Provide copies of both reports to Cowley College Student Accessibility Coordinator.

Students who did **NOT** receive Special Education services or have not completed Vocational Rehabilitation Screening...

1. Have the disability diagnosis made by a licensed professional in a field directly related to the disability.
2. Realize that the college can refer students to appropriate professionals, but does not diagnose or pay for diagnosis of disabilities.
3. Provide Cowley's Student Accessibility Coordinator with an official report detailing the disability and the recommended accommodations.

Students with psychological disabilities...

1. Provide a copy of psychological evaluation made by a professional certified to make the diagnosis.
2. Provide a description of how the disability impacts learning.

ACCOMMODATIONS PROCEDURES

1. Once students have filed the appropriate disability documentation, completed the program application with the Disability Services Office and have enrolled, they must schedule an intake conference with the Student Accessibility Coordinator to arrange services.
2. It is the philosophy of the Cowley College Disability Services Program that students take an active part in developing an Accommodation Letter which best suits their needs. Each student will assess their needs and available accommodations and work with the Student Accessibility Coordinator to develop their educational plan. (A new letter must be developed at the start of each semester)
3. Once the plan has been developed, the Student Accessibility Coordinator will make copies of the Accommodation letter. The student will be responsible for giving the letter to each instructor. The Student Accessibility Coordinator will provide the letter to students taking on-line classes. It is important that everyone involved in the accommodations process understand their role. The Student Accessibility Coordinator will not disclose the nature of the disability to the instructors merely that the student will be receiving accommodations. While the student is encouraged to discuss their disability with each instructor, it is ultimately their own decision.
4. The following is a partial list of accommodations detailing the responsibilities of both the student and the Disability Services Office in the provision of services. By following the stated procedures, services can be met in a timely and effective manner. All questions regarding any of these procedures are to be directed to the Student Accessibility Coordinator.

Alternative Testing

Any student whose documentation supports the need for extended time (double time), oral tests, scribed services, or a distraction-reduced environment.

Disability Services Responsibilities:

1. The instructor and the Student Accessibility Coordinator will determine the most suitable testing environment for your needs.
2. Many times, the instructor will provide the testing accommodation within the class; however, if an instructor is unable to do so, they will make arrangements with the Disability Services Office to provide the service. The conference room in Webb-Brown Room 203 is utilized for testing purposes.
3. The Student Accessibility Coordinator will advocate for your needs if an instructor is hesitant to provide them.

Student Responsibilities:

1. Make contact with your instructor to discuss the requested testing accommodation needed within the first week of class.
2. Only request the testing accommodation that is listed on your personalized plan of assistance.
3. Remind your instructor prior to the exam of the accommodations needed and to send the test to the Disability Services office.
4. Schedule your testing time with the Student Accessibility Coordinator at least 2 days prior to the exam date. Come to your testing appointment ready to take the test.

Alternate Format Texts

Any student who has a documented disability, which affects access to printed materials. This includes blindness, low vision, learning disabilities, and other physical impairments.

Disability Services Responsibilities:

1. The Disability Services Office will provide the alternate format textbooks and other course-related materials to the student as soon as possible. Please be aware that schedule changes and late enrollment can result in a delay of services.
2. The Disability Services Office will provide the alternate text if available. Most texts are available in an electronic format. Computer software will be made available for electronic text in student computer labs and/or for personal computers away from campus. Permission to use the text is required from the publishers and this may take up to a week or more to receive. Braille formats may take some time to obtain as well. Let the Student Accessibility Coordinator know about your request as soon as possible.

Student Responsibilities:

1. Students must notify the Student Accessibility Coordinator immediately with any course or schedule changes prior to the start of the semester.
2. Alternate format texts are NOT a substitute for the necessity of the actual required textbook. Students must purchase the required text for each course and provide a copy of their paid receipt for textbooks to the Student Accessibility Coordinator.
3. Student must check out requested Flash Drive prior to the start of the semester.
4. Students should contact the Student Accessibility Coordinator immediately if they are having technical difficulties.

Premier Assistive Technology Software – A variety of software is provided to student computer labs at the college. Several programs included in this software package are designed to read electronic text aloud to students. This software may also be provided to student for their personal computers as well. Make sure you talk to the Student Accessibility Coordinator about this service.

