

FACULTY SECTION

Accommodating Students with Disabilities

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) is available to assist you in providing academic accommodations to students with disabilities enrolled in your courses.

While these students may access lecture and course materials differently than their non-disabled peers, and require academic adjustments, *there is no need to dilute curriculum or to reduce course requirements* for them. Like any other student, students with disabilities bring a unique set of strengths and experiences to the college.

We, in the DRC, will help you to draw upon their strengths, and assist you in providing the accommodation that will permit your students with disabilities to fully access the academic environment.

Identifying the Student

Determining whether a student has a disability may not always be a simple process. For example, some students have visible disabilities that are noticeable through casual observation (i.e., students who use wheelchairs or walk with a cane). Others have hidden disabilities that are not immediately apparent (i.e., learning disabilities, psychiatric impairments, or seizure disorders).

Students with visible disabilities in need of accommodations will usually identify themselves as such by contacting the DRC before registering for courses. On the other hand, students with hidden disabilities may not disclose their disability out of shame or fear of disbelief about the legitimacy of their problem, or the need for accommodation.

Without accommodation, however, some of these students run into academic trouble, and self-identify, in a panic, just before a major exam, project, or presentation.

One way to encourage students to self-identify, before problems arise, is to make an announcement on the first day of class inviting students with disabilities to meet with you privately to discuss their need for accommodation. At that time, you could refer the student to the DRC which will help coordinate the student's individual needs with support services and resources available at our college.

Another way to encourage students to self-identify is to include an access statement on your course syllabus. The access statement could, for example, read as follows:

It is college policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center in SBA 105 located just past the college store.

Establishing and Conveying Eligibility

If, or when, a student in your course requests an academic accommodation because of a disability (i.e., extra time on an exam or project, permission to use a calculator when testing, or assistance with note-taking), you should refer him/her to the DRC.

The DRC will determine the student's eligibility for services, request documentation of his/her disability, and assess the student's need for the accommodation.

If the student is eligible for services and the request for accommodation is reasonable, we will complete a *Request for Academic Accommodation* form (RAA) with the student.

He/she will then submit the form to you for your signature, preferably during one of your office hours. The purpose of the form is to:

- officially validate the student's need for accommodation,
- inform you of his/her needs while in your course, and
- encourage the student to personally discuss his/her needs with you.

Once the student has met with you, gotten your signature, and returned the RAA form to the DRC, the accommodation(s) will be implemented.

When Accommodations Require Alternative Testing

When the accommodation includes alternative testing, the student may schedule an appointment with the DRC at least one week prior to the test date, to take his/her exam in the DRC. When this occurs, every effort is made for the student to take the exam on the same day and same time as the rest of the class.

The student is required to inform you of this appointment, and to give you an *Exam Proctoring Checklist* for you to complete and return to the DRC with the exam.

The primary purpose of the checklist is to:

- let us know what your exam requirements are; and
- for us to provide you with feedback on the administration of the exam.

On the day of the exam, the DRC will record the day, date, and time the student began and completed the exam, and the accommodation(s) provided. Any breaks, questions, or concerns the student had will also be noted on the form, and a copy will be sent back to you with the exam.

The types of alternative testing accommodations vary depending on how the student's disability affects him/her in a given course. For example, a student with a learning disability in written language may need to use a computer and be given extra time to complete an essay exams, but may not need any accommodation for an objective test.

The goal of the accommodation is to minimize the impact of the disability, not to create an unfair advantage.

The following is a list of testing accommodations that we frequently provide in the DRC and a brief rationale as to why the accommodation may be needed.

Extended Time

This could be time and one-half, double time or more, depending on the student's limitations. Some students may need extra time because of their reading or writing speed, the use of some form of adaptive equipment, or because they may need the intervention of a reader or scribe.

Alternate Setting

Students who are easily distracted, or who disability involves or is aggravated by stress, may need to take their exams in a room that minimizes visual and auditory distractions. The DRC has a small testing room set up for this purpose. We have carrels that minimize visual distractions and headphones that block out extraneous noises. The testing room is generally limited to less than five students.

Reader

Students with visual impairments or significant reading disabilities such as dyslexia, benefit from having their tests converted to audio format. The DRC converts the test from text to audio using one of two adaptive software programs: Kurzweil 3000 or Read & Write Gold. In some, rare, circumstances, we will read the exam onto a digital recorder for a student. When a student requires a "reader" for an exam, the DRC must obtain the exam at least 48 hours prior to the test date.

Test Clarification

Sometimes students with reading disabilities may need a word on the test defined or explained, or a question paraphrased because of uneven comprehension, confusion of similar words, or difficulty integrating new vocabulary.

When the test is administered by DRC, we decide whether the question being asked is crucial to the purpose of the exam (i.e., is the word the student does not understand something that should have been learned as part of the course?). In some cases, we accommodate the student and indicate any clarification provided on the *Exam Proctoring Checklist*. In other cases, we check with the instructor. If we cannot reach the instructor, we do not accommodate the student and note the student's comment/question on the *Checklist*. Therefore, it is to the student's benefit to take his/her exam with the course instructor whenever possible, as long as the instructor can provide the needed accommodation.

Scribe

Students with limited fine motor coordination, paralysis, dysgraphia (severe problems with hand writing), or severe written language skills deficits may use a scribe to dictate their exams whenever other auxiliary aid and services (adaptive computer, word processor, spellchecker) are not appropriate. *The goal is to choose the option that allows the student to be the most independent while not compromising the effectiveness of the accommodation.*

When a scribe is used, it is the student's responsibility to check for spelling and proper punctuation, unless it is the student's specific area of disability. In this case, the scribe will assist the student in the use of an electronic grammar and/or spellchecker.

Modification of Test Response Format

Students with visual or spatial perception problems, gross or fine motor coordination problems, and/or visual impairments may need to have their tests enlarged, including the size of the space allowed for their responses. Some students may need to write their answers direction on the exam rather than on a computer score sheet.

