

DISABILITY SERVICES HANDBOOK

*For more information contact Disability Services
Western State Colorado University (970) 943-7056*

Introduction

Western State Colorado University is committed to providing equal educational opportunity for persons with disabilities in accordance with the Nondiscrimination Policy of the University and in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. In support of its commitment to provide equal educational opportunity, Western State Colorado University provides a variety of services and accommodations to students with disabilities.

This handbook provides an overview of the disability support services available at Western and describes the procedures that students must follow to access services and receive accommodations. Students, faculty, and staff have a shared responsibility for ensuring that the university meets its legal requirement to provide an equal educational opportunity to its students. Students with disabilities are responsible for notifying faculty and staff of their needs in a timely manner. Faculty and staff should keep students with disabilities in mind when making arrangements for employment, courses, programs, services, and activities. The Disability Services (DS) staff coordinates services, provides reasonable accommodations, and serves as a resource for students, faculty, and staff.

If you have questions or concerns regarding disability support services, we encourage you to contact the DS staff.

This handbook is designed to serve as a quick reference to information and resources that may be useful in addressing the issue of equal access for students with disabilities attending Western State Colorado University. It is not intended to create or modify the legal requirements of federal or state laws or WSCU policy, and it is not a part of any contractual or other legal obligation of the university.

This Handbook is available in alternate formats upon request from the Disability Services office.

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Our Mission & Objectives

OUR MISSION:

The mission of the Disability Services program is to assist the University in creating an accessible community where individuals with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from all University programs, activities, and services.

OUR PRIMARY OBJECTIVES:

1. To provide direct support services for individuals with disabilities.
2. To promote self-determination, independence, and personal responsibility for students with disabilities.
3. To provide resources, advocacy, collaborative services, and outreach throughout the University community.
4. To provide an open and welcoming environment for individuals with disabilities.

The Law

Federal law states that . . .

"No otherwise qualified person with a disability in the United States ... shall, solely by reason of ... disability, be denied the benefits of, be excluded from participation in, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

A person with a disability includes . . .

"any person who (1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment."

A "qualified person with a disability" is defined as one . . .

"who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the educational program or activity."

Federal law protects the rights of qualified individuals who have disabilities generally including, but not limited to:

- Blindness/visual impairment
- Cerebral palsy
- AIDS
- Deafness/hearing impairment
- Arthritis
- Epilepsy or seizure disorder
- Cancer
- Orthopedic/mobility impairment
- Cardiac disease
- Specific learning disability
- Diabetes
- Speech and language disorder
- Multiple sclerosis
- Spinal cord injury
- Muscular dystrophy
- Tourette's syndrome
- Psychiatric disability
- Traumatic brain injury

Under the provisions of Federal law . . .

Western State Colorado University may not discriminate in the recruitment, admission, educational process, or treatment of students. Students who have self-identified, provided satisfactory documentation of disability, and requested reasonable accommodations are entitled to receive reasonable accommodations, appropriate academic adjustments, or auxiliary aids and services that enable them to participate in and benefit from all educational programs and activities.

Federal law specifies that colleges and universities may not . . .

limit the number of students with disabilities admitted, make preadmission inquiries as to whether or not an applicant has a disability, use admission tests or criteria that inadequately measure the academic qualifications of qualified students with disabilities because required accommodations were not made, exclude a qualified student with a disability from any course of study, or establish rules and policies that may adversely affect qualified students with disabilities.

Modifications and accommodations for students with disabilities generally include, but are not limited to:

- removal of architectural barriers
- provision of services such as readers for students with blindness, visual impairments, or learning disabilities; scribes for students with orthopedic impairments; and notetakers for students with hearing impairments, learning disabilities, or orthopedic impairments
- provision of modifications, substitutions, or waivers of courses in major fields of study or degree requirements on a case-by-case basis (such an accommodation need not be made if the institution can demonstrate that the changes requested would substantially alter essential elements of the course or program)
- allowing extra time to complete exams
- permitting exams to be individually proctored, read orally, dictated, or typed
- use of alternative forms of tests for students to demonstrate course mastery
- permitting the use of computer software programs or other assistive technological devices to assist in test taking and study skills

(Note: Federal law referred to in this handbook includes Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.)

Institutional Rights & Responsibilities Regarding Disability Access

Western State Colorado University, through the faculty and staff, has the right to:

- establish essential functions, abilities, skills, knowledge and standards for employment, courses, programs, services, and activities and to evaluate students on this basis;
- request and receive current documentation that supports requests for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services;
- select among equally effective accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services;
- deny a request for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services if the documentation demonstrates that they are not warranted or if the individual fails to provide appropriate documentation;
- refuse an unreasonable accommodation, adjustment, or auxiliary aid or service or one that imposes an undue hardship or a fundamental alteration of a program or activity of the University.

