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Disability Services

Student & Parent Guide

Concordia College

Counseling Center & Disability Services
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Disability Services

Student & Parent Guide

College life poses different challenges for students with disabilities. When students enroll in college, they are considered responsible adults by faculty and staff. The expectations are that they will assume responsibilities for meeting their classroom requirements. This added responsibility is coupled with a change in environment. Whereas high school was a very structured environment with a set schedule, college schedules can vary dramatically. For the first time, students may have considerable time between classes and frequently do not use this time wisely. Students must enforce their own attendance policies and prepare to realize personal consequences if they choose not to attend class. Once a student turns 18 years old they are legally an adult, responsible for their own actions and decisions.

We hope this handbook will help answer your questions about disability services at the post-secondary level.

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IDEA vs. Section 504/ADA

Section 504 and the ADA, which apply to post-secondary education, are very different from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which covers grades pre-K – 12. This means that some adjustment of the perspectives of students, parents and instructors are necessary when making the transition from high school to college.

IDEA	Section 504/ADA
Every child is entitled to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the “least restrictive environment” possible.	Students compete for admission and must be “otherwise qualified” to enter college, without consideration of disability . Students participate in the general curriculum of the college. No continuum of placement exists.
Focused on creation of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that will help the student participate in the general curriculum as much as possible.	Few colleges have “plans” for students with disabilities. Most outline accommodations without regard to goals or progress.
Requires yearly meeting of general education teachers, special education teachers, and auxiliary service personnel to discuss progress and set goals.	The student is responsible for meeting with disability services and with instructors to discuss needs and concerns.
Often involves significant modification of the curriculum and of assessments (e.g., students may learn only the major concepts of a unit, may be able to take shortened tests, or be exempt from certain assignments).	Instructors are NOT required nor encouraged to fundamentally alter the content or goals of their courses, though they may be required to make changes that do not affect essential content or goals.
Classroom teachers receive a copy of the IEP so they are supposed to have a thorough understanding of the disability and the plan.	Instructors receive a brief summary of the disability in an accommodation letter but are not given access to specific diagnostic data unless provided by the student.
There is often pressure on special education and general education teachers to do whatever is necessary to help students move on to the next grade level.	Students with disabilities should be graded by the same standards as other students, regardless of the means through which their responses are provided (on tape, orally, typed rather than handwritten, etc.).
<u>Law of Entitlement</u> Guarantees SUCCESS	<u>Civil Rights Law</u> Guarantees ACCESS

Transition from High School to College

IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are very different, leading to miscommunication between high school and college staff that have studied only statutes applying to their institution.

High School	Post-Secondary
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973	Americans with Disabilities Act
Differences	
<i>In high school the school has responsibilities which include the following:</i>	<i>The post-secondary role changes as follows:</i>
Identify students with disabilities.	Protect a student's right to privacy and confidentiality.
Provide assessment of learning disabilities.	Provide access to programs and services for persons with disabilities.
Classify disabilities according to specified diagnostic categories.	Inform students of office location and procedures for requesting accommodations.
Involve parents/guardians in placement decisions.	Accept and evaluate verifying documentation.
Provide certain non-academic services.	Determine that a mental or physical impairment causes a substantial limitation of a major life activity based on the information in the intake, on student-provided verifying documents.
Place students in programs where they can benefit.	Determine for students who are otherwise qualified for participation in the program or service, with or without accommodations, whether a reasonable accommodation is possible.
Structure a large part of the student's weekly schedule.	Make reasonable accommodations for students who meet the qualifying criteria.
Modify educational programs.	Provide reasonable access to program and service choices equal to those available to the general public.
Prepare Individualized Education Plans (IEP's).	Suggest reasonable adjustments in teaching methods which do not alter the essential content of a course or program.
Provide a free and appropriate education.	Assure that off-campus and contracted program facilities also comply with Section 504 (Subpart E) and ADA.
Provide appropriate services by the school nurse or health services.	Inform students of their rights and responsibilities.
<i>Other differences may exist for post-secondary institutions that provide housing programs, health services, psychological counseling services, and extensive international programs.</i>	

Differences Between High School and College

There are many differences between how disability services are provided at the K – 12 level and at the post-secondary level. While it is not practical to list them all, there are some key points to know. The changes reflect the fact that the college student is no longer a minor and is now responsible for making decisions as to his or her education.

