



Disability Services

St. Philip's College ensures "Access."
YOU create "Success."

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Are support services available?**

A variety of support services are available to a St. Philip's College student with a disability. These services may include, but are not limited to, interpreters, note taking paper, assistance with securing texts in digital format on CD, reader/scribes, assistance with the registration process, technological tools and testing accommodations. Arrangements for services must be made directly through **Disability Services, SLC 102, MLK Campus, or Building 1, A135 at the Southwest Campus.**

All services are elective and must be requested by the student.

- **How do I apply for services?**

To determine if you are eligible for accommodations through DS you need to:

1) Identify circumstances that interfere with your learning or access

To receive assistance at St. Philip's College, you must register for services through

Disability Services, SLC 102, MLK or Building 1, A135, SWC.

2) Complete the Initial Request for Disability Services form.

You must complete the **Initial Request form** and present **current documentation** of your disability.

3) Provide evidence of current disability.

You must bring current documentation of your disability or disabilities to your meeting with a DS advisor or coordinator. Depending upon your disability, your documentation may need to be renewed on a periodic basis by your health care provider or support agency.

See the **Documenting Your Disability** brochure information for guidance.

Acceptable forms of documentation include:

- ✚ Letter from a medical doctor. An evaluation summary from a psychologist, educational/ testing specialist, specialist in the area of disability.
- ✚ Report from Department of Assistive & Rehabilitative Services (DARS)
- ✚ Diagnostic results from any branch of the armed services
- ✚ Letter from rehabilitation clinic/hospital

4) Meet with DS Coordinator to determine appropriate accommodations.

Once all the documents are collected you'll meet with a DS staff member to review your situation. If accommodations are needed they are identified and a Letter of Accommodation is prepared for you. Your letters of accommodation will be emailed to each instructor.

• Who will be responsible for arranging accommodations?

Choosing accommodations is a collaborative effort, and you should take a lead role. It is YOUR life. **You** bear the responsibility of making your abilities and limitations known to the appropriate person within DS. You, and the designated person from DS, will then decide together the best accommodations for you. You will receive a letter outlining the accommodations you need at the beginning of each semester. The day- to-day arrangements are between you and your instructor.

• What should I expect in the classroom?

As a student with a disability, the teaching environment directly affects your ability to participate and to keep up with course work. You are a “person first” and then a “person with a disability.” You will *first* be expected to maintain the standards that apply to everyone else in the course. In the words of the law, *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, you must be **“otherwise qualified” to do the work with or without accommodations**. With the exception of minor adjustments in presentation or requirements of the course, the content will not be altered. Changes apply to course procedures and processes. In this way you have the same opportunity as other students to gain the knowledge the class offers. You should only request alterations in course procedures that directly confront your disabling condition. Being penalized for having a disability is unacceptable. However, it is also unacceptable to expect more than **reasonable accommodations** for the disability.

• I need to arrange for a volunteer note taker. What do I do?

First, speak with your instructor about your **Letter of Accommodation** which authorizes a volunteer note taker. Also, you take whatever notes you can. Record your class, if authorized, and fill in your notes later from the recording. You can also ask a classmate for a copy of their notes (explain what you need to about your disability). You may want to sit with the classmate for a while and fill in your notes from theirs. Usually you will find a classmate (or two) who are willing to share their notes. You can also bring their notes to the DS and we'll make a copy for you.

If no one steps up to help, you can ask the instructor to ask for a volunteer. If that doesn't work contact the DS for more help.

- **When should I talk with my instructor(s) about the accommodations that I will need?**

Specific adaptations will vary according to the student and the severity of the disability. Therefore, it is important that you meet with the instructor early in the term to discuss your disability and the specific accommodations that you will require. You should schedule an appointment with the instructor during the **first or second week of the semester**.

- **How can I tell my instructor about my disability?**

After you and the DS Coordinator or Advisor decide on the accommodation(s) that may be appropriate for your disability, an "Accommodations Letter" will be prepared. This letter states those things that you are responsible for in the classroom, as well as what the instructor's responsibilities will be. The letter of accommodation is emailed to you and your instructor. Your instructor acknowledges receipt of the letter. If you need to, schedule an appointment with your instructors to discuss your accommodation(s) and how they will be implemented. Things work most smoothly when you both "have a plan." You may still need to remind your instructor periodically that you have accommodations to implement so you can follow your plan.

- **I've been told that I should talk to my instructor(s) about my disability. What should I talk about?**

Topics that generally need to be addressed with the instructor include: **classroom accessibility** and **seating, test taking**, and **digital recording procedures** (for students with learning disabilities, visual impairments, and mobility difficulties), **reproduction of written materials and visual aids** (for students with visual impairments and learning disabilities), and lecture **procedures**, such as lecture notes, or how to utilize an interpreter in the classroom (for students with hearing impairments and certain learning disabilities).

