

ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL



Northeast State Community College
Blountville, TN

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Table of Contents

Section 1.....	Introduction
Section 2.....	Purpose Statement
Section 3.....	Administrative Organization of Accessibility Services
Section 4.....	Procedure for registering with Accessibility Services
Section 5.....	Documentation of Disability
Section 6.....	Responsibilities of Accessibility Services Staff
Section 7.....	Responsibilities of Faculty
Section 8.....	Responsibilities of Students
Section 9.....	Provisions of Services to Qualified Students with Disabilities
Section 10.....	Grievance Procedure
Section 11.....	Parental Involvement
Section 12.....	Disciplinary Offenses Committed by a Student with a Disability
Section 13.....	Accommodations and Assistive Technology
Section 14.....	Accommodations in Dual Enrollment Classes
Section 15.....	Service Animals on Campus
Appendix A: Policy on Testing Accommodations	

Section 1 Introduction

Accessibility Services provides ongoing assistance to faculty, staff, and students regarding the institution's obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Students who are registered with the office are eligible to receive services and accommodations.

The Accessibility Services staff at Northeast State works to provide reasonable accommodations and assure that campus programs and activities are accessible to students with disabilities.

It is the responsibility of this office to:

- Review disability documentation and determine student status under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Determine reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities
- Assist students with development of effective self-advocacy and learning skills
- Provide suggestions to instructors about provision of approved accommodations
- Locate and maintain resources to assist instructors in student's individual needs
- Assist the student and instructor in the communication process regarding accommodations when necessary

Section 2 Purpose Statement of Accessibility Services

Accessibility Services of Northeast State Community College is committed to improving educational opportunities for qualified students with disabilities and to enhancing understanding and support within the campus community. This will be accomplished through direct and indirect assistance to students with disabilities, encouragement of independence, creation and maintenance of an accessible physical environment, and a supportive psychological environment.

Section 3 Administrative Organization of the Accessibility Services Office

3.1 General Information

Accessibility Services is a department of the Division of Student Development, and is under the supervision of the Assistant Vice President for Student Engagement and Success, and the Vice President for Institutional Excellence and Student Success. Accessibility Services is staffed by experienced professionals who coordinate the accommodations and support services for all students with disabilities on campus.

The office also employs temporary part-time interpreters as needed. Lab assistants and student workers provide services based on need, experience, and availability.

3.2 General Accessibility Services Administration

3.2.1 Office Hours

Blountville Campus Accessibility Services is open and available to serve students, faculty, and staff from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Kingsport Center for Higher Education (KCHE) – Hours of operation may vary each term based on student needs.

Elizabethton Campus – Hours of operation may vary each term based on student needs.

3.2.2 Telephone

Telephone calls are answered in a friendly and professional manner. Typically, support staff answer incoming calls. If the caller requires general information, the support staff members should respond. If the caller requires specific information, the staff member should screen the call thoroughly and transfer the information and caller to the appropriate individual.

3.2.3. Personnel Policies

The personnel policies of staff members are outlined in the Northeast State Policies and Procedures Manual, which is available to all employees and discussed during orientation.

3.2.4. Appointments with Office Staff

Students, staff, and faculty are not required to make appointments. However, to ensure the availability of the staff person with whom the appointment is needed, appointments are strongly recommended. Students needing assistance with registering with the office, scheduling classes, or in need of counseling/coaching services are strongly encouraged to make an appointment to ensure availability of staff.

3.2.5. Confidentiality of Records

All records, including medical and psychological documentation, and conversations between the student, their family, and Accessibility Services are confidential and entitled to the protection ordinarily given a counseling relationship. Northeast State assures the confidentiality of student educational records in accordance with Northeast State rules and state and federal laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (Buckley Amendment). FERPA's primary intent is to provide students access to their educational records and to limit dissemination of personally identifiable information without the student's written consent.