High School	College
Parents are responsible for making sure the school is accommodating their student appropriately.	The parent is no longer responsible for making sure their student is accommodated. This is now the student's responsibility both to initiate and to make the appropriate office aware if they are not being accommodated.
Schools will make academic adjustments based on IEP or 504 Plans.	Documentation of the disability is your student's responsibility. The student is required to provide and pay for documentation of their disability. IEP and 504 Plans will not be accepted as the sole means of documentation.
High school can change academic requirements for your student.	Colleges are not required to reduce or waive essential course requirements.
High School is a guided process and students are told what to do and how to behave.	College is a student responsibility and students are held responsible for the consequences of their decisions.
High School Academic Adjustments	College Accommodations
High school allows shortened assignments.	In college shortened assignments are not a reasonable accommodation.
High school allows the use of notes, formulas or word banks on exams.	The use of these items is not considered a reasonable accommodation in college.
High school explains questions using different words.	Explaining questions using different words is not reasonable in college.
High school can request a copy of the teacher's notes.	Requesting a copy of the teacher's notes is not a reasonable accommodation. The notes are many times considered intellectual property of the professor.

General Guidelines for Disability Documentation

Concordia College uses documentation of disability to:

- 1) Establish whether an individual is a person with a disability
- 2) Provide a rationale for identifying and implementing reasonable accommodations.

Per Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990:

(1) DISABILITY: With respect to an individual, the term “disability” means —

- (a) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more **major life activities**;
- (b) a record of such an impairment; or
- (c) being regarded as having such an impairment.

(2) MAJOR LIFE ACTIVITIES

(a) In general; major life activities include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working.

(b) Major bodily functions; a **major life activity** also includes the operation of a major bodily function, including but not limited to, functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions.

***shall not apply to impairments that are *transitory* and *minor*; with an actual or expected duration of 6 months or less.**

Formal evaluation procedures, clinical narratives, historical evidence of accommodations and the individual's self-report are a part of what will be used to determine appropriate and reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. The approved accommodations and strategies must logically relate to the functional limitations described in the documentation. *Concordia College Disability Services has incorporated the Association of Higher Education and Disability's (AHEAD) (2004) essential elements of quality documentation into their criteria for documentation.*

Disability Documentation should include answers to all applicable items below

A: Service Provider Credentials:

1. Name
2. Title
3. License or Certification Number
4. Address
5. Phone Number
6. Signature

B: Student/Patient/Client Information:

1. **Indicate your general nature of your relationship with the client** (i.e. Primary Care/Family, Physician, Counselor/Psychotherapist, Psychiatrist, Crisis Intervention/Trauma Therapy, Social Worker, Single Session Provider / File Reviewer)
2. **The date of client's last appointment**
3. **Number of sessions have you had with the client**

Continued on next page

C: Disability Information:

- 1. Does the client have a physical or mental impairment that can be classified as a disability?**
- 2. Please provide clear diagnostic statements describing:**
 - a. Label(s) ascribed to the client's diagnosed condition(s)**
 - b. Date(s) of original and current diagnostic evaluations**
 - c. Method the condition was diagnosed**
 - d. Information regarding the Functional Limitation the condition has on the student**

A "functional limitation or impact" is defined as an adverse effect on a major life activity caused by the disability. Functional limitations should be described in terms of how severely the activity is affected by the disability; the frequency with which the activity is affected and how pervasive the disability is in the performance of the major life activity.
 - e. Details on the expected progression or stability of the disability**

Please include the expected changes over time, information on the cyclical or episodic nature of the disability and any known suspected environmental triggers.
- 3. Is the requested Accommodation part of an active and ongoing treatment plan?**
- 4. Provide a brief description and effectiveness of past, present and ongoing treatment plans, medications and/or accommodations. Include possible side effects caused by medication:**
- 5. Recommendations:** Although not required, professionals are invited to make recommendations for accommodations, adaptive devices, assistive services, compensatory strategies, and/or support services that are logically related to the functional limitation. College disability services offices, however, are not under any obligation to provide or adopt recommendations made by outside entities.
- 6. Additional Information:** Please feel free to include additional information about this student.