Calculators

Students with fluid (abstract) reasoning problems experience a great deal of difficulty learning math. They may learn how to solve a problem one day, and forget it the next because they spend so much time trying to memorize the problem patterns that they cannot understand the concept. Calculators

can reduce some of the problems with the mechanics of mathematics, allowing the student to spend more time focusing on the concept.

Students with long term retrieval problems may also require a calculator, not because they don't understand the concept, but because they often forget it, or how to do the basic calculations. Students with short term memory problems or sequential processing disorders may not be able to hold the information in memory long enough to solve the equation.

The DRC has one basic, four function, large display, talking calculator and several small, basic, four function calculators for student use. In most cases, programmable calculators are not considered a reasonable accommodation.

When Students Require Classroom Accommodations

In addition to testing accommodations, students with disabilities may need accommodations in the classroom. The three most common classroom accommodations at BCC are the use of a digital recorder to record lectures, a note-taker, and textbooks in audio format. Occasionally, we have a student who requires a sign language interpreter, communication access real-time translation (CART), a personal care attendant (PCA), or a supported education specialist. An explanation of these accommodations, a rationale for their use, and the procedure for obtaining them is shown below.

Tape Record Lectures

For many of the same reasons listed above, students with disabilities may need to record their lectures, although they are encouraged to write down as many of the main ideas in the lecture as possible and use their audio recording to capture the details. The DRC has several digital recorders that students may borrow.

Note-takers

Students with significant short term memory disorders, auditory processing problems, attention deficit disorder, hearing, visual and physical impairments, and/or mental illness may require a note-taker to transcribe lecture notes.

Students with short term and auditory processing problems, for example, have a hard time remembering facts, understanding concepts, and writing down the lecture information at the same time. They may also misinterpret part of the instructor's lecture and write down misunderstood words that don't make any sense.

Students with certain psychiatric disorders or attention disabilities may not be able to sustain the level of concentration needed to take notes for a whole lecture period.

When these students require a note-taker, they will provide their instructor with a letter from the DRC that explains how to assist the student in obtaining a volunteer note-taker. Your assistance is critical to the student's success in obtaining a note-taker. Any difficulty in acquiring one should be reported to the DRC immediately.

Once the student has a note-taker and receives at least one set of notes, he/she should meet with you to evaluate how meaningful and effective the notes are. For example, did the note-taker identify and write down at least four or five of the most important ideas that the lecture was built around? Did he/she make connections among them? Did he/she include supporting details? It would also be helpful to the student to receive copies of any lecture notes you may use, or copies of overhead transparencies,

PowerPoint presentations, etc. To make your lecture universally accessible, it is good practice to post your notes to a learning management system like Blackboard or Moodle.

Textbook on Tape

Students who cannot read standard print because of a visual, perceptual (learning), or physical disability may need their textbooks in alternative format. In the "old days," students acquired their books on tape. Today, we provide students with copies of their textbooks in a digital format that is easily converted to audio format via various software programs like Kurzweil, Read & Write Gold and Adobe Reader. However, the conversion process can be time consuming. Therefore, students need to submit their requests to the DRC several weeks before the semester begins. In order to do this, instructors need to identify and post their required reading lists as far in advance as possible.

Sign Language Interpreter

Students who are deaf or hard of hearing may require the services of a sign language interpreter. A sign language interpreter is a professional who facilitates communication between hearing individuals and people who are deaf or hard of hearing. He/she interprets what the instructor and other students say in the classroom, and states out loud what the student who is hearing impaired signs.

There are two types of interpreters: oral and manual. the oral interpreter "mouths" what is being said, while the manual interpreter uses sign language. The two methods are often used simultaneously.

Requesting an Interpreter

Deaf or hard of hearing students usually request an interpreter from DRC when they register for classes. In the unlikely event that a student shows up for the first day of class without an interpreter, he/she should be referred to the DRC so that we can schedule an interpreter for the student. Because there is a national shortage of interpreters, when a student waits until the last minute to request one, there is no guarantee that one can be provided. Alternative accommodations, although less effective, may need to be arranged.

What Instructors Should Know When Working with Interpreters

Interpreters are bound by a code of ethics developed by the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. The code specifies that interpreters are to serve as communication intermediaries who are not otherwise involved. Therefore, speak directly to the hearing impaired students, rather than to the interpreter, and avoid using such phrases as "tell him" or "ask her."

Relax and talk normally, noting that there may be a lag between the spoken message and the interpretation. When referring to objects or written information, allow time for the translation to take place. Replace terms such as "here" and "there" with more specific terms such as "on the second line" and "in the left corner."

In a conference room or class environment, the deaf student and interpreter will work out seating arrangements, with the interpreter usually located near the speaker. Inform the interpreter in advance if there is an audio-visual element in a presentation so arrangements can be made for lighting and positioning.

Be sensitive to sessions that extend longer than one hour. The interpreter may require a short break to maintain proficiency in interpreting.

Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART)

Students who are deaf or hard of hearing may use CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation) as an accommodation rather than an interpreter. CART is the instantaneous translation of the spoken word into English text using a stenotype machine, notebook computer and real-time software and displaying the text on a laptop computer, monitor or screen. Because BCC is in a rural area that has very few CART stenographers available, remote CART is used. With remote CART, a captioner is in a remote location (Florida, for example) and, while receiving audio feed of the classroom via a phone line, is providing captioning (streaming text) broadcast over the internet. In a classroom setting, the text displayed includes identification of the speaker(s), when known, the dialogue and, where possible, a description of sounds.

Personal Care Attendant

Students with coordination/mobility impairments, such as cerebral palsy or total paralysis, may require the services of a personal care attendant (PCA) to assist them with activities of daily living. The student, not the college, is responsible for providing and maintaining his/her own personal care attendant.

