



Office of Disability Services

Frequently Asked Questions for Faculty

What is the Disability Services Office?

The Disability Services Office works collaboratively with students, faculty, and staff to help ensure equal access to courses, programs, services, activities, and campus resources for students with disabilities.

Disability Services coordinates the interactive process, reviews accommodation requests and supporting documentation, and determines reasonable accommodations in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008.

The office also serves as a resource for faculty regarding accommodation implementation, accessibility concerns, and disability-related questions while supporting the College's commitment to inclusion, access, and academic integrity.

What are accommodations?

Accommodations are approved adjustments, supports, or services that help provide students with disabilities equal access to courses, programs, services, activities, and campus resources.

Accommodations are intended to remove barriers and provide equitable access to the learning environment. They do not guarantee success, lower academic standards, waive essential course requirements, or require instructors to fundamentally alter the nature of a course or program.

What is my responsibility as an instructor?

Faculty plays an important role in supporting students with approved accommodations and helping ensure equal access within the learning environment.

Instructor's responsibilities include:

- reviewing accommodation letters promptly,
- implementing approved accommodations in a timely manner,
- maintaining student confidentiality regarding disability-related information,
- communicating privately and respectfully with students regarding accommodation implementation,
- contacting Disability Services with questions or concerns regarding accommodations or accessibility, and
- maintaining essential course requirements and academic standards while providing approved accommodations.



Faculty should not independently deny or modify approved accommodations. If an instructor believes an accommodation may fundamentally alter a course or create concerns regarding essential requirements, they should contact Disability Services as soon as possible to discuss the situation collaboratively.

Can I ask a student about their disability or diagnosis?

No. Students are not required to disclose their diagnosis or specific medical information to instructors.

Accommodation letters issued by Disability Services provide information regarding approved accommodations, but they do not typically include details about a student's diagnosis.

Faculty may discuss how accommodations will be implemented within the course and may ask questions related to logistics, scheduling, or classroom procedures; however, questions regarding a student's diagnosis, treatment, or medical history should be directed to Disability Services rather than the student.

What if I suspect a student may have a disability?

If an instructor suspects a student may be experiencing barriers related to a disability, it is generally best not to suggest or imply that the student has a disability or diagnosis. Instead, instructors are encouraged to focus on the student's academic performance, classroom observations, and available support resources. Students may also be referred to other campus resources, such as tutoring, advising, counseling, or academic support services, when appropriate.

If a student voluntarily discloses a disability, previous accommodations, or concerns related to accessibility, the instructor should refer the student to Disability Services to discuss available accommodations and support services.

Faculty should not independently provide or promise disability-related accommodations without involvement from Disability Services, even when the requested adjustments appear minor. Disability Services coordinates the interactive process and evaluates accommodation requests based on the student's individual circumstances, documented needs, and the essential requirements of the courses and programs.

What if I think a student's accommodations are changing my course goals or requirements?

Disability Services will never ask faculty to lower academic standards or expectations for students with disabilities.



Accommodations are designed to provide equal access to the learning environment while maintaining the essential requirements and integrity of courses and programs.

If an instructor believes an accommodation may fundamentally alter an essential course requirement, compromise academic standards, or create a safety concern, the instructor should contact Disability Services as soon as possible to discuss the concern.

Disability Services will work collaboratively with the instructor and, when appropriate, academic leadership through the interactive process to evaluate the concern and determine whether alternative accommodations or solutions may be appropriate.

What accommodations are commonly approved?

Accommodations are determined on an individualized basis through the interactive process and are based on the student's documented functional limitations and the essential requirements of courses and programs.

Common accommodations may include:

- extended testing time,
- reduced-distraction testing,
- preferential seating,
- access to lecture notes,
- use of assistive technology,
- flexibility with presentation format, or
- housing and dining accommodations.

Not all students receive the same accommodations, and accommodations may vary depending on the course, program, or educational environment.

How does testing accommodations work?

Students approved for a reduced-distraction testing environment may complete quizzes, exams, midterm exams, and final exams through the Disability Services Testing Center when appropriate.

Students are responsible for scheduling testing appointments through [NWCC Accommodate](#) at least two business days in advance and communicating with their instructor regarding their intent to use testing accommodations.

Faculty may be asked to submit testing materials and instructions prior to the scheduled testing time to help ensure accommodations are implemented appropriately.



Repeated late scheduling requests, cancellations, missed appointments, or same-day changes may result in testing being deferred to the instructor or rescheduled based on availability. Disability Services reserves the right to deny or reschedule appointments that do not meet required scheduling timelines or exceed testing center capacity limitations.

Questions regarding testing accommodations, scheduling procedures, or implementation concerns should be directed to Disability Services.

How do I communicate with students about Disability Services and accommodations?

One effective way to communicate information about Disability Services is to include an accessibility statement in your course syllabus.

***Syllabus Accessibility Statement:** Northwest Mississippi Community College is committed to creating an inclusive and accessible learning environment for all students. If you have a disability that may require academic accommodations, please contact Disability Services Office (DSO) at your campus Senatobia: 662-562-3309; DeSoto/Olive Branch/Ashland: 662-280-6193; or Lafayette-Yalobusha/Batesville: 662-238-7951.*

DSO will work collaboratively with you to determine appropriate accommodations based on your documented needs. Students are responsible for discussing their approved accommodation letter with their instructors at the beginning of each semester. Faculty are expected to provide reasonable accommodations as outlined in the student's Accommodation Letter from DSO. Course materials will be made available in accessible formats upon request, such as electronic text, alternative formats, and captions for multimedia. Students are encouraged to contact DSO early in the semester to ensure timely implementation of accommodations.

Faculty may also encourage students to discuss approved accommodations privately during office hours or by appointment.

Disability Services is available to help faculty and students with accommodation-related questions or implementation concerns.

What should I do if a student has flexible attendance as an accommodation?

The Flexible attendance accommodation is intended to provide reasonable flexibility for disability-related absences when appropriate.



When an absence is disability-related, instructors should not apply automatic grade deductions, attendance penalties, or withdrawal based solely on the absence. Students are expected to communicate regarding disability-related absences and submit supporting documentation to Disability Services within established timelines, when applicable. Disability Services will review the information provided and determine whether the absence qualifies under the approved accommodation.

When a disability-related absence occurs, instructors should offer reasonable opportunities to complete missed tests, assignments, quizzes, or participation work as long as it does not compromise essential course requirements. Reasonable adjustments may include deadline extensions, rescheduled exams, or alternative participation methods.

If absences begin to interfere with the student's ability to meet essential course requirements, participation expectations, clinical standards, lab requirements, or learning outcomes, instructors should contact Disability Services as soon as possible to discuss the situation collaboratively.

How do I discuss a student's accommodation with them?

It is important to maintain student confidentiality regarding disability-related information and approved accommodations. Faculty play an essential role in protecting student privacy and ensuring respectful communication.

Discussions regarding accommodations should take place privately and should not occur within hearing range of other students, faculty, staff, or individuals without an educational need to know. Instructors should not disclose or announce that a student has a disability or receives accommodations.

Faculty with questions regarding confidentiality, accommodation implementation, or student communication are encouraged to contact Disability Services for guidance and support.

How do I contact DSO?

Dr. Angelica Woods-Smith, Director of Student Counseling, Disability, & Testing Services

Email: awoods-smith@northwestms.edu

Phone: (662)562-3204

Location: Tate Hall, Senatobia Campus

Missy Kelsay, Disability Services Coordinator

Email: mkelsay@northwestms.edu

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