Western State Colorado University, through the faculty and staff, has the responsibility to:

- provide information to people with disabilities in reasonable and accessible formats upon request;
- evaluate each request for accommodation on an individual basis;
- provide or arrange reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services for employment, courses, programs, services, and activities in the most integrated and appropriate settings;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication except where permitted or required by law.

Western State Colorado University is not required to lower its standards.

Federal law does require Western to provide reasonable accommodations that afford an equal opportunity for students with disabilities.

Student Rights & Responsibilities Regarding Disability Access

Students with disabilities have the right to:

- an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from employment, courses, programs, services, and activities offered through the University;
- receive reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services;
- information, reasonably available in accessible formats.

Students with disabilities have the responsibility to:

- meet qualifications and maintain essential institutional standards for employment, courses, programs, services, and activities;
- self-identify as an individual with a disability when an accommodation is needed, and to seek information, counsel, and assistance as necessary;
- provide documentation from an appropriate professional source that verifies the disability and the need for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services;
- follow published procedures for obtaining information, services, and reasonable accommodations.

Accommodations are subject to adjustment. The initial accommodation determination of the DS staff may be modified for any number of reasons. Some common reasons for changing the initial accommodation determination are:

- the faculty member teaching the course determines that providing the accommodation would fundamentally alter an essential element of the course;
- the student tries the accommodation and it is not effective;
- the student requests a different accommodation, provided it is reasonable and appropriate;
- the DS staff substitutes an equally effective accommodation.

Procedure for Filing a Complaint Based on Disability

A student who believes that he or she has been discriminated against on the basis of disability may seek advice and assistance from the Director of Disability Services or the Director's designees. The Director or designee will explain the student's options including informal resolution of the matter and formal complaint procedures.

Compliance Responsibility

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) was enacted to protect individuals with disabilities against discrimination in critical areas such as employment, housing, public accommodations, education, transportation, communication, health services, and access to public services. The purpose of the ADA is to provide a clear mandate for the elimination of discrimination against people with disabilities, thus bringing them into the social and economic mainstream.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is civil rights legislation that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs and activities, public and private, that receive federal financial assistance. Eliminating barriers to education programs and services, increasing building accessibility, and establishing equitable employment practices are addressed in Section 504 regulations. The U.S. Office for Civil Rights (OCR), U.S. Department of Education, is responsible for the enforcement and investigation of compliance with Section 504.

The Director of Disability Services serves as the ADA Coordinator and is responsible for facilitating the University's efforts to comply with the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The Director of Disability Services will work with University personnel and students to resolve disagreements regarding ADA compliance issues. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, the student may file a formal complaint. Additional information is available in the Disability Services office located in Taylor 302 (970-943-7056).

Complaint Procedure

A student who believes that he or she has been discriminated against on the basis of disability is entitled to file a complaint with the University's Affirmative Action Officer, an external agency, or both. Discrimination can include but is not limited to failure to accommodate the student's disability effectively, exclusion from a University program or activity, and disability-related harassment. The procedure for filing an internal University complaint is published in the University's Affirmative Action Plan. To file an internal complaint of disability discrimination, notify the Affirmative Action Officer in person or in writing. Complaints will be promptly acknowledged and investigated.

Disputes may arise between the University and students with disabilities as a result of misunderstanding or miscommunications. The Affirmative Action Officer can frequently facilitate a resolution of such disputes through informal negotiation or mediation.

A student may choose to file a complaint of disability discrimination with an external agency instead of or in addition to filing an internal University complaint. Most external complaints should be filed with the United State Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, which has a local office in Denver. Complaints alleging disability-based employment discrimination can also be filed with the Colorado Civil Rights Division or the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Additional information on internal and external complaint procedures is available from the Human Resources Office located in Taylor 321 (970-943-3140).

DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES

Students with disabilities who request disability support services at Western State Colorado University are required to submit documentation to verify eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Complete and appropriate documentation is necessary to determine eligibility for accommodations, auxiliary aids, and/or services.

Disability documentation should reflect current levels of skills, abilities, and needs for support services. For most students, documentation should be no older than three years. For students age 21 and older where sufficient evidence is provided by the student indicating that the disability has been evaluated regularly without significant changes in skills and needs across time, it may be appropriate to extend the length of time the documentation will be considered valid. Disabilities that are sporadic or degenerative in nature may require more frequent evaluation as needed for accommodation change. Generally, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Plan is not sufficient documentation of a disability. Documentation must be on official letterhead with names, titles, professional credentials, addresses, and phone/fax numbers of the evaluator(s), as well as the official date(s) of testing.