In the classroom, the PCA may monitor the student's adaptive equipment, serve as the student's voice when appropriate, or take notes for the student. The college recognizes that the role of the PCA is critical to the success of the student. To ensure that the students with disabilities are recognized as independent members of their classes, the following guidelines have been established for personal care attendants:

- attend to the needs for which he/she was hired
- serve as the student's voice, when appropriate, without offering his/her own perspective
- demonstrate appropriate classroom behavior
- abide by the college policies as described in the current student handbook, and
- adhere to all college parking regulations

Finally, the PCA is considered a full participating member of the class ONLY if he/she is registered for that class.

Supported Education Specialist

Students with severe psychiatric disabilities or autism spectrum disorders, for whom college has not traditionally occurred, or for whom a college education has been interrupted as a result of their disability, may need the services of a supported education specialist/advocate to assist them in accessing the college and the support services available to them.

A supported education specialist/advocate is usually a community mental health service provider or paraprofessional provided by the school district in which the student attended, who, at BCC, works in conjunction with the DRC to support these students while on campus. The specialist/advocate may attend classes with the student (pre-approved by the DRC and on the RAA form) or he/she may provide tutoring assistance, help with obtaining accommodations, or any other process on campus. He she may not speak for the student, nor should they negotiate accommodations with the instructor for the student. All accommodations must be approved in advance from the DRC and be indicated on the Request for Academic Accommodation (RAA) form. Strict FERPA and HIPPA regulations apply.

Teaching Students with Disabilities

Although the ADA requires colleges to use a case-by-case approach to meet students' needs, some generalizations can be made for accommodating students in a particular disability category. For example, generally, students with visual impairments benefit from having the font of their exams enlarged to at least Times New Roman, size 18; although, some visually impaired students may benefit from a larger font.

The text that follows defines the most prominent disability categories at the college, provides recommended accommodations, and suggests instructional strategies to consider when teaching students in a particular disability category.

Learning Disabilities

Students with learning disabilities may exhibit disorders in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using written or spoken language. Such disabilities may cause difficulties in listening, thinking, speaking, reading, writing, spelling, or performing mathematical calculations.

The term "learning disability" does not include individuals who have learning problems primarily as a result of visual, hearing or motor limitations; mental retardation; emotional disturbances; or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage (PL 94-142. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975).

Students from divergent cultural and language backgrounds may experience many of the oral and written language difficulties that students with learning disabilities exhibit, but are not necessarily learning disabled by virtue of this difference alone.

College students with learning disabilities may exhibit one or more of the following characteristics:

Reading Skills

The reading skills of college students with learning disabilities may be characterized by:

- A slow reading rate and/or difficulty in modifying reading rate in accordance with the material's level of difficulty
- Poor comprehension and retention
- Difficulty identifying important points/themes
- Poor mastery of phonics, confusion of similar words, and difficulty integrating new vocabulary

Oral Language Skills

The oral language skills of college students with learning disabilities may be characterized by:

- An inability to concentrate on, and to comprehend, spoken language when presented rapidly
- Difficulty in orally expressing concepts that they seem to understand
- Difficulty speaking grammatically correct English
- Trouble telling a story in the proper sequence

Mathematical Skills

The mathematical skills of college students with learning disabilities may be characterized by:

- Incomplete mastery of basic facts (i.e., mathematical tables)
- Reversing numbers (i.e., 123 to 321 or 231)
- Confusing operational symbols, especially “+” and “x”
- Copying problems incorrectly from one line to another
- Difficulty recalling the sequence of operational concepts
- Difficulty comprehending word problems

Organizational and Study Skills

The organizational/study skills of college students with learning disabilities may be characterized by:

- Difficulty with organization skills
- Time management difficulties
- Being slow to start and complete tasks
- Repeated inability, on a day-to-day basis, to recall what has been taught
- Difficulty interpreting charts and graphs
- Difficulty preparing for, and taking, tests

Examples of Academic Accommodations

Testing accommodations may include:

- Extra time (typically time and one-half to double-time)
- Reading and/or writing assistance
- Clarification of test questions
- Recording answers directly on exams rather than on Scantron
- Tape recorded exams or use of reading software
- Spellchecker
- Word processor
- An alternate setting (i.e., least acoustically/visually distracting)

Classroom accommodations may include:

- A basic, four-function calculator
- Note-take,
- Tape recorded lectures
- Digital/audio recorded textbooks and reading materials

Instructional Strategies to Consider

- Provide students with a detailed course syllabus. If possible, have it available before registration.
- Clearly spell out expectations before course begins (i.e., grading, material to be covered, and due dates).

- Start each lecture with an outline of material to be covered that period. At the conclusion of the class, briefly summarize key points.
- Speak directly to students, and use gestures and natural expressions to convey further meaning.
- Announce reading assignments well in advance for students who are using digital/audio materials. It takes an average of 4-6 weeks to get a book in alternative formats.
- Provide adequate opportunities for questions and answers, including review sessions.
- Provide, in advance, study questions for exams that illustrate the format, as well as the content of the test. Explain what constitutes a good answer and why.
- Give assignments both orally and in written form to avoid confusion.
- Present new or technical vocabulary on the chalkboard or use a student handout. Terms should be used in context to convey greater meaning.

Attention Deficit Disorder with or without Hyperactivity (ADD/ADHD)

Students with ADD/ADHD exhibit a persistent pattern of inattention or hyperactivity/impulsivity manifested in academic, employment, and/or social situations dating back to childhood. These students often have difficulty concentrating on and completing tasks, frequently shifting from one uncompleted activity or another. It is not attributed to gross neurological, sensory, language, or motor impairment, or to mental retardation, or severe emotional disturbance. ADD/ADHD may exist alone, or with a learning disability.

Examples of Academic Accommodations

See testing and classroom accommodations for students with learning disabilities.

Instructional Strategies to Consider

See instructional strategies to consider for students with learning disabilities.

