

Whatcom  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# Access & Disability Services Student Handbook



Your present circumstances don't determine where you can go; they merely determine where you start.

Nido Qubein

## **Whatcom Community College Mission Statement**

Whatcom Community College contributes to the vitality of its communities by providing quality education in academic transfer, professional-technical and lifelong learning, preparing students for active citizenship in a global society.

## **Whatcom Affirms Inclusion**

WCC is committed to maintaining an environment in which every member of the College community feels welcome to participate in the life of the College, free from harassment and discrimination. We welcome people of all races, ethnicities, national origins, religions, ages, genders, sexual orientations, marital status, veteran status, abilities and disabilities.

Toward that end, faculty, students and staff will: Treat one another with respect and dignity; Promote a learning and working community that ensures social justice, understanding, civility and non-violence in a safe and supportive climate; Influence curriculum, teaching strategies, student services and personnel practices that facilitate sensitivity and openness to diverse ideas, peoples and cultures in a creative, safe and collegial environment.

## **Access & Disability Services Mission Statement**

The office of Access & Disability Services (ADS) values the diversity students with disabilities bring to WCC's campus community. Through intentional programs, services, and reasonable accommodations, ADS ensures students with disabilities equal access to Whatcom Community College and encourages the development of independence and self-advocacy skills while supporting the learning experience.

## **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:

- identify their specific disability(ies)
- describe the educational challenges (functional limitations) they experience in academic settings
- renew their accommodations on a quarterly basis
- utilize campus and community resources

### **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. Schedule and attend an intake appointment.
2. Self-disclose to the ADS staff member 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. If a current student, provide a copy of your current class schedule to the 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. Documentation needs to be on your healthcare professional's letterhead or the WCC Disability Verification Form (available from the ADS office or webpage); written within the past 3 years; identify the diagnosis; and indicate the functional limitations of your disability.

An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan from a high school is an acceptable form of documentation if it contains the school psychologist's assessment and is no more than four 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 6 years thereafter. After that time, all information within the file will be destroyed, including documentation.

## **Accommodation Procedures**

Accommodations are determined 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. Accommodations are **not** retro-active.

## Renewing Accommodations

The student is responsible for renewing their accommodations on a quarterly basis. Renewals can be completed in any of the following ways:

1. In person at LDC 116 by completing the *Quarterly Request for Accommodations Form* and returning it and a copy of your schedule to the ADS office.
2. Accessing the ADS Canvas page, clicking the link titled “Renew Accommodations” and follow the procedure listed.
3. Emailing the *Quarterly Request for Accommodations Form* and your current schedule to [ADS@whatcom.ctc.edu](mailto:ADS@whatcom.ctc.edu)

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.

If your accommodations need to be adjusted, schedule an appointment with ADS staff to discuss this. Call 360-383-3080 for scheduling.

## Renewal Process for Specific Accommodations

### Testing Accommodations

1. Complete *Quarterly 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.

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

1. Purchase textbook. You can purchase a print copy or request the WCC bookstore order the E-text for you if the publisher has made one available. If not, you must purchase the print copy and go on to Step 2.
2. Complete *Request for Texts in Alternate Format* form and return to ADS office.
3. Allow a two to six week lead-time to receive materials.
4. ADS will deposit books in a DropBox account and share the folder with student.

5. Student is responsible to download the text. All books will be deleted from the folder at the end of the quarter.
6. Please notify the ADS office of schedule changes, or materials no longer needed.

### Interpreting or Typewell Transcribing Services

1. Complete *Quarterly Request for Accommodations 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 20 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.
8. If you are unable to attend class, inform ADS immediately so communication access services can be canceled for that class.

### Notetaking Services

1. Complete *Quarterly 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 LDC 116 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.

## Reader or Scribe Services for Testing/Exams

1. Complete *Quarterly Request for Accommodations Form* and provide ADS with a copy of your current class schedule.
2. Drop off a hard copy of exam schedule to ADS office or email exam schedule to [ADS@whatcom.ctc.edu](mailto:ADS@whatcom.ctc.edu).
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.

**\*\* ACCOMMODATIONS MUST BE RENEWED ON A QUARTERLY BASIS \*\***

## 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 two (2) 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 appropriate accommodations. Such documentation may include, but is not limited to:
  - Identification of tests administered
  - Test results
  - Description of the disability
  - Recommended accommodations
- Cooperate with ADS staff to develop an appropriate access plan and any academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, or related services needed.
- Promptly notify ADS of any problems encountered in receiving the agreed upon accommodations.
- **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 (ADAA), 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:

Director for Human Resources - 360-383-3400.

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

Whatcom Community College  
Access & Disability Services  
Laidlaw Center 116  
[www.whatcom.ctc.edu](http://www.whatcom.ctc.edu)