

# DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES

ECC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the College's educational programs. It is the policy and practice of the college to promote inclusive learning environments. If a student has a documented disability, they may be eligible for reasonable accommodations in compliance with college policy, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and/or the NJ Law Against Discrimination. Please note, students are not permitted to negotiate accommodations directly with professors, Chairpersons, and Deans. To request accommodations or assistance, a student must self-identify with the Office of Student Development and Counseling, Coordinator of Disability Services. The Coordinator of Disability Services is available on the main campus in Room 4122 and may also be reached by telephone at 973-877-3071 or by email at [disability@essex.edu](mailto:disability@essex.edu).



## THE OFFICE OF STUDENT DEVELOPMENT & COUNSELING DISABILITY SERVICES

"DISABILITY DOES NOT DISABLE DREAMS" - DHAR MANN



**MARIA MERCADO,**  
COORDINATOR, DISABILITY SERVICES

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**ROOM 4122-I 8:30AM - 4:30PM**

### SERVICES PROVIDED

- ACCOMMODATION LETTERS
- STUDENT REFERRAL PROGRAM
- RELAXATION TECHNIQUES
- ACQUIRING PDF VERSIONS OF TEXTBOOKS
- COMMUNICATING WITH PROFESSORS AND CHAIRPERSONS

In accordance with the requirements of USIDE Guidelines IV-C, Title VI, 34 C.F.R. § 100.6 (d), Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and other federal, state and local laws, and in accordance with our values, Essex County College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy, disability, or sex gender, identity or expression, in the administration of any of its services, educational programs and activities or in its hiring or employment practices.

De acuerdo con los requisitos de los Planes IV-C de USIDE, Título VI, 34 C.F.R. § 100.6 (d), Título VI y Título VII de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964, Sección 504 de la Ley de Rehabilitación de 1973, la Ley de Envejecimiento con Discapacidad, la Ley de Discriminación por Edad de 1975, el Título IX de las Enmiendas de 1972 y otras leyes federales, estatales y locales, y de acuerdo con nuestros valores, Essex County College no discrimina por motivos de raza, color, religión, credo, origen nacional o étnico, orientación sexual, edad, embarazo, discapacidad o sexo, identidad o expresión de género, en la administración de cualquiera de sus servicios, programas educativos y actividades o en sus prácticas de contratación o empleo.

An accommodation is a different way to do a particular task. An accommodation must also be necessary for the student to perform well and does not change the nature of the expectations of the course. It is important to make sure that all accommodations are "reasonable" in nature, otherwise the institution will have the right to refuse what is requested. For instance, requesting the use of a calculator in a remedial mathematics class that is based on computation would not be reasonable. An accommodation could, for example, include allowing a student with a disability to tape record lectures instead of taking notes.

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), an accommodation cannot alter the nature of the course or program.

Appropriate academic accommodations create equal access to education, as long as they do not create a substantial change to an essential component of the curriculum. The college determines this aspect. An accommodation is a change that: 1) is required by law, 2) helps students with disabilities have a fair chance of success, 3) gives an equal chance to learn in, work in, and enter a building or other facility, 4) is chosen for the individual student's needs, and 5) is needed when similar tasks are done in other places. The college makes a reasonable effort to provide accommodations. However, students with a disability must meet all academic prerequisites and requirements of their courses and programs.

Reasonable accommodations must be individualized and flexible. They must also be based on the nature and severity of the disability for a particular student and in relationship to the conditions of an academic environment. An accommodation cannot be provided if it is determined that it jeopardizes the integrity of a course or program.

Asking for an accommodation is a personal choice that each student makes themselves. Some students may not want to request accommodations for various reasons. Some feel that they can manage a class without using an accommodation. Choosing not to receive an accommodation is up to the individual; however, it may be to their advantage to do so as it may assist them in being able to complete their class work in a successful manner and pass their courses. It is especially important to ask for an accommodation early in the semester rather than later. Such requests are best made before the end of the Add/Drop period. This is particularly critical before the first examination since any that are requested afterward do not alter the initial performance in the course. This is to say that an accommodation is not retroactive. Ideally, requests for accommodations should be made during the first week of class, after the student has attended the first class session, received the course syllabus, confirmed the name of the instructor, and decided on their semester schedule. Of course, an accommodation can only be made after the appropriate documentation on the nature and severity of the disability, and how it impacts a major life area, has been reviewed.

### When is Accommodation Required

A college is only required to accommodate a "known" disability of an otherwise qualified applicant or student. The requirement will generally be initiated by a request from an individual with a disability.

Accommodations must be made on an individual basis, since the nature and extent of a disabling condition will vary with each individual.

If the individual does not request an accommodation, the school is not obligated to provide one. If a student with a documented disability requests a specific accommodation, the college may offer that accommodation or an alternative one if the alternative would also be effective. The actual responsibility for determining eligibility of a student for any accommodations rests with the institution.

### Accommodations

Academic accommodations should be reasonable and individualized.

Some faculty have expressed concerns that they are receiving accommodation letters for students that stipulate double-time for examinations and completion of other assignments. They find this troubling with respect to maintaining academic standards.

### What is an Accommodation

A reasonable accommodation is a modification in the way that something is done that is acceptable to both the institution and the student.

Under the law, only if the student has disclosed a disability to the appropriate individual or office, and provided appropriate documentation is the instructor responsible for providing any accommodation.

Appropriate documentary verification of both the nature and severity of the disability is required, such as a psycho-educational assessment report for a student with a specific learning disability or for another with an emotional disability.

**Reasonable Accommodation**

Reasonable accommodation is a key nondiscrimination requirement of the ADA due to the unique nature of discrimination experienced by individuals with disabilities. A reasonable accommodation is any adjustment or modification to a school environment that will enable a qualified applicant or student with a disability to participate in the educational process. Many individuals with disabilities can perform academically without any need for accommodations. Yet there are others who could be excluded because of the existence of unnecessary barriers.

The notion of reasonable accommodation also includes adjustments to assure that a qualified individual with a disability has rights and privileges in school equal to those of students without disabilities. Accommodations do not substantially change the instructional level, the content or the performance criteria, but are made in order to provide a student equal access to learning and equal opportunity to demonstrate what is known. Accommodations shall not alter the content of any test or provide inappropriate assistance to the student within the context of the test.

**Essential Academic Standards**

The concept of essential academic standards ensures that colleges and universities cannot fundamentally alter their programs of instruction to accommodate students with disabilities. Essential academic tasks are those activities that are fundamental and necessary to meet the critical course or program requirements, as well as certification or licensing requirements. The necessity of colleges and universities to insist that students with disabilities meet all academic standards, such as maintaining a certain grade point average (GPA), as well as the technical standards has been upheld in the courts.