Asperger's Syndrome

Students with Asperger's Syndrome have severe and sustained impairment in social interaction and experience restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests and activities. In an educational setting, they may lack desire to interact with peers; lack conversational reciprocity (often talks without listening in return); have poor understanding of social cues, the feelings of others and body language; marked impairment in the use of eye contact, facial expression, vocal inflection and gestures; and commonly do not understand jokes, irony and metaphors. Often, they can "see the trees, but not the forest."

Examples of Academic Accommodations

Testing accommodations may include:

- Extra time
- Alternate setting

Classroom accommodations may include:

- Tape record lectures or use note-taker
- Preferential seating

Instructional Strategies to Consider

- Keep instructions as uncomplicated as possible and provide in written format.
- Avoid long series of verbal instructions.
- Define course material and requirements clearly both in oral and written forms.
- Use concrete visual methods to teach number concepts.
- Provide concrete guidelines and structure.
- Provide a predictable environment with consistent routines.

Psychiatric Disabilities

Students with Psychiatric disabilities, including psychoactive substance use disorders, in remission, which substantially limit major life activities, may be provided with reasonable academic accommodations. Such psychiatric impairments may be exhibited in interpersonal relationships, by inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances, alterations in mood, and/or tendencies to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal problems. They may also manifest themselves in short attention spans, forgetfulness, and/or energy levels that fluctuate. Medications may ameliorate or exacerbate their symptoms.

Examples of Academic Accommodations

Testing accommodations may include:

- Extra time
- Alternate setting

Classroom accommodations may include:

- Tape recording lecture or providing a note-taker
- Breaks during instruction
- Special seating
- Excused absences

Instructional Strategies to Consider

- When dealing with psychological conditions that impair the functioning of the affected student alone, the following suggestions apply:
- Clearly spell out expectations before course begins (i.e., grading, material to be covered, due dates).
- Start each lecture with an outline of material to be covered that period. At the conclusion of class, briefly summarize key points.

If the student's behavior begins to affect others or your course of instruction, the following measures may be necessary:

- Discuss inappropriate classroom behavior with the student privately, directly, and forthrightly, delineating, if necessary, the limits of acceptable conduct.
- In your discussions with the student, do not attempt to diagnose or treat the psychological disorder, but only the student's behavior in the course.

- If you sense that discussion would not be effective, or if the student approaches you for therapeutic help, refer the student to the psychological counselor located in the Student Development Center.
- Promptly refer to the college's proper disciplinary or security channels any behavior by the student that may be abusive or threatening.

Blindness

Blindness includes students without vision, or those with unreliable vision, who may need to rely on tactile and/or aural means to obtain information during coursework or examinations. In addition, modifications in the usual mode of examination response (i.e., paper and pencil recording) may need to be made to allow students to either record their own responses or have responses recorded for them (i.e., by a reader/writer proctor).

Examples of Academic Accommodations

Testing accommodations:

- Extra time
- Tape recorded exams
- Reading and/or writing assistance
- Calculating devices
- Specializes hardware/software program (Kurzweil, JAWS)

Classroom Accommodations:

- Use of a "talking" computer
- Note-taker
- Digital/audio textbooks and reading materials
- Lab assistants
- Instructional Strategies to Consider
- Face the class when speaking.
- Convey in spoken words whatever you put on the chalkboard and whatever other visual cues or graphic material you may use.
- Try not to move materials or equipment without orienting the student, or at the very least, letting the student know the changes have taken place.
- Call students by name. Address objects, etc., by name so even if the student can't see clearly what or who is being addressed, he/she can still understand.
- Use non-skid tape around safety areas in a lab.
- Provide the student a hands-on examination of new materials, equipment, etc., during the introduction of the concept in the lab or classroom.

Partially Sighted or Low Vision

Students with low, or limited, vision may be able to perform gross visual tasks, but may have difficulty with detailed tasks, such as printed material, graphs, charts, diagrams, etc. Speed, endurance, and precision may also be detrimentally affected. Depending upon the degree and type of disability, a partially sighted or low vision student may need a reader or other aural means to obtain information (i.e., instructions and questions) during coursework and/or examinations. In some cases, modifications in the usual mode of examination response (i.e., paper and pencil recording) need to be made so that

students with disabilities may record their own answers, or have their responses recorded for them by a reader/writer proctor.

Examples of Academic Accommodations

See accommodations for students who are blind.

Additional examples include:

- Mechanical enlarging or magnifying equipment
- Recording answers directly on exams rather than on a Scantron

Instructional Strategies to Consider

See strategies for students who are blind.

Additional examples include:

- Using an overhead projector to enlarge materials as much as possible
- Duplicating materials distributed to the class on a large-print copier
- Encouraging the student to use black felt tip pens to complete work so he/she can see the work better

Prelingual Deafness

Prelingual deafness occurs prior to the development of language. Students who are prelingually deaf are likely to have limited language concepts that may cause them difficulty in comprehending some materials in Standard English. These students may need to receive instructions in print, or through sign language which may be furnished through an interpreter for the deaf.

Examples of Academic Accommodations

Testing accommodations may include

- Extra time
- Clarification of test questions

Classroom accommodations may include:

- Interpreting services
- Note-takers

Instructional Strategies to Consider

- Reserve a front-row seat for the student. If an interpreter is necessary, the student should be positioned in such a way as to see both you and the interpreter.
- Face the student, keep your face within view whenever you speak, and speak in a natural tone of voice. Don't turn your back to write on the board while you are speaking. The student needs to see your face.
- Have good lighting on your face. To avoid glare, do not stand in front of lamps or windows.
- If a sign language interpreter is present, speak directly to the student and not to the interpreter.