Section 4 Accessibility Services Registration Process

Northeast State and Accessibility Services make every effort to inform current and potential students about services for qualified students with disabilities. In order to receive services from Accessibility Services, a student must self-identify as having a disability, complete appropriate forms, and provide appropriate documentation. The coordinator will meet individually with students who self-identify and discuss the need for accommodations and/or modifications in the classroom or for college-sponsored activities.

Section 5 Documentation of Disability

The student who voluntarily discloses their disability will be asked to provide recent documentation (in most cases, within the last 3-5 years) of the disability. Documentation could include medical findings, psychological, and/or education assessments. This documentation should include a complete diagnosis, including any appropriate test scores and findings, and how the disability impacts the student in an academic setting. Ideally, the report should include recommendations for accommodations as well as an explanation as to why each accommodation is recommended. A disability must limit the student's ability to function on an equal basis in the classroom or related activities in order to receive accommodations.

Section 6 Accessibility Services Staff Responsibilities

Accessibility Services staff will:

1. Inform prospective and new students about the availability of services and how to self-identify.
2. Meet with students who self-identify as having a disability and develop an individual academic accommodation plan for each student with a documented disability who requests accommodation.
3. Maintain confidential student files.
4. Identify the physical or academic barriers for students with disabilities and seek methods to eliminate or neutralize them.
5. Identify adaptive equipment, classroom modifications, and campus and community resources for students with disabilities.
6. Serve as a liaison between students with disabilities and faculty/staff and other appropriate referral or support agencies or programs.
7. Provide and promote activities that enhance faculty/staff awareness of students with disabilities and their particular needs.
8. Serve as an advocate for students with disabilities, while encouraging students to begin advocating for themselves in preparation for obtaining their goals for the future.

Section 7 Responsibilities of Faculty

All faculty members are required by law to allow and/or provide reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

The faculty member will:

1. Provide or permit the reasonable and appropriate accommodation(s) recommended for each student as outlined in the accommodation letter from the Accessibility Services office.
2. Meet with the student to discuss the academic accommodations that are requested or recommended by Accessibility Services.
3. Consult with Accessibility Services for clarification of a student's accommodation plan and/or any issue related to reasonable accommodations.
4. Maintain confidentiality of student accommodation requests.
5. Refer students who request accommodations but have not self-identified to Accessibility Services.
6. Other than for appropriate accommodations, treat the student with a disability the same as other students.

Section 8 Responsibilities of Students

Students with disabilities are encouraged to self-identify, although doing so is completely voluntary. However, in order to receive academic accommodations for classes, students must be registered with Accessibility Services.

Once the Accessibility Services registration process is complete, the student will:

1. Request their term specific Faculty Accommodation Letter each semester.
2. Provide a copy of their Faculty Accommodation Letter to each faculty member for any course they choose to utilize their approved accommodations in.
3. Notify Accessibility Services immediately if there is any question or dispute about a reasonable academic accommodation request.
4. Comply with all policies and procedures of Accessibility Services and the general rules for student conduct as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Section 9 Provision of Services to Qualified Students with Disabilities

Students who have registered with Accessibility Services as having a disability may be eligible for a wide range of services and support, depending on the individual needs of each student. In general, these services are provided at no cost to the student. The college provides accommodations unless they cause a fundamental alteration in the academic standards of the college, or cause undue hardship on the college. Individually prescribed devices, personal care attendants, tutors, readers for personal use, or other study devices of a personal nature are not the responsibility of the college.

At the time the accommodation plan is developed, students are instructed to report any problems with classes or suggested accommodations as soon as the student is aware there is a problem. The Accessibility Services staff will make every effort to make reasonable adjustments or add additional support services so that the student has equal access in the class. An instructor may also make the Accessibility Services staff aware of problems that a qualified student appears to be having in their class, and ask for assistance in providing needed support within the classroom. It is suggested that students check in regularly with Accessibility Services staff to report on their progress so that any changes to accommodations can be made as soon as possible. The student has the right to and may refuse any accommodations that have been suggested.

9.1 Tutoring

Northeast State Community College provides free peer and professional tutoring through The Learning Center located room L103 and TRiO Student Support Services located in room C2428.