- **What if my instructor(s) asks questions about my disability?**

If an instructor asks you questions about your disability, it is up to you how you choose to answer. People who don't live with disabilities often learn about them from people who do. **The more you can comfortably share about what works for you, the better your instructor will understand.** On the other hand, if he or she wishes to find out more information concerning your disability from Disability Services, the information can be obtained from the Coordinator. However, this additional information can be obtained only **after you have given your written permission.**

- **What should I expect from Disability Services?**

We believe that a person with a disability **can** succeed and **can take control** of his or her own education. We believe that **self-understanding, self-advocacy** and **self-help** are keys to **empowerment**. We believe that our role is to provide you with information about services and accommodations that are available, to explain the procedures to be followed, to coordinate the options that are chosen and to act as liaison, if needed, between the student and the College. We are determined to remove barriers to access. That means we'll make every effort to have tools available for you to use (such as text readers and screen readers), clear pathways to your classes, advisors and tutors who can help you plan and understand your studies. We believe the **rest is up to the student!**

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What are my responsibilities at St. Philip's College?

- **Be qualified** to meet academic & technical standards. Students in college are here to prepare for career or additional schooling so it is expected that you will meet the standards of your vocation or profession. You may now select programs that match your strengths and interests.
- **Attend class and complete requirements** determined by the instructor (usually found in your syllabus).
- **Follow classroom and College policies** and procedures that apply to all students
- Adhere to the **Code of Conduct** for St. Philip's College. Students are expected to behave in class and on campus.
- **You are responsible for making the initial contact** with the appropriate person(s) in **Disability Services**. It is advisable to make this contact **before** or **immediately after** the semester begins. **Provide notice of a disability** & make a **specific request** for accommodation. Merely identifying yourself as having a disability is not enough to trigger a school's responsibility to provide accommodation if that accommodation is not specifically requested.
- **Adhere to St. Philip's policies & procedures** regarding accommodation requests. Even "qualifying disabilities" may not require accommodation for all classes. Accommodations are determined by class, as well.

It is your responsibility to **bring the most recent documentation of your disability** to this initial meeting. You must provide acceptable and current documentation of the disability. If you are new to the College or new to **Disability Services**, this documentation is needed to determine whether you are eligible for this service. Not everyone with a genuine disability requires accommodation or meets the eligibility demands for services. This documentation also helps us to select those accommodations which are the most appropriate for you.

- **Interactively participate in the accommodation process.** The student has a responsibility to determine his or her own needs to the best of his or her ability. It is your responsibility to understand your own interests, aptitudes, and strengths and weaknesses, and to come to the campus disability services office to request a Letter of Accommodation. Students must also request any accommodations that they need, and follow the school's policies and procedures when requesting these accommodations and using the school services.
- Use accommodations **appropriately**. Requests must be timely. A student **may not always get a "first choice"** accommodation. Objections to choices must be supported by reasons why a choice will not work. If you are using specialized equipment, you must maintain contact with people providing and servicing equipment. You must also fulfill school contracts and agreements for ethical use of equipment and services.
- **You must come in person** (requests will not be taken over the phone) to **Disability Services**, fill in the **Renewal of Services Form**, and request letters for your instructors **each and every semester**. It is your responsibility to **bring a copy of your current schedule** to the DS staff so that the disability letters can be completed. Letters for your instructors take time to prepare.
- You are responsible for notifying the DS staff if you need more, fewer, or modified letters for your instructors. Sometimes your schedule will change in the first couple of weeks of class. You will need to come back to **Disability Services** to notify the coordinator. You may also not wish for all of your appropriate accommodations to be listed on every disability letter. In this case, you will need to convey the needed alterations to your designated DS staff member so that the changes can be made.
- If you have "**special**" testing, **it is up to YOU to remind the instructor at least 2 days (48 hours) in advance of the test** so that these accommodations can be arranged. You will need to reserve a testing room in the Tutoring & Technology Center, NTB 116.
- However, **if you need a quiet room, a reader, or a reader/scribe for a test, YOU are responsible for making these additional arrangements** directly with your instructor or with **Disability Services**. You will need to reserve your private testing room at the Tutoring & Technology Center (NTB 116). The arrangements **must** be made at least **2 days (48 hours) before** you are scheduled to take the test.
- Unless special arrangements have been made between you and your instructor, you are required to start the test at the same time as everyone else in the class. **Once you pick up an exam in NTB 116, with the intention of taking the test, you will not be allowed to turn the exam in to finish at a later time, unless specified by your instructor.**

- If receiving "**instructor's notes**" is one of your accommodations, then **you are responsible for making any copies of the notes** that are necessary. The only responsibility of the instructor is to make the notes available to you. You can either write your own notes from the instructor's copy or you can make a copy of the instructor's notes using one of the copiers on campus. Many instructors now post their notes online. The instructor can give you the web address. Neither the instructor nor Disability Services is responsible for making copies for you. **Making copies of the instructor's notes is your responsibility.**

If you are not receiving all of your accommodations or if you believe you are being discriminated against, it is your responsibility to let the DS staff know immediately after the incident has occurred. Waiting days, weeks and/or semesters after the incident decreases the chances of the situation being resolved in a timely and equitable fashion. If you do not care to talk to your service provider (for whatever reason), but do want to report the incident, you may contact the Dean of Student Success, Dr. Paul Machen.