Specific documentation guidelines are available to assist the Disability Services (DS) staff in collaborating with each student to ensure that the documentation is complete and to determine individualized and appropriate accommodations, auxiliary aids, and/or services. The cost of obtaining documentation will be borne by the student. DS staff will review the appropriateness of submitted documentation on a case-by-case basis. Additional documentation may be requested to determine eligibility for services. Pending receipt of documentation, DS reserves the right to deny accommodations, auxiliary aids, and/or services. **Note:** Submission of documentation is not the same as the request for services. The student must initiate requests for accommodations, auxiliary aids, and/or services by contacting DS.

Information regarding a student's documentation is confidential. All documentation and files related to a student's disability are housed in the DS office and are not part of the student's University record. Students should keep a copy of their documentation. DS holds this information for seven years after the student leaves the University, at which time it is destroyed.

Documentation for students requesting services should be submitted to:

Disability Services
Academic Resource Center
Taylor 302
Western State Colorado University
Gunnison, CO 81231

Phone: (970) 943-7056
Fax: (970) 943-3409

Accommodation Procedures

- A student with a disability may request accommodation by scheduling an intake appointment, submitting a request for services, and providing appropriate documentation to the Disability Services (DS) office. Students choosing to access disability support services should contact the DS office as soon as possible after acceptance to Western.
- Requesting an accommodation or identifying oneself as having a disability is voluntary.
- Students who qualify for services work with the DS staff to determine reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services. DS staff may consult with faculty, staff, and outside professionals regarding essential course elements and reasonable accommodations.
- Reasonable accommodation is individualized to the person and the situation.
- Reasonable accommodation need not be the best accommodation available, as long as it effectively provides meaningful access to the program or activity.
- DS will provide a "DS Accommodation Notification Form" for faculty members that certifies the existence of the student's disability and recommends reasonable accommodations. Students will deliver the forms to professors who teach classes in which the student is requesting accommodation.
- Students, faculty, and staff should refer to DS procedures to make arrangements for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- Students with disabilities are responsible for contacting DS if reasonable accommodations are not implemented in a timely way or are not effective.
- Common academic accommodations include, but are not limited to: exam modifications or adjustments, notetakers, readers, scribes, taped textbooks, alternate print formats, assistive technology, course substitutions, priority registration, taped lectures, and classroom relocations.
- Policies and procedures for the most commonly requested accommodations at Western are included in this handbook. Contact the DS office for policies and procedures for other accommodations.

Accommodation is not required if:

- it would create a direct threat to the health and safety of others;
- it would require a substantial change in an essential element of the program or a substantial alteration in the manner in which services are provided;
- it would create an undue financial or administrative burden on the University.

Alternative Testing

Students with documented disabilities may be eligible for reasonable and appropriate testing accommodations. Accommodations that may be available to students include, but are not limited to: extended time, alternative test formats (e.g., oral tests or essays instead of multiple choice), a test setting with reduced distractions, a reader, a scribe, enlarged text, and word processing with spell check. Recommendations for testing accommodations are determined by the DS staff following review of the documentation of disability submitted by the student. The student is responsible for delivering a "Notice of Accommodation" form to faculty members who teach the courses in which the student is requesting accommodations. Accommodations recommended by the DS staff are listed on this form.

Evaluating student progress in an academic setting is an essential component of the educational process. A modified test method is often a more accurate way to measure the ability or achievement of a student with a disability. Modifications are meant to neither heighten nor lessen the student's chances for success or failure but to equalize opportunities. The ADA provides for equality of opportunity, but it does not guarantee equality of results.

The University is required to make reasonable modifications to its policies, practices, and procedures unless doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity or pose an undue administrative or financial burden. Faculty judgment is important when determining whether a requested accommodation would fundamentally alter an essential element of a course or program. Students and faculty should discuss accommodations for each testing situation to determine whether recommended accommodations are reasonable and effective. Students and faculty are encouraged to contact the DS staff if consultation is needed regarding testing accommodations.

Testing accommodations may be provided by the faculty member, the academic department staff, or the DS staff. It is the responsibility of the academic department to provide appropriate accommodations if the test is proctored by the faculty member or the academic department staff.

The following are things to know when a student is taking a test in the DS office:

- The student must make testing arrangements with both the instructor and the DS staff. An "Alternative Testing Request Form" that includes information regarding test accommodations that have been agreed upon by the instructor, student, and DS staff must be completed for each test.
- The student should make arrangements at least one week in advance of each testing date.
- To schedule a test, the student may either call or stop by the DS office. Tests are given between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except during finals week when DS will proctor exams at regularly scheduled exam times or at a time agreed upon by the instructor, student, and DS staff.
- The "Alternative Testing Request Form" should be turned in to the DS office at least one week before the date of the test.
- Requests for a reader, scribe, computer with word processing, or other special accommodations must be indicated on the "Alternative Testing Request Form."
- Proctoring instructions must be approved by the instructor on the "Alternative Testing Request Form." Unless noted otherwise, the student may not use books, notes, or other materials

during the test.

