WELCOME TO WHATCOM COMMUNITY COLLEGE!

This handbook was designed to address the rights and responsibilities pertaining to students with disabilities while attending Whatcom Community College (WCC). Our intent is that this handbook will answer questions regarding access and disability services which may positively impact your academic success while attending WCC. This is not a legal document nor is it intended to offer legal advice. This document provides procedures to follow in order to access academic adjustments, auxiliary aids and support services while attending WCC.

ACCESS & DISABILITY SERVICES STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the second quarter of access to services, and with the aid of the professionals in the Access & Disability Services (ADS) office at WCC, students will be able to:

1. Identify their specific disability(ies).
2. Describe the educational challenges (ie: functional limitations) they experience in academic settings.
3. Articulate the steps required to initially secure disability services at WCC.
4. Articulate the steps required for quarterly renewal of accommodations.
5. Independently negotiate their accommodations with their instructors.
6. Utilize additional campus and community resources available to them.

WHAT ADS IS…

Access & Disability Services (ADS) exists as a center for access and disability education and resources for students, staff and faculty. The professionals in the ADS office are here to support students as they navigate their college career, as well as assist in locating necessary services. We are invested in your academic success. One of the primary functions of ADS is to act as a facilitator for students to obtain and utilize accommodations necessary to ensure **equal access for participation in campus programs and activities.** Additionally, ADS is a strong ally for students at every level of their disability awareness, student development, and academic goals.

WHAT ADS IS NOT…

While the professionals in the ADS office are able to direct you to the appropriate services on and off campus, ADS is not:

- Mental Health Counseling
- Tutoring Services
- Financial Aid Experts
- Community Services Specialists
- Disability diagnosticians
- Responsible for your academic success – that is ***your*** responsibility

HOW TO ACCESS SERVICES

The Access & Disability Services office facilitates in obtaining services necessary to ensure equal access for participation in campus programs and activities. To access services students must:

1. Attend a one hour intake appointment with the ADS Associate Director.
2. Self-disclose to the ADS Associate Director that you have a documented disability.
3. Read and sign *Confidentiality Release and Student Responsibility* form.
4. Provide clinical documentation with your disability diagnosis from a professional healthcare provider (bring this with you to the intake appointment).
5. Provide a copy of your current class schedule to ADS Office.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND DOCUMENTATION

In order for ADS to provide appropriate services, accurate documentation and assessment of the student's needs are required. Documentation should be provided by a qualified healthcare professional trained to diagnose your disability and should be written according to the *Documenting a Disability for Higher Education* document (available on the WCC website or from the ADS office). Documentation needs to be on your healthcare professional's letterhead, written within the past 3 years, and state the diagnosis and functional limitations.

An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan from a high school is an acceptable form of documentation if the last evaluation was done during your senior year and is no more than 3 years old.

All information shared with ADS regarding a student's disability is maintained in a confidential file and is available for ADS staff use only. Clinical information is not released

to other individuals, offices or departments without the express written permission of the student.

A confidential electronic and paper file will be kept for each student, which may contain disability documentation, release forms, conference record, scheduling/advising sheets, and other educational and service related information in the ADS office. This file will be kept as long as the student is enrolled at WCC plus 7 years thereafter. After that time, all information within the file will be destroyed, including documentation.

ACCOMMODATION PROCEDURES

Accommodations are determined by the Associate Director on a case-by-case basis dependent on disability, clinical documentation, and information gathered from an intake interview. Once appropriate accommodations have been decided, an accommodation letter will be emailed to your faculty member and yourself. However, it is your responsibility to let your instructor(s) know you have registered with ADS and are requesting accommodations for the quarter.

RENEWING ACCOMMODATIONS

The student is responsible for renewing their accommodations on a quarterly basis. Inform the ADS office that you are enrolled and want your accommodations put in place by giving a copy of your quarterly schedule to the ADS Office and completing a *Quarterly Request for Accommodations* Form. In the same way it is your responsibility to register for classes required for your degree plan, it is also your responsibility to make accommodation renewals a part of your academic planning.

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RENEWAL PROCESS FOR SPECIFIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Alternate Format Materials (E-text, Enlarged or Braille Materials)

1. Purchase textbook (available from WCC bookstore or online at various sites), -- this is a publisher requirement and alternate format materials will not be released until the book has been purchased.
2. Allow a two to six week lead-time to receive materials.
3. ADS will order textbooks and notify student when they are available for pick up in LDC 116.
4. Please notify the ADS office of schedule changes, or materials no longer needed.
5. Student needs to return all materials to ADS at the end of each quarter.
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Equipment Loan

1. Complete Request for Accommodation form and provide ADS with a copy of your current class schedule.
2. Complete the Equipment Checkout Request form.
3. Return borrowed equipment in working order at the end of the quarter.
4. Failure to return borrowed items may result in the following actions: (1) a bill will be submitted to a collection agency and collection charges will be added to your account and (2) your grades and transcript will not be released.