9.2 Assistive Equipment

An Assistive Computer Lab is available in the Accessibility Services office on the Blountville campus and is open to all qualified students with disabilities. The lab is equipped with a variety of equipment that provides needed accommodations/modifications for many different disabilities, such as voice recognition software, text enlarging software, Internet access with screen reading capabilities, and a CCTV which can be moved from campus to campus.

Students with mild to moderate hearing loss may borrow a FM listening system from the Accessibility Services office. Also available for loan are audio recorders and computer-aided note taking software. Students are required to check-out equipment. If equipment is not returned at the end of the semester for which it was checked out, a hold will be placed on the student's records until the equipment is returned or payment is made for lost or damaged equipment.

9.3 Alternate Format Textbooks/Audio Textbooks

Students with visual or learning disabilities may request books on PDF, when digital version is not available. It is the student's responsibilities to notify Accessibility Services

if these textbooks are needed, and this should be discussed during the initial interview with the student. The student is required to fill out a request form for books on PDF and show proof of purchase of textbooks before requests can be honored.

9.4 Note-takers

Students with a variety of disabilities may need a note-taker. Instructors may assist the student in locating another student in the class, or the student may select someone on their own who agrees to provide a copy of the class notes to the student with a disability. Accessibility Services keeps note-taker paper available. Having a note-taker does not relieve the student with a disability from the responsibility of attending class. Alternative forms of assistive note taking devices and software are also available through Accessibility Services to create more independent forms of accommodating note taking assistance.

9.5 Recording Class Lectures

Audio recording class lectures and discussions is one of the few accommodations that is specifically named in federal legislation as an appropriate accommodation. Students with qualified disabilities are allowed to use audio recording devices and/or software in class for personal study use. Recorded lectures may not be used for any purpose other than for personal study. Recorded lectures may not be used in any way against the faculty member, other lecturers, or students who classroom comments are taped as a part of the class activity. Instructors who are concerned about copyright infringement may want to develop a contract between themselves and the student with a disability who uses an audio recording accommodation in class. Information contained in the recorded lecture is protected under federal copyright laws and may not be published without the consent of the lecturer.

9.6 Test Modifications

Extended time for test taking is allowed on an individual basis and is always requested in the initial accommodation notification to faculty. Under no circumstances is unlimited time allowed, unless this option is available to all students in the class. Time-and-a-half is the standard for extended time, but may be extended, depending on the difficulty and nature of the test being administered, as well as the student's specific limitations.

Alternative location for testing is worked out between the student, the instructor, and Accessibility Services. It is the responsibility of the student who has been approved for testing accommodations and want to test in Accessibility Services to schedule a date online at Online Testing Registration. Students must then notify their instructor no less than a minimum of 48 hours in advance of the scheduled testing date.

9.7 Interpreters

Students who are deaf or hard of hearing and utilize sign language as their primary means of communication will be provided with an interpreter in all classes and labs. Interpreter schedules are coordinated each semester to ensure that all classes are covered. It is the student's responsibility to notify Accessibility Services of the need for interpreters each semester. In most cases, a two-week notice prior to the beginning of the semester is necessary in order to coordinate schedules for interpreters. Students needing an interpreter for extracurricular activities, special meetings, or other events must email Accessibility@NortheastState.edu as soon as possible, but no less than 48 hours prior to the event. These requests may or may not be filled, depending on the availability of an interpreter at the time requested. In rare cases, it may not be possible to provide an interpreter for class or lab, due to illness or scheduling conflicts. At those times, the instructor will be notified in advance, and appropriate alternate materials will be provided.

9.8 Readers and Scribes

Assistive software for reading and writing is available for students. Students will be encouraged to develop competency to use software for assignments, quizzes, and tests. Readers may be provided for a student with visual impairments or a reading disability on a case-by-case basis. Readers are Accessibility Services student workers or staff.