- Make certain you have the student's attention before speaking with the student, or starting your lecture.
- Repeat the questions and comments of the other students in the classroom, unless there is an interpreter present. He/she will do this.
- Use visual forms to reinforce what is being said (i.e., overhead projector, chalkboard, handouts, lecture outlines, etc.).
- Provide written directions or instructions when possible.
- Facilitate independent viewing time for audio-visual materials and check if any movie or televised show you use is captioned; if it is, use television that is closed-captioned reception.
- Allow extra time for reading assignments if the hearing impairment involves an English language difficulty.

Postlingual Deafness/Hearing Impairment

Students with postlingual deafness or other hearing impairment usually function the same as students without disabilities with respect to written material. However, they may require accommodations with respect to oral test instructions/lectures. These students should be seated where they have a clear view of the instructor.

Examples of Academic Accommodations

See accommodations for prelingual deafness.

Additional examples include:

- Special seating
- An FM system

Instructional Strategies to Consider

See strategies for prelingual deafness.

Coordination/Mobility Impairment

Students with coordination/mobility impairments have difficulty with upper body movement and hand functions. Many experience spasticity, or tremor, of the hands. Some students with manual dexterity problems also have difficulty walking, or may use a wheelchair or other assistive device to access their environment. Examples of coordination/mobility impairments include partial or total paralysis, amputation or sever injury, arthritis, active sickle cell disease, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, and cerebral palsy. Respiratory and cardiac diseases can also affect coordination. Any of these conditions may also impair strength, speed, endurance, coordination, and dexterity necessary or proper hand/leg function.

Examples of Academic Accommodations

Testing accommodations may include:

- Extra time
- Writing assistance or use of special software/hardware
- Recording answer directly on exams rather than on a Scantron

Classroom accommodations may include:

- Tape recording lectures or a note-taker
- Lab assistant
- Extended deadlines for assignments

Instructional Strategies to Consider

- Make sure the classroom and lab are physically accessible.
- Arrange the classroom differently, if necessary, to accommodate the student's wheelchair or other mobility needs.
- Consider emergency evacuation from the classroom and what alternatives would be necessary for the student. Be aware of the college's emergency evacuation procedures.
- Don't isolate the student in classroom seating because of mobility needs. Find a way to integrate the student into the mainstream while still giving him/her accessible seating.
- If the class includes a field trip, choose an appropriate mode of transportation. If it includes a practicum or other field placement, ensure that it is accessible.

Systemic Disabilities

Students with systemic disabilities such as heart conditions, fibromyalgia, asthma, epilepsy, or diabetes may have limited strength, vitality or alertness. They may require frequent rest periods or breaks during class lectures or examinations to change position, use the bathroom, or rest.

Examples of Academic Accommodations

Testing accommodations may include:

- Special timing (i.e., 10 minute rest periods during each hour, plus 30 minute rest periods after three and one-half hours) and rest periods not to count toward total test time allowance
- Breaks for use of toilet facilities with the time not to be counted toward total test time allowance
- Alternate seating (in front, near door)

Classroom accommodations are the same as testing accommodations

Brain Injury

Students with brain injuries have either a traumatic brain injury (TBI) and have experienced a blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury that disrupts brain function; or a non-traumatic brain injury that was the result of a stroke or aneurism, seizure activity, brain tumor, infectious disease, substance abuse or loss of oxygen to the brain. These students typically experience changes in cognitive, emotional, behavioral and physiological functioning. These changes can be temporary or permanent and will frequently include a combination of the following: impaired memory, disorganization, poor concentration, difficulty problem-solving, impaired thought processing speed, decreased tolerance for frustration, impulsivity, depression, increased irritability, anger management issues, loss of balance or coordination, fatigue, to name a few.

Examples of Academic Accommodations

Testing accommodations may include:

- Extended time
- Alternate setting
- Basic, four- function calculator
- Spell checker
- Word processor

Classroom accommodations may include:

- Preferential seating
- Audio tape lectures or use of a note-taker
- Digital/audio formatted textbooks and reading materials

Intellectual Disabilities

Students with intellectual disabilities have significantly below average intellectual abilities and limitations in the ability to function in activities of daily living. Students with intellectual disabilities can and do learn new skills, but they develop them more slowly than students with average to above average intelligence and adaptive skills. At BCC, these students are typically found in developmental courses (English 010, 020 and 060), and may need to repeat them several times before meeting the course objectives. Depending on the level of severity, some students with intellectual disabilities are quite capable of obtaining a program certificate.

Examples of Academic Accommodations

Testing accommodations may include:

See accommodations for students with learning disabilities.

Classroom accommodations may include:

See accommodations for students with learning disabilities.

STUDENT SECTION

Strategies for College Success

Researchers have pinpointed several things that students can do to ensure college success, yet many students do not even know what they are. The following suggestions can help you to flourish at BCC.

- Set realistic goals and priorities for course work. Try to have realistic expectations.
- Know what accommodations work for you and ask for them. It is your right under the law.
- Become knowledgeable and comfortable about describing your disability so you can advocate for yourself with faculty.
- Know where the Disability Resource Center (DRC) is and become familiar with their policies and procedures for requesting reasonable accommodations.
- Familiarize yourself with the adaptive computing lab and learn to use assistive technology when appropriate.
- Learn where the Tutorial Center, Writing Lab, Math Lab, Career Development Office, Transfer Counselor, and Personal Counselor are and use them when needed, successful people do.
- Understand why you are in college and keep that reason at the forefront of your mind. It will help you persevere through difficult times.
- Keep a calendar with all relevant dates, assignments, and appointments. Do not try to keep a schedule in your head.
- Get to know your academic advisor. He/she will support and guide you. If you are not comfortable with your advisor, ask for another.
- Choose teachers who involve you in the learning process, rather than choosing your teacher/class based on what will fit best in your schedule. Ask upper-class students who the best instructors are.
- Get to know your instructors.
- Show up for class! Instructors tend to test on what they discuss in class, and on attendance and class participation.
- If you can't avoid stress, learn how to live with it. A counselor in the Student Development Center can help.
- Know the college calendar, especially important dates such as add/drop week, last day to drop a class, exam weeks, etc.
- Sit toward the front of the classroom to maximize your contact and to reduce distractions.
- Use a tape recorder during lectures. Selectively record key points using the "pause" switch.
- Listen to the tape or review your written notes as soon as possible after class to refresh your memory and to fill in any gaps.
- Expect to spend at least 3 hours on homework for every hour spent in class. For example, if you are registered for 12 credit hours, you should spend a minimum of 36 hours outside class studying. Often students with disabilities need to spend considerable more time than this to be

successful. If you cannot make this commitment to studying at this time, consider enrolling part time or attending college at a later date.