Interpreting or Transcribing Services

1. Complete Request for Accommodation form and provide ADS with a copy of your current class schedule.
2. Interpreting and transcribing services require a 4 week notice for ongoing assignments (ie: your classes). Less notice may mean services will not be available when requested.
3. Inform the ADS office and your interpreters or transcribers if you will be absent from class.
4. If you are late for class, interpreters/transcribers will wait 15 minutes for classes less than 1 ½ hours long and 30 minutes for classes over 1 ½ hours.
   NOTE: Repeated "no-shows" may result in a suspension of interpreting and/or transcribing services. To reinstate services, you must schedule a meeting with the Associate Director of ADS.
5. Interpreting/transcribing services may be requested for any college activity or function. Inform ADS Office of event and allow a minimum of 5 days for services to be set in place. Less notice may mean an interpreter or transcriber will not be available.
6. Inform Associate Director of ADS of any problems with provided services.
7. Notify the ADS office of any schedule changes.

Notetaking Services

1. Complete Request for Accommodations form and provide ADS with a copy of your current class schedule.
2. Your instructor will be informed by ADS to request a fellow classmate to voluntarily take notes; however, you can ask another student to take notes if you prefer.
3. Pick up carbonless notetaking paper from the ADS office or reception area in Entry & Advising and give to the student who will be taking notes.
4. Notify the ADS office of any schedule changes or if a notetaker is not found.

Private Testing Room (located in the Testing Center - LDC 133)

1. Complete Request for Accommodation form and provide ADS with a copy of your current class schedule.
2. Schedule time to access the Private Testing Room with the ADS office.

Reader or Scribe Services for Testing/Exams

1. Complete Request for Accommodations form and provide ADS with a copy of your current class schedule.
2. Give a copy of exam schedule to ADS office.
3. ADS office requires a 2 day lead time to schedule a reader and/or scribe.
4. Inform ADS office and reader/scribe if you need to reschedule exams.
5. Notify ADS staff of any schedule changes.

Testing Accommodations

1. Complete Request for Accommodations form and provide ADS with a copy of your current class schedule.
2. Your instructor will be emailed notification of your testing accommodations.
3. You are responsible for reminding your instructor several days prior to the exam if tests are to be proctored by the ADS office or taken in the Testing Center.
4. If you have been approved to test in the ADS Private Testing Room, you must schedule your exams with the ADS office in advance.
5. Notify the ADS office of any schedule changes.

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STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The college will work collaboratively with each student in determining reasonable accommodations. To ensure that needed services are provided, students shall:

- Provide timely notice and documentation of the nature and extent of their disability, and the services they are requesting to the ADS office. Requests for accommodations should be received by the ADS office four (4) weeks prior to the beginning of the quarter for which the request is made. Lack of advance notice may delay the availability of some accommodations.

- Provide additional documentation if requested by the ADS staff to determine
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appropriate accommodations. Such documentation may include, but is not limited to:

- Identification of tests administered
- Test results
- Description of the covered disability
- Recommended accommodations

- Cooperate with ADS staff to develop an appropriate educational plan and any academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, or related services needed.

- Promptly notify ADS of any problems encountered in receiving the agreed-upon accommodations.

- Maintain satisfactory academic progress.

- **IMPORTANT!** All students are subject to the Academic Standards of Progress Policy and the Student Conduct code as outlined in the current WCC Catalog.

STUDENT RIGHTS

Whatcom Community College is committed to providing qualified students with a disability an equal opportunity to access the benefits, rights and privileges of college services, programs, and activities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and State of Washington Laws of 1994, Chapter 105 ensure that students not be discriminated against due to their disability.

- All qualified students have the right to receive appropriate services under these laws.
- All qualified students have the right to appeal any decisions made regarding accommodations.
- All students have the right to confidentiality.

Under the ADA, a person with a disability is someone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Unlike elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities are ***not*** required to design special academic programs for students with disabilities.

ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENTS

Under the ADAA, the College is not required to alter the fundamental nature of a program to accommodate a student with a disability. WCC will not waive degree requirements. A course substitution may be granted in **rare** cases. The *Course Substitution* form is available from the Entry and Advising Center in LDC 116.

ACCESS

Review of the campus and coordination of efforts to ensure campus accessibility, including barrier-free design, signage, identification of hazards or mobility barriers, maintenance of access during construction, snow and ice clearance, and an adequate number of disability parking for all facilities is an on-going process. If you experience a barrier on campus, please contact the ADS office at 360-383-3043.

Referral for on-campus resources including academic tutoring, counseling, and academic advising are available for all students. Additionally, referral for appropriate off-campus resources, services and agencies are available.

DISPUTES

For denial of academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, or other disability related services by the ADS office, or if a faculty member denies ADS approved accommodations meet with the Associate Director to discuss steps for resolution. If the issue cannot be resolved through this meeting, the student is encouraged to make an appointment with the Director of Access and First Year Experience by calling 360-383-3080.

Accommodations are not entitlements. You are not entitled to receive accommodations because you have a disability. You are entitled to not be discriminated against.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

Whatcom Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, genetic information or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Director for Human Resources - 360-383-3400.

For Title IX compliance:
Vice President for Educational Services – 360-383-3070.

WCC publications are available in alternate formats upon request by contacting the Access & Disability Services Office at 360-383-3080; VideoPhone 360.255.7182.

Whatcom Community College
Access & Disability Services
Laidlaw Center 116
360-383-3080
http://whatcom.ctc.edu/index.php/student-services/student-support/disability-support/