

Disability Services Office
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SMCC Disability Services Procedures & Policies

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A. Introduction

This document sets forth the policy of Southern Maine Community College.

1. Preface

SMCC (College) will work with qualified students (“students”) with legally recognized disabilities (“disabilities”) who are entitled to and who are requesting reasonable accommodations (“accommodations”). The purpose of this document is to guide College students, faculty and staff in providing and receiving disability related services. No portion of this document is intended to expand or diminish any right or obligation imposed by law.

2. Statement of College Policy

Pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the College is committed to helping qualified students with disabilities achieve their individual educational goals. Upon request and documentation, the College provides to qualified students reasonable accommodations to remediate the competitive disadvantage that a disability can create in our collegiate setting. The goal of the College is to balance on a case-by-case basis the specific needs of its students with the programmatic integrity, administrative resources and financial limitations of the College.

3. Examples of Disabilities

Applicable law protects many, but not all, impairments that may be regarded as disabling. Disabilities protected by law include certain physical, psychological, mental, neurological, and learning disabilities. The law also protects certain cosmetic disfigurements and serious contagious and non-contagious diseases including, but not limited to, AIDS, AIDS-related complex, epilepsy and tuberculosis.

4. Examples of Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be made on a case-by case basis and implemented to meet the specific needs of each student and each course,

program or activity. Such accommodations may include, for example, providing additional copies of handouts and supplementary materials for readers, note takers and interpreters; enlarging and photocopying reading materials; providing printed outlines of class lectures or lesson plans; allowing for extra time during writing assignments and tests; allowing students to take exams in a quiet, distraction-reduced environment under supervision; providing alternative seating arrangements in a classroom or lab; providing for the alternative access to course content, such as a video and audio recordings; and other accommodations deemed reasonable by the college.

B. Procedure for Requesting, Reviewing & Implementing Accommodations

Applicable law requires a multi-step process for assessing requests for, and provision of, reasonable accommodations. The College administers that process as follows:

1. Step One: Notice, Meeting and Documentation

- I. Be admitted to or enrolled at the College;
- II. Disclose as soon as possible after acceptance to the ADA Services Coordinator (“Coordinator”) the student’s claim of disability and request for accommodations. While a student is free to disclose his or her condition and request to instructors or staff, and while instructors and staff are encouraged to refer such disclosures to the Coordinator, a student must not rely on disclosures to persons other than the Coordinator. The student must provide timely notice to the Coordinator; notice that does not permit the College a meaningful opportunity to review and implement an accommodation is not timely.
- III. Make an appointment to meet with the Coordinator to discuss the claimed disability and possible accommodations; and
- IV. At the initial consultation, provide current and valid documentation of the claimed disability. This documentation must specify the nature of the disability, how the disability affects the student in a college environment, and recommendations for accommodations to remediate competitive disadvantage. Examples of current and valid documentation include, but are not limited to:
 - written assessment completed by a licensed or certified professional qualified to evaluate the disability; or
 - written evaluation based on assessment reports from the student’s most recent secondary or post-secondary school.

In addition to other requirements imposed by law, a student must:

- A prospective or current student who believes that he or she may have a disability that is currently undiagnosed, undocumented or insufficiently documented should meet

with the Coordinator for referral assistance.

2. Step Two: College Review of the Request

The Coordinator will review the disability documentation, the student's prior disability-related services and other pertinent information. The Coordinator may also consult confidentially with the person(s) assessing the student's disability and those College officials who the Coordinator deems necessary to the appropriate decision.

I. Approval of the Student's Request

If the Coordinator finds the student eligible for accommodation, the Coordinator will discuss with the student the accommodations appropriate and reasonable under the circumstances. If the student and Coordinator agree to the provision of certain accommodations, the Coordinator will memorialize that agreement in a draft confidential Memorandum ("Memo"). The student must approve, revise or reject the Memo. If the student wishes to revise or reject the Memo, the student must discuss this with coordinator.

Upon final agreement to the terms of the Memo, the student must sign the release on the Memo allowing the Coordinator to share confidentially with necessary College personnel information regarding the student's needs. The student must also meet with the affected instructor(s) to coordinate implementing the recommended accommodations. When requested by the student, the student's academic advisor and/or the Coordinator may assist in this effort. As necessary, the student must arrange to renew or update the terms of the Memo at the beginning of each semester.

II. Disapproval of the Student's Request

If the Coordinator finds the student ineligible for accommodation, or if a requested accommodation is denied by the Coordinator, the Coordinator will so notify the student. The student may then grieve the Coordinator's decision pursuant to the Grievance Procedure in Section III.

III. Role of Faculty, Instructors, Staff and Administrators

Faculty, instructors, staff and administrators are situated to play an important role in this process. They are encouraged to refer to the Coordinator students who disclose a condition that may be disabling or who request an accommodation. Such persons may be asked to participate in identifying and assessing possible accommodations. Such persons shall keep confidential all such information regarding the student, and shall implement the accommodation(s) deemed reasonable by the Coordinator. Faculty, instructors, staff and administrators with concerns or questions regarding a disability or its accommodation should bring these concerns or questions to the attention of the Coordinator as soon as possible.

C. Grievance Procedure

The following grievance procedure must be used by a student for complaints regarding claims of disability and requests for accommodation.

1. Contents of the Grievance

The grievance must be in writing; contain the name, address, and telephone number of student; and the location, date and description of the alleged discrimination. Alternative means of grieving, such as personal interview or tape-recording, are available upon request if required by disability.

2. Filing the Grievance

The student or, if necessary because of disability, a designee must submit the grievance to the ADA Compliance Officer ("Officer") as soon as possible and no later than twenty (20) calendar days after the alleged violation. The current Officer may be contacted at Southern Maine Community College, Dean of Students Life, Spring Point Hall, (207) 741-5505.

3. Officer's Decision

As soon as practical after receipt of the grievance, the Officer will meet with the student to discuss the complaint. As soon as practical after the meeting, the Officer will respond in a format accessible to the student (such as large print, Braille or audiotape). The response will explain the position of the College and, where practical, offer options for substantive resolution.

4. Student Appeal to College President

Within fifteen (15) calendar days after receiving the Officer's decision, the student may appeal to the College President or designee.

5. Decision of the College President

As soon as practical after the receipt of the appeal, the College President or designee will meet with the student to discuss the appeal. As soon as practical after the meeting, the College President or designee will issue in a format accessible to the student a final decision regarding the grievance.

6. Record Retention

The college will retain all grievances, appeals and responses in the above Procedure for at least three (3) years.

D. Distribution of Policy

This Policy and Procedure shall be distributed to all employees and added to the Student Handbook. Notice of the College's non-discrimination statement and contact information for the Affirmative Action Officer/ADA Compliance Officer and the ADA/504 Services Coordinator shall be posted in conspicuous locations throughout the campus.