- If you learn better by listening to others and then discussing what you have learned, start a study group.
- Make a copy of your schedule and keep it in a handy place.
- Know when your high and low energy times are and schedule activities accordingly.
- Review any course syllabus that has been given to you. Know your instructor's name. Know where your instructor's office is and what her/his office hours are. Know what readings you must do. Know what projects will be assigned. Know how you will be graded (tests, projects, papers).
- Tape record important tutor explanations.
- Take 50 minute courses rather than 75-minute courses if you have difficulty concentrating, have a bad back, arthritis, or other physical limitation that makes prolong sitting and/or writing uncomfortable.
- Limit reading intensive courses to three or less per semester if you have a reading or visual impairment.
- Take history, natural science, and mathematics courses during separate semesters if you have a learning disability that makes recalling material difficult.
- Turn notebook sideways and use the columns or use graph paper if you have difficulty keeping your place when solving math problems.
- Spread courses out over a full day instead of taking them back to back when side effects of medication result in a short attention span.
- Know who the people are who can help you and stop by regularly, even if it's only to say, "Hi!"

Academic Accommodations

The DRC at BCC will help you to obtain reasonable and appropriate accommodations to ensure your academic success. However, ***you must initiate the process.*** For more information see "Policy for Academic Accommodations" on page 1.

Procedures

Described below is the normal sequence of events involved in obtaining academic accommodations.

1. The student self-identifies the need for accommodations to a BCC faculty or staff member.
2. The student is referred to the Disability Resource Center (DRC) in the Susan B. Anthony (SBA) building, just past the College Store, where the student completes an Intake Form and provides the DRC with a copy of his/her disability documentation.
3. A DRC staff member determines the need for academic accommodations based on official documentation of the student's disability.
4. The DRC staff member completes and signs the *Request for Academic Accommodations* form. Depending on the time of year, the form is either given to the student, or it is mailed to the student at the beginning of each semester. Students taking an online course can request an electronic copy of the Academic Accommodation form .

5. The student receives and signs the Academic Accommodation form (A photocopy is kept on file until the original is returned to DRC).
6. The student submits the accommodations request form to his/her instructor(s). Online students may email the electronic copy of the form to their professors.
7. If the accommodations are accepted, the instructor signs the request form and gives it back to the student. Online students will need to ask their professors to confirm receipt of the form and acceptance of the accommodations by emailing the DRC coordinator and attaching a copy of the form to it.
8. The student returns the form to the DRC. Online students will need to confirm with the DRC that their professors returned the form/email to the DRC.
9. **If the accommodations are rejected**, the student returns to the DRC staff member who completed and signed the request form in step 3 above.
10. The DRC staff member meets with the instructor to work out a reasonable solution. The student may or may not be present at this meeting.
11. If a reasonable solution cannot be reached, the DRC staff member takes the matter to the college's Affirmative Action/504 Coordinator.
12. During the time the adjudication is in process, the faculty member must allow the accommodation as recommended until a solution is determined.
13. The Affirmative Action/504 Coordinator meets with the Disability review Board (Dean of Student Affairs or designee, Dean of Academic Affairs or designee, Assistant Dean of appropriate program or designee, Coordinator of the DRC) to determine appropriate action.

Learning Skills Assessment

Berkshire Community College is happy to provide reasonable accommodations for the Learning Skills Assessment (Accuplacer) to qualified students with documented disabilities. Please refer to *Policy for Academic Accommodation* to determine acceptable documentation and reasonable accommodations.

Procedure

In order to obtain accommodations for the placement test, the following procedures must occur:

1. The student self-identifies the need for accommodation to either, the Assessment and Testing Center staff and is then referred to the DRC; or the student self-identifies to the DRC directly.
2. A DRC staff member determines the need for academic accommodations based on official documentation of the student's disability.
3. A DRC staff member reviews the documentation and completes a *Learning Skills Assessment Accommodation* form and forwards it to the Testing Center.
4. The Testing Center contacts the student to schedule the assessment with accommodations.
5. The Testing Center administers the assessment and notifies the student of the results.
6. The student schedules an appointment through the Registrar's Office to meet with an academic advisor in the Academic Advising Office to select courses.

Alternate Testing

Every effort will be made for students, who need extended time or a quiet proctored setting, to take their course exams with their instructors.

However, if the instructor is unable to provide the accommodation, or if additional assistance is needed, eligible students (*Request for Academic Accommodations* form completed and on file) must do the following at least one week prior to the course test date:

1. Schedule an appointment with Disability Resource Center (DRC).
2. Request an *Exam Proctoring Checklist* from the DRC and deliver it to the instructor in a timely manner.
3. Inform the instructor that you will be taking your exam with accommodations in the DRC and that this form must accompany your exam.
4. Report to the DRC on time for your scheduled exam. Unfortunately, if you arrive late, you risk losing your testing appointment or having time deducted from your allotment because our staff, space, and time is limited.

Your instructor must have the exam in the DRC office at least 48 hours prior to scheduled test date. This enables DRC staff to scan tests, record them, or to enlarge them, if necessary.

Testing accommodations are available:

Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on the main campus. Special arrangements can be made for night students or students taking courses at the South County Center, McCann Technical Center, or the Intermodal Center by contacting the coordinator of the DRC.