- The student may request to schedule the test at a date and/or time that is different from the actual class date and time of the test if, because of a schedule conflict, taking it at the actual class time does not allow for the provision of appropriate accommodations. The instructor must approve the alternative date and/or time.
- The start and finish times for the test must be provided on the "Alternative Testing Request Form." If an ending time or time limit is not indicated, it will be assumed that the student may have unlimited time.
- The student must arrive on time when taking tests in the DS office. The instructor will be notified if the student is more than fifteen minutes late for a scheduled test.
- If the student is unable to take the test at the scheduled time due to illness or an emergency, the student should contact both the instructor and the DS office as soon as possible. If the instructor allows the student to take a make-up test, the instructor must approve the date and time for the test.
- When testing in the DS office, the student may not leave the area for any reason without first checking with the DS staff.
- All tests taken in the DS office are proctored and the integrity of the testing situation is maintained at all times. Cheating will be reported to the instructor. The instructor determines the consequences for cheating.
- Tests can be delivered to the DS office in many ways:
 - The instructor may drop the test off at the DS office, as well as pick it up.
 - The instructor can e-mail the test to the DS office at: jbjornstad@western.edu
 - The instructor can fax the test to the DS office at: 943-3409.
 - The student may pick up the test from the instructor or the department office and bring it to the DS office. Test security can be maintained if the test is put in a sealed envelope with a signature over the seal. The test can be returned to the instructor in the same way.
 - The DS staff can pick up and return the test, though it is not always possible for the DS staff to pick up and/or return a test on the same day of the test. If the instructor requests that the DS staff pick up a test, it must be available on the day before the test is to be given. Every attempt will be made to return the test on the same day of the test or the following morning.
- Each test should be labeled with the student's name.

ALTERNATIVE FORMATS OF TEXT

Students with documented disabilities that affect their ability to read print may be eligible for alternative formats of text. Disabilities that may affect the ability to read print include, but are not limited to, learning, visual, and physical disabilities.

In general, providing text in alternative format is a time intensive process. Every effort is made to obtain materials in a timely manner and in the specific format requested. However, consideration will be given to the most expedient manner and format available in the fulfillment of student requests.

DS recommends that students who are requesting alternative text:

- Make an appointment for training from Disability Services (DS) to learn how to obtain alternative text.
- Submit an "Alternative Text Request Form" at least four weeks before they wish to begin receiving text.
- Be responsible for purchasing a copy of all required texts. Students may be asked to submit a receipt of purchase in the case of text scanning.
- Submit materials that need to be scanned or taped at least four weeks before needed. In some cases students may need to provide DS with a hard copy of the requested material. DS will make a "good faith effort" to obtain another copy of the textbook. However, if none is available, the student's book will be cut apart to scan.
- Be prepared to provide their own playback devices which may include 4-track, tape players, e-text software, and Learning Ally playback devices and/or software. Several playback devices and software packages can be obtained at a very low-cost or for no cost. (A limited quantity of playback devices may be available to checkout through the DS office on a first-come, first-served basis. In addition, DAISY format software is available on the computers at the DS office during office hours.)
- Notify the DS office immediately of changes in their schedules so that proper adjustments in services can be made.
- Notify DS of any problems with alternative text, including the material provided or the process itself.
- Return all alternative text to DS by the last day of finals of the semester in which it was used.

ACADEMIC ASSIGNMENT ADJUSTMENT PROCEDURES

Western recognizes that as a result of disability, some students may be unable to satisfy specific course work requirements as outlined in the course syllabus. Therefore, qualified students with disabilities may request that appropriate adjustment, including an assignment substitution, be considered.

The DS staff, in conjunction with appropriate University faculty, staff and administration, will review such requests on a case-by-case basis to determine eligibility and to reasonably accommodate qualified students with course-appropriate adjustments.

Students should follow the steps below to request time extensions:

- Complete a “Disability Services: Request for Assignment Adjustment Form” for each class in which he/she requests the adjustment for a given assignment.
- Provide DS with complete, current documentation of disability. The documentation must include verification of disability, evidence of a disability-related need for the requested adjustment, and justification for regarding the request as reasonable. Disability documentation guidelines are available from the DS office.
- Meet with the Director of Disability Services to discuss the request and review the documentation.

Note: Adjustment policies are not determined by DS. Because assignments, tests and/or quizzes may be integral to the pedagogic (learning) process, policies are set by faculty at the University, departmental, or individual level. Members of the faculty are not required to lower or affect substantial modifications of standards for accommodation purposes. It is ultimately at the discretion of the faculty member to address requested adjustments with any student. Disability Services will assist in the communication and establishment of appropriate accommodations with the faculty involved in the request.