Scribes are provided for people with visual impairments, motor difficulties, or written language disabilities. Scribes serve as the hands of the student with a disability, and provide no other assistance other than putting on paper what is dictated by the student with a disability.

In certain cases, a person may serve both as a reader and a scribe, for instance, when reading a test to a student and recording their answers.

9.9 Other Support Services

Since support services are provided to students on an individual basis, this list is not meant to be exhaustive. The college also provides career and personal counseling, academic advising, financial aid advising, job placement services, and a variety of other services that are available to the general college population. Accessibility Services will be happy to coordinate these other services for the student with a disability if the office is made aware of a need for such services.

Section 10 Grievance Procedure

All students have access to established procedures for respectfully presenting and addressing their concerns/complaints to the college. If a student with a disability feels they have been treated unfairly or discriminated against because of the disability, the student should contact Accessibility Services and the appropriate staff member will attempt to resolve the issue by acting as a mediator between the student and the offending party. If the student is not satisfied with this resolution, the student should contact the college's Assistant Director of Policy and Compliance to file a complaint. The Assistant Director of Policy and Compliance will investigate the situation thoroughly and may involve the Vice President for Institutional Excellence & Student Success in the investigation. Upon completion of the investigation, the student will receive a written description of the investigation and the findings of the Policy and Compliance office.

Section 11 Parental Involvement

While we recognize that many students coming directly from high school have had the support of their parents all through school and, in many cases, have had decisions made by their parents as well, the student and parent must realize that the student is to be treated as an adult at the college level. In all cases, the student will make decisions on accommodations and other support services. No information will be released to parents without student consent, including grades and performance in classes. While parents may be present at meetings and conferences with the student, all questions and conversation will be directed to the student. It is our goal to advise and make appropriate suggestions so that the student can make informed decisions, helping to develop a person who can advocate for themselves as they progress through college and beyond.

Section 12 Disciplinary Offenses Committed by a Student with a Disability

Students with disabilities are expected to follow the same disciplinary policies as outlined in the Student Handbook as are students without disabilities. Generally, through appropriate due process procedures, institutional disciplinary measures shall be imposed for conduct which adversely affects the institution's pursuit of its educational objectives, which violates or shows a disregard for the rights of other members of the academic community, or which endangers property or persons or the institution or institution-controlled property. Any conduct which constitutes a danger to any person's health, safety, or personal well-being, including physical abuse, verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, harassment, coercion, or any other conduct which threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person is subject to disciplinary action.

Section 13 Accommodations and Assistive Technology

Accommodations and assistive technology should be individually prescribed and based on functional limitations evidenced by sound diagnostic measures. The following accommodations are representative of those commonly used in the higher education environment; this list is not exhaustive:

1. Extended time for tests
2. Low-distraction test location
3. Preferential seating
4. Other materials in alternate format
5. Reader or scribe services
6. Assistive technology software
7. Audio recorder for class lectures or discussions
8. Permission to take breaks during class

Tutoring is not a service provided through Accessibility Services. The college offers free tutoring to all students through The Learning Center located in L103 and TRiO Student Support Services located in room C2428.

Section 14 Process to Receive Accommodations in Dual Enrollment Classes

The student should contact Accessibility Services at Northeast State as soon as possible to self-identify, submit documentation, and request accommodations. Colleges are not under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) so accommodations may be different. Accommodations are not retroactive. Contact Accessibility Services each semester before classes begin to request accommodations. Even if students have a 504 Plan or an IEP in high school, they may not receive the same accommodations in college dual enrollment classes.

Section 15 Service Animals on Campus

Service animal as defined by Title II (2) and Title III (3) of the ADA means:

“Any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability.”

Tasks performed can include, among other things, pulling a wheelchair, retrieving dropped items, alerting a person to a sound, reminding a person to take medication, or pressing an elevator button.

Emotional support animals, comfort animals, and therapy dogs are not service animals under Title II (2) and Title III (3) of the ADA. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained, or untrained are not considered service animals. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability. It does not matter if a person has a note from a doctor that states that the person has a disability and needs to have the animal for emotional support.