Exceptions

Every effort will be made for you to take your course exam at your regularly scheduled class time. The only exceptions are when you have:

- back-to-back classes, or
- an evening class, or
- DRC does not have an available proctor at the requested time.

Only under the above conditions will you be allowed to schedule a course exam for a time other than the designated class time, and only if it is within three days of the scheduled exam. Alternative arrangements must be made with the instructor.

DRC will not permit students to make-up exams without written/verbal consent from their instructor.

Course Substitutions

A student with a disability may qualify for either modification or substitution of specific course work required for a program certificate or degree based on the limits of his/her disability.

Policy

In all cases, it is your responsibility to furnish documentation verifying your handicapping condition (see "Documentation" heading on page 3 for an explanation of appropriate documentation).

For the purpose of course substitution, the documentation must provide clear and specific evidence that supports your inability to do the course work. Such documentation shall be submitted to the Coordinator of the DRC, who, acting for the college, will determine the nature and conditions of accommodations as they relate to the disability.

Acting with advice from the Coordinator of DRC and the appropriate Assistant Dean, the Dean of Academic Affairs shall determine the need for the modification or substitution of course work. In such cases the following conditions must apply:

- You must be otherwise qualified to complete the program with, or without, accommodations.
- Modifications or substitutions are only granted if the college determines they are not essential to the program of study, or to particular degree requirement; and only after you have made a good faith effort to complete the course with accommodations.

This policy does not obligate the college to modify or waive other academic requirements including, but not limited to, the college's right to require appropriate substitutions for modifications made.

Procedures

The following procedures must be completed for a course substitution to be considered:

1. The student completes a *Request for Course Substitution* form based on his/her disability.
2. The student submits the form to the DRC coordinator, along with a copy of his/her disability documentation, if not already on file.
3. The DRC coordinator interviews the student and explores all possible course accommodations before a course substitution is considered.
4. When the documentation is in place, the DRC coordinator evaluates the specificity of the documentation, as it relates to the request.
5. The DRC coordinator makes a determination and, if appropriate, recommends a course substitution.
6. The DRC coordinator meets with the appropriate Assistant Dean to discuss the course substitution. At this time, the Assistant Dean may make suggestions of appropriate alternative courses, or deny the request because the request would require a substantial change in an essential element of the curriculum.
7. The Assistant Dean and Dean of Academic Affairs review the decisions, consult with the DRC coordinator, and reach a mutually agreeable recommendation. The decision is recorded on the *Course Substitution* form.
8. The DRC coordinator meets with the student and the two of them sign the *Course Substitution* form. One copy is given to the student, and one is placed in his/her file.

If the student is not satisfied with the decision, he/she has the right to follow the grievance process as outlined in the college's policy guide.

Obtaining a Note-taker

Note-takers are generally classmates who share copies of their course notes with you. You may obtain class notes by

- asking a classmate for copies of his/her notes,
- asking your instructor for copies of his/her lecture notes,
- asking your instructor to make an announcement seeking a volunteer note-taker. When you require a note-taker, the DRC will attach a letter, for your instructor, to your Academic Accommodation form. This letter will contain information about what your instructor needs to do to assist you in obtaining a note-taker.

Interested students are asked to see the instructor after class at which time the instructor takes the name(s) and phone number(s) of the volunteer(s), and gives them to you. You then contact one of the volunteers to be your note-taker.

If needed, a DRC staff member will role play appropriate methods for asking someone to be a note-taker, or for asking an instructor for assistance.

If a volunteer note-taker within the class cannot be recruited, DRC will assist you in finding a volunteer to go to class with you.

Once a note-taker has been recruited, he/she may use the photocopy machine in the Student Development Center, or he/she may use carbonless paper available in the DRC office.

After you receive at least one set of notes, you should meet with the instructor during his/her office hours to evaluate the notes to see if they are meaningful and effective. The following elements should be considered:

- Did the note-taker identify and write down at least four or five of the most important ideas that the lecture was built around?
- Did he/she make connections among them? Include supporting details?
- Did he/she leave space on the notes for a recall column – a space where you can fill in key words or phrases that will act as labels or tags for main ideas and key information covered in the notes?

If the notetaking arrangement is not working in a satisfactory manner, you must inform DRC as soon as possible, so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Sign Language Interpreters

If you need a sign language interpreter, you must request one from the Coordinator of the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Reasonable notification is expected.

Because interpreters are costly, you are expected to notify DRC within 48 hours before an expected absence, or when you do not need the services of a scheduled interpreter, so we may cancel the service. *Three unexcused absences or late cancellations, without good cause will result in the suspension of interpreter services until you meet with the DRC coordinator.*

If you, or the interpreter, are absent unexpectedly, please let us know as soon as possible so we may adjust our records accordingly.

Personal Care Attendants in the Classroom

A personal care attendant (PCA) is a person who assists an individual with a disability with the activities of daily living.

In the classroom, the PCA may monitor the student's adaptive equipment, serve as the student's voice when appropriate, or take notes for the student. The college recognizes that the role of the PCA is critical to the success of the student.

Guidelines

To ensure that students with disabilities are recognized as independent class members, the following guidelines are provided for personal care attendants:

- attend to the needs for which he/she was hired,
- serve as the student's voice, when appropriate, without offering his/her own perspective,
- demonstrate appropriate classroom behavior,
- abide by college policies as described in the college's policy guide,
- adhere to all college parking regulations, and
- be considered a full participating member of the class, only IF he/she is registered for that class.

Supported Education Specialist/Advocate

Supported education has been defined in the following terms:

"Education in integrated settings for people with severe psychiatric disabilities for whom post-secondary education has not traditionally occurred, or for people whom postsecondary education has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a severe psychiatric disability and who, because of their handicap, need ongoing support services to be successful in the education environment."