Note Taker

Students whose documentation indicates an inability to take adequate lecture notes.

Disability Services Responsibilities:

1. The Disability Services Office will provide students with note taking paper or provide for copies of notes to be made for the student.
2. The Student Accessibility Coordinator will provide assistance to student if they are unable to find a note taker.

Student Responsibilities:

1. The student will find someone to take notes for them during the first week or two of classes and notify the Student Accessibility Coordinator of the student's name, address and phone number. Instructors may be able to help find a note taker.
2. The student will make arrangements to obtain the carbonless note taking paper from the Disability Services office prior to class and as needed during the semester.
3. The student shall take their own notes during class (if physically able). They are to use their own notes as a supplement to the note takers'. The Student Accessibility Coordinator reserves the right to review the students' notes.
4. When the note taker is absent from a class, the student should utilize their own notes or ask another student for their notes for that day.
5. Attend class every day. Excessive absences will result in the review of the accommodation.
6. Notify the Disability Services Office immediately if the note takers' notes are unsatisfactory or if the note taker fails to provide a copy of their notes.
7. Instructor notes are often available from the instructor's web site. The notes may be downloaded and printed. This can be a reasonable substitute for note taking by another student.

Recording Lectures

Disability Services Responsibilities:

1. The Student Accessibility Coordinator will provide a recording device to record lectures.

Student Responsibilities:

1. The student will be responsible for attending class and sitting close to the instructor in order to obtain good quality recording.

Sign Language Interpreter Services

Deaf and hard of hearing students needing sign language interpreter services should contact the Disability Services Office as soon as possible. Locating and arranging these services can be difficult due to the limited number of sign language interpreters in the area.

Disability Services Responsibilities:

1. Contact interpreter services and make arrangements based on the student's schedule.
2. Coordinate schedule for interpreter and arrange for payment of services.

Student Responsibilities:

1. Contact the Disability Services Office as soon as possible in order for services to be arranged.
2. Meet with the interpreter to discuss class procedures and establish meeting places prior to class.
3. Notify the interpreter of absences at least 24 hours in advance, if possible.
4. Attend class regularly and participate fully in the assigned activities.

Rules and responsibilities:

1. Late requests for interpreters may not be met due to limited number of available interpreters in the area.
2. Students who fail to notify the Student Accessibility Coordinator or interpreter of absences 24 hours prior to class for 3 times will have their interpreter services suspended until they meet with the Student Accessibility Coordinator. After 5 unexcused absences, the interpreting services may be suspended for the remainder of the semester and another means of accommodating the student will be provided.
3. Interpreters will be required to wait no longer than 15 minutes at classes or activities for the students using their services. Arrivals to class or activities after 15 minutes will be considered no shows.

Service Animals

Students who require the assistance of a service animal defined by the ADA as guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual living with a disability are welcome at Cowley College. Students must provide their own service animal.

Disability Services Responsibilities:

1. The Disability Services Office will provide instructors and students with orientation to designated areas of campus where it is permissible to relieve the animal. Students are responsible for clean up after the animal.
2. The Disability Services Office will notify the student's instructor(s) regarding the provision of a service animal in the classroom using the accommodation letter.

Student Responsibilities:

1. Contact the Disability Services Office to notify them that you will be using a service animal for the semester.
2. Provide proper identification for the animal which includes: (1) licensing with the city, (2) a health statement, including vaccinations from a licensed veterinarian.
3. Provide the animal with some type of commonly recognized identification symbol.
4. Keep the animal on a leash and maintain full control of the animal at all times.

Additional Accommodations

There are many other accommodations which can be provided to students. Accommodations such as interpreters for the hearing impaired, mobility assistance, scribes, readers, and tape recorders are available. Due to the individualized nature of each of the above accommodations, the Student Accessibility Coordinator will make detailed arrangements with the student regarding the responsibilities of each party. Students requesting additional services should contact the Disability Services Office. Additional services will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Factors affecting additional services will be dependent upon disability, documented need, and the compliance requirements of the American with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Cowley College provides a work station for students with learning disabilities and other physical disabilities. Check with the Student Accessibility Coordinator for location. It is available to students who have assistive technology included in their accommodation letter. This computer has a variety of software programs which assist students with reading difficulties. Students who wish to use the work station should schedule a training session with the Student Accessibility Coordinator.