Once DS has received the student’s request, the following action will be taken:

- DS will review the student’s request. The appropriate University staff, academic departments and faculty may be consulted.
- DS will provide faculty, in writing, notification of the student’s request, verification of disability, and an opportunity to determine appropriate adjustments based on the course content, academic requirements for successful progression and completion of the specific course.
- Disability Services will facilitate the communication process and a written agreement with the faculty, outlining the appropriate, if any, accommodations for his/her course will be provided to the student. Copies of the written agreement will be kept with the faculty, student and DS.
- If the student’s request for an adjustment is denied, the student may request a review by the office of Academic Affairs or follow appropriate procedures for filing a complaint based on disability.

COURSE SUBSTITUTION POLICY

Western recognizes that as a result of a disability, some students may be unable to satisfy specific course work requirements for degree completion. Therefore, qualified students with disabilities may request that appropriate course substitutions be considered.

The DS staff, in conjunction with the Office of the Registrar and appropriate University staff and academic departments, will review such requests on a case-by-case basis to determine eligibility and to reasonably accommodate qualified students with alternative course work that will satisfactorily fulfill the appropriate degree requirement.

Students should follow the steps below to request a course substitution:

- Complete a “Disability Services: Request for Course Substitution Form.”
- Provide DS with complete, current documentation of disability. The documentation must include verification of disability, evidence of a disability-related need for the substitution, and justification for regarding the request as reasonable. Disability documentation guidelines are available from the DS office.
- Provide DS with a history of any previous attempts to complete the course work in question, including high school and/or University transcripts.
- Meet with the Director of Disability Services to discuss the request and review the documentation.
- Sign a release allowing DS to consult with appropriate University staff and academic departments regarding the course substitution request.

Note: It is the student’s responsibility to meet with his/her advisor(s) to determine the impact of a course substitution on his/her program of study. The substitution should not substantially alter an essential element of the student’s program of study, including requirements for majors/minors.

Once DS has received the student’s request, the following action will be taken:

- DS will review the student’s request. The Office of the Registrar and appropriate University staff and academic departments may be consulted.
- DS will provide to the Office of the Registrar, in writing, notification of the student’s request, verification of disability, and recommendations regarding the request.
- The Office of the Registrar will contact the student, in writing, notifying the student of the decision to grant or deny the request. Copies of the written notification will be retained in the Office of the Registrar and DS.
- If the student’s request for a course substitution is denied, the student may request a review by the office of Academic Affairs or follow appropriate procedures for filing a complaint based on disability.

FLEXIBLE ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE

Western State Colorado University recognizes that as a result of disability, some students may be unable to satisfy specific course work requirements with the class attendance policy as outlined in the course syllabus. Therefore, qualified students with disabilities may request that appropriate attendance policy adjustments be considered.

The DS staff, in conjunction with appropriate University faculty, staff and administration, will review such requests on a case-by-case basis to determine eligibility and to reasonably accommodate qualified students with course-appropriate attendance requirement adjustments.

Students should follow the steps below to request flexible attendance:

- Complete a “Disability Services: Request for Attendance Policy Modification” form for each class in which s/he requests the adjustment.
- Provide DS with complete, current documentation of the relevant disability. The documentation must include verification of disability, evidence of a disability-related need for an attendance policy modification, and justification for regarding the request as reasonable. Disability documentation guidelines are available from the DS office.
- Meet with the Director of Disability Services to discuss the request and review the documentation.

Note: Attendance policies are not determined by DS. Class attendance may be integral to the pedagogic (learning) process, therefore policies are set by faculty at the University, departmental, or individual level. Members of the faculty are not required to lower or affect substantial modifications of standards for accommodation purposes. It is ultimately at the discretion of the faculty member to address attendance policies with any student. Disability Services will assist in the communication and establishment of appropriate accommodations with the faculty involved in the request.

Once DS has received the student’s request, the following action will be taken:

- DS will review the student’s request. The appropriate University staff, academic departments and faculty may be consulted.
- DS will provide faculty, in writing, notification of the student’s request, verification of disability, and an opportunity to determine appropriate class attendance requirements based on the course content and academic requirements for successful progression and completion of the specific course.
- Each faculty will have the ability to determine the appropriateness of class attendance, as relevant to his/her individual course.
- Disability Services will facilitate the communication process and a written agreement with the faculty, outlining the appropriate, if any, accommodations for his/her course. This will be provided to the student. Copies of the written agreement will be kept with the faculty, student and DS.
- If the student’s request for a class attendance modification is denied, the student may request a review by the office of Academic Affairs or follow appropriate procedures for filing a complaint based on disability.

