

**MCHENRY COUNTY COLLEGE**

**SPECIAL NEEDS**

**DEPARTMENT**

**GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES**

These guidelines and procedures should not be considered a contract. They are designed to be used by students, faculty, staff, and administration in assessing reasonable, appropriate, proper procedures and accommodations. The guidelines and procedures contained herein may be changed at any time, with or without notice. Any questions may be directed to the Special Needs Coordinator.

## **WHO WE ARE**

The Special Needs Program at McHenry County College is designed to provide reasonable support for otherwise qualified students with disabilities so that they have the same opportunities as other students to succeed in college.

Whether a student has a documented learning, physical, or psychological disability, or other barriers to learning; our comprehensive support services may help the student achieve his or her potential. Some students in occupational programs who have limited English proficiency or are academically disadvantaged may also qualify for accommodations.

Our focus is on ability – not disability – as we help to provide equal access for students with special needs.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

To provide equal access to post-secondary education for students with disabilities and other special needs and to promote understanding and acceptance within the college community.

## **LINKAGES**

The success of our program depends on close working relationships with the high schools; with agencies such as the Division of Rehabilitation Services, Pioneer Center, and the Special Education District of McHenry County (SEDOM); and with other offices at MCC, including:

Counseling  
Advising and Transfer Center  
Financial Aid  
Career Services  
Sage Learning Center  
Athletics and Student Activities

## **LAWS**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

According to these laws, no otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of a public entity.

“Qualified”

The ADA specifies that a qualified individual with a disability is a person who, with or without reasonable modifications to rules, policies or practices, the removal of architectural, communication, or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements to receive services or participate in programs or activities provided by a public entity.

“Disability”

Section 504 and the ADA consider three categories of people with disabilities:

- A person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of that person.
- A person who has a record of such impairment.
- A person who, while not actually disabled is regarded as having such impairment.

Major life activities include walking, speaking, seeing, hearing, breathing, learning, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, and working.

## **ADA/SECTION 504 COORDINATOR**

McHenry County College has designated the following person as its ADA/Section 504 Coordinator to coordinate its efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under the ADA and Section 504:

Assistant Vice President of Human Resources  
McHenry County College  
8900 US Hwy 14, Room A244  
Crystal Lake, Illinois 60012-2738  
Phone: (815) 455-8737

## **SYLLABUS STATEMENT**

The following statement shall be included in the syllabus for every credit (including developmental) class offered through McHenry County College:

McHenry County College offers support services for students with special needs. The Special Needs Coordinator coordinates McHenry County College's special needs services. Please stop in or call the Special Needs Department, room A-257, 815-455-8676, as soon as possible if you would like more information about special needs services. It is the student's responsibility to meet with the Special Needs Coordinator and provide current documentation regarding his/her disability in support for a request for accommodations. In addition, it is important for students to discuss those accommodations with the course instructor so that all students are able to fully participate in this course.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS COORDINATOR**

Beverly C. Albright  
Special Needs Coordinator  
McHenry County College  
8900 US Hwy 14, Room A257  
Crystal Lake, Illinois 60012-2738  
Phone: (815)455-8676  
Email: [balbrigh@mchenry.edu](mailto:balbrigh@mchenry.edu)

## **STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Students** with disabilities who attend McHenry County College have the following **rights**:

- Equal access to courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities.
- Reasonable accommodations that provide equal opportunity.
- Access to auxiliary aids and/or assistive technology.
- Appropriate confidentiality of disability documentation. Information will only be released with written consent or whenever disclosure is required or permitted by law.

**Students** with disabilities who attend McHenry County College have the following **responsibilities**:

- Self-identify themselves with the Special Needs office by meeting with the Coordinator and providing appropriate documentation of disability(ies).
- Complete an “Accommodations Request Form” for each semester to indicate the support services needed for that semester.
- Provide a minimum of three weeks notice to the Special Needs Department for all major accommodation requests. Special accommodations for equipment may require more time.
- Provide a minimum of one week notice to the instructor and Special Needs Department for any testing accommodations.
- Seek information, academic and/or personal counseling, and assistance when needed.
- Adhere to course content, academic standards, code of conduct, policies and procedures set forth by the instructor, department, and/or college, as all students are required to follow.

## **COLLEGE'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**McHenry County College** has the following **rights**:

- Establish standards for courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities and to evaluate students based upon these standards.
- Require current appropriate documentation that supports the student's need for accommodations.
- Select among equally effective accommodations or auxiliary aides or services.
- Deny an unreasonable request for an accommodation that fundamentally alters a course, program, or activity at the college.