Services

A Supported Education Specialist generally assists students with the following:

- Identifying interests and educational preference;
- Completing admissions and/or financial aid applications;
- Assisting with the registration process;
- Coordinating campus support service (i.e., DRC, Counseling, Tutorial Center) and community-based support services (i.e., Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Mental Health Services of the Berkshires, Berkshire Training and Employment);
- Reducing anxiety through skills training; and
- Providing crisis resolution.

Advocates for students with disabilities may assist them by doing the following:

- refer to student to the DRC;
- accompany the student to the DRC;
- request or recommend accommodations for consideration via the DRC;

- with the student's permission, participate in faculty/student/DRC meetings, as deemed appropriate by DRC;
- with the student's permission, participate in faculty/student conversations regarding clarification of student's assignments;
- with the student's written consent, request to be informed of the student's progress (i.e., academic warning, faculty concerns) via the DRC office; and
- accompany the student to college offices (i.e., Admissions, Financial Aid, Registrar), but not act on the student's behalf.

Advocates for students with disabilities may NOT do the following:

- negotiate accommodations, academic adjustments, or any other academic issue with faculty, regardless of the student's presence. All such matters must go through the DRC office. Students requiring such services must formally register with that office; or
- have access to a student's grades pursuant to The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 without written consent from the student on file in the Registrar's Office.

Handicapped Parking

Handicapped parking is conveniently available throughout the campus. However, *the college cannot issue handicapped parking permits.*

In order to park in a handicapped space, you must possess one of the following:

- a distinguishing license plate issued in accordance with Massachusetts General law, Chapter 90, Section 2, or
- a special parking identification plate issued in accordance with the above law and bearing the driver's name and photograph, or
- the official handicapped parking identification issued by any other state or Canadian Province.

The Registry of motor Vehicles is responsible for issuing the above plates in Massachusetts. The DRC office cannot issue handicapped parking permits.

College Resources

Berkshire Community College provides the following resources to assist BCC students.

Adaptive Computing Lab

Adaptive computing services and training are available for qualified students with disabilities through the Adaptive Computer Lab located in the DRC. The Lab provides access for students with disabilities to computer technology through specially designed adaptive software/hardware.

Support Services

The staff at BCC provides a wide variety of services and experiences that complement your academic pursuits. You are encouraged to make use of all available resources, services, programs, and facilities.

Below is just a partial list of the services available to you. Please see your Student Handbook for others.

Career Development

Are you unsure about your career direction? Explore your options with the help of the Career Development staff. Workshops can help you identify your skills, interests, and values in relation to career selection.

Consider attending one of the workshops on resume writing, job search strategies, or effective interviewing skills that are held each semester. You'll find this information helpful whether you plan to transfer to another college, or enter the job market, after your graduation from BCC.

Personal Counseling

As a BCC student, short-term psychological counseling is available to you at no charge. Almost everyone feels confused, depressed, or lonely at times. Discovering a need for psychological help is nothing to fear. Many people choose counseling when they're under stress, or when they just want to learn more about who they are. Meetings are confidential, and referrals to community agencies can also be arranged.

Transfer Counseling

The Transfer office, located in the Student Development Center, is a resource for comprehensive information and assistance about every aspect of the transfer process. Students should consult with the Transfer Counselor as early in their education as possible for information about academic programs, Baccalaureate Colleges, course equivalencies, and general transfer policies, as well as joint admission, articulation agreements, and the transfer compact.

Trio Programs

The TRIO (Talent, Resources, Initiative, Opportunity) Program is a federally funded program that provides free support services to eligible students.

To be eligible for the program, a student must meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. neither parent graduated from a four-year college,
2. the student is receiving financial aid, or
3. the student has a documented learning or physical disability.

Once a student is accepted into the program, TRIO staff work with the student one-on-one to develop a personalized educational plan that helps to guide the student in the successful completion of his/her studies at BCC.

Tutorial Services

If you begin to feel overwhelmed with a certain class and you just "can't seem to get it," the Tutorial Center can help.

In the center you can find books, tapes, and other resources to help you with notetaking skills, time management, test anxiety, reading methods, study skills, memory, and concentration. Workshops on most of these topics are presented each semester.

The Center can also match you up with a tutor in almost any subject. All tutors are recommended by BCC faculty as caring and competent students.

In addition, the center offers a writing lab which can help as you work on papers in any academic subject. For more information, call or visit the Tutorial Center, located in the basement of the college's library.

Community resources

In addition to the available resources at BCC, students with disabilities can find the following resources in the community.

Funding

The following state agencies may provide funding for tuition and fees, books and supplies, interpreters and/or readers for eligible students with disabilities. They are also good resources in terms of career counseling, case management, advocacy, and information and referral services. To find out how you may benefit, call today.

- **Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission**

6 Clinton Avenue
Pittsfield, MA 01201
(413)499-2720 Voice/TTY
(800)210-9876 Toll Free

- **Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

210 South Street, 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02111
(800)882-1155 Toll Free/Voice/TTY

- **Massachusetts Commission for the Blind**

1694 Main Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(800)332-2772 Toll Free/Voice/TTY

Advocacy/Referral Sources

The following agencies provide advocacy and referral services to individuals with disabilities. Ad Lib also provides peer counseling and skills training.

- **Ad Lib Independent Living Program, Inc.**

215 North Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201
(413)442-7047
(413)442-7158 TTY
(800)232-7047 Toll Free

- **Client Assistance Program**

Massachusetts Office on Disability
One Ashburton Place, Room 1305
Boston, MA 02108
(617)727-7440 Voice/TTY
(800)322-2020 Toll Free/Voice/TTY

Transportation

The following two organizations are equipped to provide transportation for individuals with disabilities.

- **Berkshire Transit Authority (BRTA)**

BRTA buses make hourly runs to BCC and are accessible to people in wheelchairs. For more information, call 499-2728, ext. 772.

- **Cabulance**

Cabulance is a local taxi service accessible to wheelchairs. For more information call 499-3232.