HOUSING ACCOMMODATIONS

Residential living is central to the learning environment for all Western State Colorado University students. Because the University offers a wide variety of residence hall options, virtually all student needs can be met through the standard room selection process. However, students with disabilities whose needs cannot be met through this process may request consideration for housing accommodations.

The Disability Services and Residential Life staff work together to accommodate students with disabilities in the residence hall setting. We carefully consider each request for accommodation to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to the University's housing resources. Please note that Western State Colorado University has a two-year residency requirement. Because residential living is considered a significant part of a student's total educational experience, students are granted permission to move off campus early for disability-related reasons only in the extremely rare occurrence that WSCU cannot accommodate the student on campus.

Single rooms based on a student's desire to have a "quiet, undisturbed place to study" will be provided only in unusual circumstances. By virtue of the shared facilities, resources, and number of people living under one roof in the residence halls, a single room does not necessarily provide a quieter, more distraction-free space than a standard shared room.

Students should follow the steps below to request disability-related housing accommodations:

- All students requesting disability-related housing accommodations must 1) apply for housing through Residential Life **AND** 2) notify Disability Services of their specific housing accommodation needs (see contact information below).
- Students who have not already done so should register with the office of Disability Services and provide documentation that supports the disability and accommodations requested.
- Continuing students should schedule a meeting with the director of Disability Services to discuss their request for accommodations. **New first-year and transfer students** should contact the director as soon as possible after acceptance to the university and confirmation to attend.

Once DS has received the student's request, the following action will be taken:

- Students will be notified of any decisions regarding requests for housing accommodations. Residential Life will notify students who are approved for housing accommodations of their room assignment.
Note: Students who are not approved for housing accommodations must complete the standard Residential Life room selection process.
- Requests that are incomplete or received after the published deadlines above will not be processed unless a condition manifests itself or significantly changes after the deadline or if there are extenuating circumstances.
- Students who do not qualify for disability-related housing accommodations but feel they have needs that cannot be met through the standard housing process should contact Residential Life for information on the special consideration process for on-campus housing.

Important information for continuing students:

- Students must request housing accommodations two months prior to the start of the semester in which accommodations are requested (i.e. June for Fall, November for Spring). Be sure to request housing accommodations as soon as possible.

INTERPRETER SERVICES

Enrolled students who are deaf or hard of hearing and who are in need of sign-language interpreter services receive this accommodation for classes, academic meetings and appointments, and University-sponsored activities and programs.

Students should follow the steps below to arrange interpreter services:

- Interpreter services must be requested through DS. Early notification is necessary in order to best ensure provision of this service. Students new to WSCU should request services as soon as the student is admitted. Students must provide appropriate documentation to receive services.
- Continuing students should make arrangements for interpreter services early in the course registration period for the upcoming semester. In order to do this, the student should notify DS so a priority registration time can be assigned to the student.
- Academic interpreting will be provided for scheduled classes and class events as scheduled in class syllabi. All other requests for interpreter services should be made in advance through DS and will be filled on a priority basis; student need and interpreter availability will be considered.

What happens in the event of student tardiness and absences?

- The interpreter will wait ten minutes for every hour of scheduled events. If the student requesting services is not in attendance at the end of the wait time, the interpreter may leave.
- Students who have advance notification of class absences should notify the interpreter at least 24 hours before the planned absence. In the case of an emergency or illness, the student should notify the interpreter or DS as soon as possible so adjustments in the interpreter's schedule can be made as needed.
- In the case of student absence without notification, the interpreter will wait the required time during the first two classes or events scheduled that day. If the student has not notified the interpreter or DS after this time and does not attend the second scheduled class or event for the day, it is assumed that all services requested for that day have been cancelled.
- Three consecutive absences from the same class without advance notification to the DS office is cause for temporary discontinuation of interpreter services for that class. The student will be notified of the discontinuation of services prior to terminating the service. The student must meet with DS staff to arrange reinstatement of services.

What can the student expect from the interpreter?

- Interpreters are expected to act in a professional manner according to the R.I.D. Code of Ethics.
- Interpreters may be evaluated for the adequacy of their ability to interpret university-level course content by another qualified interpreter or by the student requesting the service.
- An interpreter's function is to facilitate communication; the interpreter is not available to act as a notetaker or messenger. Students should contact the DS office if they have questions regarding the role of the interpreter.

Notes to faculty and staff:

- Information to assist you in working effectively with students who are deaf or hard of hearing may be obtained from the DS office or the interpreter assigned to your class.
- If you have questions regarding interpreter services, please contact DS.

NOTETAKING SERVICES

Students with documented disabilities that affect their ability to take class notes may be eligible for notetaking services. Examples of disabilities that may affect notetaking ability include, but are not limited to, learning, visual, hearing, and physical disabilities.