**McHenry County College**, through the Special Needs Department, has the following **responsibilities**:

- Serve as an advocate and liaison for students with disabilities and encourage them to become strong self-advocates.
- Reduce or eliminate physical, academic, and attitudinal barriers for qualified individuals with disabilities.
- Provide reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities who are otherwise qualified to participate in college courses, programs, and activities.
- Notify instructors of accommodation eligibility(ies) for students requesting support services. This is done on a semester by semester basis.
- Maintain confidentiality of documentation and other personal information except where permitted or required by law to make disclosure.

## **INTAKE PROCEDURE**

Every student who requests accommodations from the Special Needs Department must present current, appropriate documentation of his or her disability(ies) during an intake appointment with the Special Needs Coordinator. The intake appointment usually proceeds as follows:

- Student makes the intake appointment with the Special Needs Coordinator. It usually lasts about 30 minutes. Student may bring parents or another person to the appointment.
- Student must bring appropriate, current documentation of his/her disability to the intake appointment.
- During the intake appointment the coordinator will explain the purpose and procedures of the Special Needs department. The following paperwork will be completed by Special Needs staff:
  1. Intake Form/Release – Kept in student’s file with documentation.
  2. Special Needs Accommodation form – Accommodations that the student is eligible for are listed by Special Needs staff. The form will be given to student after the intake appointment along with the Special Needs Flyer.
  3. Certification Card Request form – Laminated cards are printed for students.
- The following paperwork will be completed by the student:
  1. Accommodations Request Form – If completed prior to beginning of the semester, services are coordinated just before the beginning of the semester. If completed after the semester has begun, services will begin as quickly as possible. Tutors will receive a copy of the student’s schedule so they can call the student to arrange for tutoring times. A schedule sheet is placed in the Master Binder so tutors can fill in their tutoring times for the student. If a student does not request a tutor for a class, but does request other services, the Coordinator will send an accommodations card to the instructor.
- A file will be opened for the student containing the Intake Form/Release and all documentation. The student's information will be entered into the Special Needs data base.

## **DOCUMENTATION**

Disability documentation must have a disability diagnosis, indicate academic accommodations needed as a result of the disability, and include the signature of a licensed clinical professional and the date of signature. This documentation may include high school individualized education plans (IEP's), ADA 504 plans, letters on appropriate letterhead, a completed Verification of Disability Form from the MCC Special Needs office, medical records, etc. Prescription slips DO NOT qualify as appropriate documentation. At a minimum, the documentation must include a diagnostic evaluation including, as appropriate, a psychological or medical evaluation which is no more than three years old. Exceptions may be necessary dependent upon individual circumstances and disability.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any and all materials contained within a student's Special Needs file shall remain confidential, pursuant to The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99). These materials shall include, but are not limited to: Special Needs intake form; medical and psychological records; high school individualized education plans (IEP's); correspondence from doctors or other appropriate professionals; notes from instructors, counselors, advisors, Special Needs staff, etc.

The contents of a student's Special Needs file may not be discussed over the phone or released to other individuals without the student's written consent. The student must sign a Documentation Release form in order to receive the contents of his or her Special Needs file.

## **ACCOMMODATIONS**

The Special Needs Program at McHenry County College is designed to provide reasonable support to otherwise qualified students with disabilities so that they have the same opportunities as other students to succeed in college. Whether a student has a documented learning, physical, or psychological disability or other barriers to learning; our comprehensive support services help the student achieve his or her potential. Some students in occupational programs who have limited English proficiency or are academically disadvantaged may also qualify for accommodations. Our focus is on ability – not disability – as we help to provide equal access for students with special needs. We are located in Room A-257.

Eligible students may access support services each semester by completing an "Accommodations Request Form", available in A-257. We highly recommend that each student discuss accommodations with his or her instructor(s).

### **Tutors**

Professional tutors offer one hour, per week, per course of small group tutoring for many of the courses available at MCC. Each can be reached at 815-479-7639 unless otherwise indicated. The tutoring services are at the expense of MCC.

### **Note Takers**

Many students who receive support through the Special Needs Department are eligible for a note taker in class. It is the student's responsibility to ask someone in the class to be his or her note taker. Occasionally the student may need the assistance of the instructor when arranging for a note taker. The instructor might make an announcement that a note taker is needed and to stop by after class if interested.