Software included on the computer:

Screen Reading System - A screen reading system verbally announces the screen output so students who are blind or have low vision can operate the computer without having someone read the screen for them.

- ❖ Window-Eyes is the screen reading program available at Cowley College.

Screen Magnification System - A screen magnification system enlarges screen output so that students with low vision or learning disabilities can read the screen.

Print Access Systems - Print access systems assist in reading printed materials or in producing documents on a computer. Print access systems can be advantageous to people with low vision and/or learning disabilities.

- ❖ Premier Assistive Technology programs are available on all student computers at the college and may also be installed on the student's personal computer.

Reduced Motion Systems - Reduced Motion Systems are designed to reduce keystrokes and physical movement while operating a computer.

- ❖ Dragon Naturally Speaking is a voice recognition system, which allows individuals to operate the computer with voice commands rather than keystrokes and/or mouse clicks.

COWLEY COLLEGE ACADEMIC RESOURCES

The Underground/ IMPACT: This is a federally funded, Student Support Services TRIO grant program designed to assist eligible students in successfully reaching their goal of graduation from college. Academic and social support is provided to students in the program.

Renn Memorial Library: The library is open 6 days a week and has thousands of print volumes and periodicals, as well as an extensive on-line database. Computers, scanner, copier, printers, tutoring and internet access are readily available. **Tutoring in and of itself is not a required accommodation under the ADA or section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act. Cowley College, however, offers tutoring for any student experiencing academic difficulty. Students living with disabilities are guaranteed equal access to tutoring.**

Counseling: The Student Life Counselor is available to provide professional mental health services designed to support students in the effective management of educational and personal challenges. The counseling services are confidential and free to Cowley students.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

All students must adhere to the "Student Code of Good Conduct Policy" published in the Cowley College catalog and handbook.

APPEAL PROCEDURE

If a student living with a disability believes that he/she has not received the accommodations requested, the following steps are recommended:

1. The American with Disabilities Act requires that accommodations be developed in a give-and-take dialogue process between the institution and the person living with a disability. The student needs to meet with the Student Accessibility Coordinator located in Room #202 in the Webb-Brown Building to discuss and explore appropriate, reasonable accommodations. The student and/or the Student Accessibility Coordinator may need to meet with the instructor as well.
2. Colleges are not required to provide the requested or preferred accommodation. They are required to provide reasonable, appropriate, and effective accommodations for disabilities which have been adequately documented and for which the accommodation has been requested. Therefore, the student should ask, *"Is the accommodation that has been offered reasonable and effective?"*
3. If a student has considered both #1) and #2) above and believes the accommodation that has been offered is not reasonable or effective, the following steps should be taken:
 - A. Schedule a meeting with the Student Accessibility Coordinator (620) 441-5557 who arranged the original accommodation. If the accommodation is related to a specific course or action by a specific instructor, the student's instructor may be asked to attend the meeting.
 - B. If the student is not satisfied with the results of the meeting with the Student Accessibility Coordinator, the student may file a grievance through Cowley College's Student Grievance procedure. The grievance procedure is available through the Student Life office, located in the Nelson Student Center.
4. *A complaint can often be resolved in a timely manner by following the above-mentioned steps.* However, a student can also file a complaint with the Executive Director of Student Affairs located in the Nelson Student Center.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

Cowley County Community College and Area Vocational-Technical School is dedicated to providing equal opportunities to all individuals regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, genetic information, marital status, political affiliation or other legally protected category.

The college will provide all qualified individuals reasonable accommodations in the work and educational environment and ensure equal access to all College programs, activities and facilities.

The College does not discriminate in admissions, educational programs, or employment on the basis of any factor outlined above or prohibited under applicable law.

This prohibition against discrimination applies to College employees, students, contractors, or agents of the College and to anyone participating in a College-sponsored event or activity. Inquiries concerning the college's compliance with its non-discrimination policies may be referred to the Executive Director for Student Affairs or the Director of Human Resources at 125 S Second St, Arkansas City, KS 67005 or by calling 620-442-0430.