Western uses a peer notetaking system to provide copies of class notes to students with disabilities. The faculty members in the classes in which notes are needed are the primary partners in obtaining quality notetakers. It is important for the faculty member to keep in mind that permission must be obtained from the student with a disability before that student's identity can be disclosed to a notetaker.

There are several ways a faculty member can encourage notetakers to apply to the Disability Services (DS) office: (a) the faculty member can make an announcement in class; (b) The faculty member or the student with a disability may already know students in class who can serve as a notetaker; (c) after observing students for the first couple of days, the faculty member may have a better idea of students who may be able to serve as good notetakers.

When recruiting notetakers, it may be helpful for the faculty member to talk about the benefits of becoming a notetaker. In addition to a small, monetary incentive, notetakers often say that their class attendance and the quality of their notes improve when serving as a notetaker. Also, the notetaking experience is a good addition to a résumé. A handout with tips and a short training for notetakers is available from DS.

It is helpful for faculty members to notify DS when students receiving notes are absent from class. **Peer notes do not substitute for class attendance.** DS does not provide notes for students who do not attend class, except possibly in the event of a medical absence or other verified emergency.

The following are things to know about arranging notetaking services:

- The student with a disability must notify DS of the need for notetaking services by completing a "Request for Notetaking Services" form for each class in which a notetaker is requested.
- The student will give a DS "Notice of Accommodation" form to instructors in appropriate classes to verify that the student's request for notetaking services is legitimate.
- Notes can be supplied in four ways:
 - Most preferable, notes can be delivered electronically to the Academic Resource Center (ARC) (email notes to jbjornstad@western.edu)
 - Instructors can provide copies of their lecture notes, transparencies, etc to the student
 - Peer notetakers can photocopy their class notes in the ARC
 - Peer notetakers can use NCR (no carbon required) paper supplied by DS
- If a peer notetaker is used to provide class notes, s/he will need to begin as soon as possible after the request is made so that services can be provided in a timely manner. The instructor's assistance in providing this accommodation and referring a notetaker, if necessary, to the DS office is crucial. If necessary, a substitute notetaker may need to be recruited.

- If notes are emailed:
 - Notetakers will email typed notes to the ARC (ibjornstad@western.edu)
 - Students receiving notes will pick up notes in the ARC Teachers Folder in the Pickup subfolder.
- If notes are photocopied:
 - Notetakers will photocopy their class notes at the ARC at least twice each week.
 - Notetakers will maintain records of photocopies notes in the DS notetaking logbook.
 - Students receiving notes will pick up photocopied notes in the ARC. The notes must be signed out of the logbook.
- If notes are taken on NCR paper, students can obtain a copy of the notes in three ways:
 - After each class, the notetaker will give the notes to the instructor, and the instructor will give the notes to the student with the disability.
 - If the student with a disability has given permission to be identified to the notetaker, the notetaker can give the notes directly to the student.
 - Notes can be dropped off in the ARC.
- Only notetakers approved by the instructor or DS may photocopy notes in the ARC.
- Class notes only may be copied in the ARC. Homework, papers, study guides, etc., may not be copied.
- Students receiving notes are responsible for notifying Disability Services in the Academic Resource Center if the notes are of poor quality or not supplied on a regular basis.
- If the student determines that a notetaker is not needed in a class, the instructor and DS should be notified immediately.
- Notetaking services will be discontinued if the student is not attending class.
- Students receiving notes may not share class notes received through DS with other students.

PRIORITY REGISTRATION

Priority registration allows students to register for their classes early in the registration period. Priority registration may be granted to students with disabilities on a case-by-case basis when there is a disability-related need. All priority registration requests are reviewed and approved by the Director of Disability Services or his/her designee. Eligibility for priority registration will be periodically reevaluated; prior approval does not constitute automatic entitlement for on-going eligibility.

Please follow the steps below to access priority registration.

- The student must complete an intake appointment with the Director of Disability Services. After the intake appointment, the student will have priority registration marked on his/her account.
- The student should make an appointment with his/her academic advisor as early as possible during the advising/registration period to plan a class schedule. The advisor will provide the student with an Advising Registration Code (ARC) that is required to access online registration.
- After meeting with an advisor and receiving the ARC, the student may register for classes online at the time assigned by the Office of the Registrar.

Please note:

- The student may consult with DS staff regarding academic advising and course registration, but it is still necessary for the student to meet with his/her academic advisor.
- After finalizing a class schedule with an advisor, the student should meet with a DS staff member if the student needs assistance in arranging accommodations for the upcoming semester(s).

SERVICE ANIMAL POLICY

Service animals are dogs or miniature horses trained to assist people with disabilities in the activities of daily living. The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) defines service animals as **“dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.** Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person’s disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.” If an animal meets this definition, it is considered a service animal regardless of whether it has been licensed or certified by a state or local government or a training program.