Once the student finds a note taker, that person needs to stop by the Special Needs office to complete the proper paperwork so he or she can be paid at the end of the semester. Special note taking paper is always available in A- 257. This paper is carbonized so the note taker can simply separate the pages and share their notes at the end of each class. In some cases it is not convenient to use this paper, so the notes may be copied in the Special Needs office.

### **Extended Testing Time**

If a student with special needs requests extended time for tests and/or quizzes, instructors can handle the request in a number of ways.

- Allow the student to begin the test before the class.
- Allow the student to continue working on the test after class.
- Send the test to the Testing Center, Room A-245, writing "No Charge" on top of the "Make-Up Exam Authorization" form.

## **Test Readers**

The Special Needs Department has test readers available to eligible students. Test reading is done in Room A-257. A message should be left on the voice mail (815-479-7548) with the following information:

- Name
- Phone number
- Course and instructor
- Date and time to take the test

At least **one week's** notice is required. They will call to set up a day and time for the test.

## **Private Testing**

Some students are eligible for private testing. This means that testing can be done in one of the rooms within the special needs area. Appointments for private testing should be made with the test readers by calling 815-479-7548

## **Taped Text Books**

Students eligible for taped text books need to see the department Secretary or Coordinator as soon as possible to determine an appropriate method of text conversion. They will need the syllabus for the course which will contain information regarding the course, section number, instructor, and schedule of assignments. Student's proof of purchase for the text book is required. Students are welcome to use Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic, at their own expense, as a source for tapes for their textbooks.

## **Classroom Aide**

Students with limited mobility and/or visual impairments may be eligible for an aide in the classroom. The request should be made before the semester begins to give the Special Needs department time to arrange for a student worker to provide assistance in the classroom.

## **Sign Language Interpreter**

Students with a hearing impairment may request a sign language interpreter for classes, tutoring, and college activities outside the classroom. The lead interpreter can be reached at 815-479-7548 or 815-479-7512 (TTY).

## **Assistive Equipment and Technology**

A variety of assistive equipment and technology is available for eligible students. All requests should be made to the Special Needs Coordinator, 815-455-8676.

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

McHenry County College has adopted this grievance procedure to assure the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints that the College has violated the ADA or Section 504, including complaints alleging retaliation for having complained of or opposed a violation of the ADA or Section 504.

Any student who wishes to make a complaint of a violation of the ADA or Section 504, including a complaint of retaliation, may do so by contacting the Special Needs Coordinator. The College prefers to receive complaints in writing, although alternative methods of communication, such as a personal or telephone interview, e-mail, or a tape recording, are acceptable. All complaints must be signed by the complainant. The complainant must provide his or her name and address and describe the alleged violation in as much detail as possible, including the date(s) and people involved. The College asks that the complainant make the complaint as soon after the alleged violation as possible, in order to allow a prompt investigation. All complaints must be filed within 180 days of the event or activity which is the subject of the complaint.

Upon receiving the complaint, the Special Needs Coordinator or designee thereof will promptly investigate the complaint and determine whether the complaint can be resolved. When the investigation is complete, the Special Needs Coordinator will communicate to the complainant the result of the investigation and any resolution.

If the complaint relates to a requested accommodation, and the Special Needs Coordinator determines that a requested accommodation would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the College's programs, services, or activities, or in an undue financial or administrative burden, the Special Needs Coordinator will provide the complainant with a written statement of the reasons for reaching this determination. The Special Needs Coordinator will also work with the complainant to attempt to identify alternative action by the College that would not result in such an alteration or such burdens, but would nevertheless ensure that the complainant receives the benefits and services of the College's programs and activities.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Special Needs Coordinator's response, he or she may request reconsideration. The complainant may request reconsideration by submitting a written request to:

Jonathan Birnbaum  
Dean, Library & Academic Support Services  
McHenry County College  
8900 US Hwy 14, Room A212  
Crystal Lake, Illinois 60012-2738  
Phone: (815) 479-7545  
Email: [jbirnbau@mchenry.edu](mailto:jbirnbau@mchenry.edu)

The government enforcement agency for the ADA and Section 504 is the Office for Civil Rights. Complaints to that agency may be directed to:

Chicago Office  
Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education  
111 N. Canal Street, Suite 1053  
Chicago, IL 60606-7204  
Phone: 312-886-8434  
FAX: 312-353-4888; TDD: 877-521-2172  
Email: [OCR.Chicago@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.Chicago@ed.gov)