Documents that Disability Services does NOT find useful:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Patient Medical Charts | • Self-evaluations |
| • Patient Discharge Instructions | • Information from non-professionals |
| • Information written on prescription pads | • Documentation provided by a member of the student's family |
| • Information that is illegible | |

Submit Documentation To:

Matthew Rutten, Director of Counseling & Disability Services

**Mail: Counseling Center & Disability Services Office
Old Main 109A
Concordia College
901 8th St. S.
Moorhead, MN 56562**

Phone: 218-299-3514

Email: mrutten@cord.edu

FAX: 218-299-4557

Additional Information

Student Responsibilities

- At the college level students must request services. Students must self-identify to the Disability Services (DS) office as having a disability and present appropriate documentation. Students must meet with the Disability Services Coordinator at the beginning of each semester that they wish to receive accommodations. To make an appointment, please contact our office directly.
- College students must notify their faculty directly as to their accommodation needs. DS will not, as a general rule, contact instructors for students. DS will provide the faculty member with an accommodation letter, but it's the student's responsibility to meet with his or her instructors and discuss the stated accommodations.
- Students are responsible for notifying DS about any problems they encounter with the provision of accommodation.

How Parents Can Help

The following are some important ways parents can help:

- Encourage the student to take advantage of available services. While services cannot be forced upon a student, it is in their best interest to know what services he or she is eligible for.
- Encourage the student to meet with the DS Coordinator at the start of each semester. Even if a student doesn't want services or accommodations, it is helpful for the student to discuss this with the provider. It also helps us be aware of how each student is doing and makes it easier to offer assistance should the student change their mind during the course of a semester.
- Encourage the student to meet with the DS Coordinator at least once more during the semester to check in and let us know if they need any additional services or assistance. Some good times are a few weeks before mid-term exams and evaluations, and a few weeks before finals and end-of-the-semester evaluations. Students are, of course, welcome any time. Some students choose to meet with the DS Coordinator on a regular basis.
- Encourage the student to familiarize themselves with the contents of the DS webpages in **CobberNet**: <https://cobbernet.cord.edu/directories/offices-services/counseling-center-and-disability-services/disability/>
- Encourage the student to speak up for him or herself and to be their own best advocate.
- Encourage the student to meet regularly with his or her instructors to get feedback as to their progress in class, and to check in with their advisors as well.

Communication

While students may sign a release of information with Disability Services, the DS Coordinator still communicates primarily with the student. In the past, parents may have communicated on the student's behalf in high school. College is a different environment in which each student needs to grow and develop their self-advocacy skills. We recommend that you discuss college life with your student if you are interested in knowing about his/her experiences. If you contact DS and would like to discuss concerns about your child, you are welcome to do so, but arrangements must be made with the DS provider for the student to be present in order to discuss any specific information regarding the student. The DS provider will be happy to speak with parents and answer any basic questions but will not share specific information about the student unless the student is present or has specifically requested the information be shared.

Services

- Time Management Skills
- Interpreting services for students with hearing impairments
- Note-taking services for eligible students
- Study skills
- Faculty education
- Alternate format of text (audio/large print)
- Readers
- Assistive technology/software (library)
- Adaptive equipment (tables, chairs, etc.)
- Housing accommodations
- Meal plan modification

Categories of Accommodated Disabilities

- Learning Disabilities
- Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder
- Physical Disabilities: Hearing, Medical, Vision, Orthopedic, etc.
- Psychological/Emotional
- Pervasive Developmental Disorder

Concordia College Disability Services

Contact Information

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Mailing Address

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Hours of Operation

Academic Year: 8 am – 5 pm, Monday through Friday
Open during select holidays and recesses

Summer (mid-May – mid-August): Limited hours