The ADA allows service animals accompanying persons with disabilities to be on the Western State Colorado University campus. A service animal must be permitted to accompany a person with a disability everywhere on campus except in situations where safety may be compromised or where the service animal may interfere with the fundamental nature of the activities being conducted.

The person a service animal assists is referred to as a partner. The partner’s disability may not be visible. If you are not sure whether an animal is a pet or a service animal, you may ask the individual if this is a service animal required because of a disability. You may also ask what function or task the animal does for the person. Although these two questions are allowed, you may not require a person to tell you details about his or her disability. Questions of a personal nature should be avoided.

A service dog can be any breed or size. It might wear specialized equipment such as a backpack, harness, or special collar or leash, but this is not a legal requirement.

Faculty, staff, and students should know the following about service animals:

- Allow a service animal to accompany the partner at all times and everywhere on campus, except where service animals are specifically prohibited. The courts have upheld the rights of service animal owners to take service animals into food service locations.
- Do not pet a service animal without first asking permission; touching the animal might distract it from its work.
- Speak first to the partner.
- Do not deliberately startle a service animal.
- Do not feed a service animal.
- Do not separate or attempt to separate a partner from his or her service animal.
- In case of an emergency, every effort should be made to keep the animal with its partner. However, the first effort should be toward the partner; this may necessitate leaving an animal behind in certain emergency situations.

The following are requirements of service animals and their partners:

- To be qualified to utilize a service animal for ongoing accommodation on the Western State Colorado University campus, the student/partner must register with the Disability Services office and supply appropriate documentation of disability. For questions and accommodation needs concerning the use of a service animal, please contact the Director of Disability Services.
- The animal cannot pose a direct threat to the health and safety of persons on the university campus.
- Local ordinances regarding animals apply to service animals, including requirements for immunization, licensing, noise, restraint, at-large animals and dangerous animals. Dogs must wear a license tag and a current rabies vaccination tag.
- The partner must be in full control of the animal at all times, including use of a leash, as appropriate for the disability. The care and supervision of a service animal is solely the responsibility of its partner. The animal must be maintained and used at all times in ways that do not create safety hazards for other people.
- The partner is responsible for cleaning up the animal's feces. The partner should always carry equipment and bags sufficient to clean up and properly dispose of the animal's feces. Partners who are not physically able to pick up and dispose of feces are responsible for making all necessary arrangements for assistance. The University is not responsible for these services.

TIME EXTENSION PROCEDURE

Western State Colorado University recognizes that as a result of disability, some students may be unable to satisfy specific course work requirements within the usual timeframe outlined in the course syllabus. Therefore, qualified students with disabilities may request that appropriate time extensions for tests, quizzes or assignments be considered. It should be noted, however, that if assignments are given in the syllabus a time extension may not be appropriate. In this case DS can work with you more closely on time management and planning skills to help you complete assignments in a timely manner.

The DS staff, in conjunction with appropriate University faculty, staff and administration, will review such requests on a case-by-case basis to determine eligibility and to reasonably accommodate qualified students with course-appropriate time extensions.

Students should follow the steps below to request time extensions:

- Complete a “Disability Services: Request for Time Extension Form” for each assignment/test/quiz in which s/he requests an extension at least one week in advance of the due date.
- Provide DS with complete, current documentation of disability. The documentation must include verification of disability, evidence of a disability-related need for the time extension, and justification for regarding the request as reasonable. Disability documentation guidelines are available from the DS office.
- Meet with the Director of Disability Services to discuss the request and review the documentation.

Note: Extension policies are not determined by DS. Assignments, tests and/or quizzes may be integral to the pedagogic (learning) process, therefore policies are set by faculty at the University, departmental, or individual level. Members of the faculty are not required to lower or affect substantial modifications of standards for accommodation purposes. It is ultimately at the discretion of the faculty member to address time extension policies with any student. Disability Services will assist in the communication and establishment of appropriate accommodations with the faculty involved in the request.

Once DS has received the student’s request, the following action will be taken:

- DS will review the student’s request. The appropriate University staff, academic departments and faculty may be consulted.
- DS will provide faculty, in writing, notification of the student’s request, verification of disability, and an opportunity to determine appropriate extensions based on the course content, academic requirements for successful progression and completion of the specific course.
- Disability Services will facilitate the communication process and a written agreement with the faculty, outlining the appropriate, if any, accommodations for his/her course will be provided to the student. Copies of the written agreement will be kept with the faculty, student and DS.
- If the student’s request for an extension is denied, the student may request a review by the office of Academic Affairs or follow appropriate procedures for filing a complaint based on disability.
- Assignments must be complete by the last day of final exams. If a student needs an extension beyond the last day of finals and is in compliance with academic policies, s/he may be granted an Incomplete.