Northeast State employees should not make assumptions about whether a dog present on campus is a service animal. Remember, disability is hidden more often than not. Let the dog's behavior dictate your course of action.

1. When you see a dog on campus (A service animal should be a dog, or in rare cases, a miniature horse.)
 - a. How is the dog behaving?
 - i. Working Dog Behavior – no need to ask questions
 1. Is in a harness or leash (unless obviously performing a task that requires being off leash)
 2. Follows verbal or hand commands and remains “at attention”
 - b. Untrained Dog Behavior – appropriate personnel may ask questions
 - i. Is engaging in “normal dog” behavior such as sniffing around or greeting people
 - ii. Is off leash or harness (for example inside a purse or jacket)
 - iii. Is having difficulty following commands of handler (partner)
 1. Is barking, growling, jumping, soiling, etc.
 2. Is running loose
 3. Is ignoring commands of handler (partner) or not being given direction

Section 16 Accessibility Services Information for Faculty

Accommodation Letters:

1. Students who are registered with Accessibility Services are to request their accommodation letter at the beginning of each semester. Letters will be sent to the student's Northeast State student email, not D2L email. It is up to the student to either forward their letter to their instructors or they may choose to print them out and hand carry to their instructor.
2. The accommodation letter is very confidential and should not be discussed with anyone other than the student or Accessibility Services staff. Faculty should not discuss the student's disability in front of others. Students should contact Accessibility Services if a faculty member discloses their disability to other students.
3. The student is to speak to their instructor individually regarding their accommodations; however, if the student does not communicate with the instructor, the instructor may take the initiative to communicate with the student privately.

Appendix A: Policy on Testing Accommodations

Based on suggested accommodations documented in the Needs Assessment, some students may need to have tests administered in Accessibility Services. In order to provide the highest quality service to all students and faculty, the following policy on testing accommodations will be always in effect.

1. If a student needs a testing room, access to software, a reader, or scribe for any quiz or exam in the Accessibility Services office, students must schedule a testing appointment at least two days in advance of the test date. Failure to do this may result in services not being available to the student at the time they had planned. It is the student's responsibility to let the instructor know that they will be taking the exam in Accessibility Services by providing email communication to their instructor in a timely manner.
2. Extended time allowed for tests will be set by a student's instructor based on the amount of time the class is allowed on the exam. Typically, time and a half is sufficient, but may be increased based on documentation presented by the student. Except in very unusual circumstances, a test should be finished on the same day it was begun.
3. All books, book bags, cell phones, and other electronic devices will be placed in the appropriate area prior to students receiving their test. Only materials approved by the instructor will be allowed in the testing room.
4. At the time the instructor is contacted by the student regarding their intent to take a test in the Accessibility Services office, arrangements should be made for delivery of testing materials, either through e-mail or in person. The instructor must utilize the Testing Cover Sheet to indicate whether any special materials or equipment is to be allowed for the test.
5. The instructor will have the choice of either picking up the exam or it can be scanned/e-mailed to the instructor upon request. Under no circumstances can an exam either complete or incomplete be delivered to Accessibility Services or taken from the Accessibility Services office by the testing student.
6. During a test, students may not leave the room to smoke, eat, drink, go to the restroom, make a phone call, etc. Barring an emergency, students should not leave the testing room during the exam.
7. It is imperative that a student arrive on time for a test scheduled in the Accessibility Services office, since another student may have a test scheduled immediately afterwards. If a student arrives late for a test in which they are receiving extended time, the student will be given only the time remaining in the allotted time period the student had reserved to complete the test.
8. If a student must use a computer, one will be provided. A student may not use their own computer for a test unless it has been authorized in writing by the student's instructor.
9. If a student is caught cheating, the test will be taken up immediately, and the student's instructor will be notified. The student and the instructor will meet to determine the dispensation of this and any further tests being taken in Accessibility Services.
10. Exceptions or modifications to these guidelines may be made at the discretion of the Accessibility Coordinator.