

Disability Services Student Handbook
2010-2011

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Section 1: An Overview

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I. Philosophy and Purpose

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

Meredith College's goal is to create an accessible community where people are judged on their abilities not their disabilities. The Disability Services staff strives to provide individuals with the tools by which they can better accomplish their educational goals.

In post-secondary settings, it is the student's responsibility to request accommodations, if desired. It is important to remember that not every student with a disability needs an accommodation. It is equally important to remember that even though two individuals may have the same disability, they may not need the same accommodation.

Disability Services provides, arranges, and coordinates accommodations for students in courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities. The Disability Services staff maintains disability-related documents, certifies eligibility for services, determines reasonable accommodations and develops plans for the provision of such accommodations for students with disabilities.

II. Our Mission

The Counseling Center/Disability Services is committed to providing confidential, culturally-competent and evidence-based counseling and disability services to students. Our philosophy encourages students' empowerment, the development of individual strengths, greater independence, and self-advocacy.

III. Learning Outcomes

Students using the Counseling Center/Disability Services will:

- use counseling services to identify individual goals to address personal problems.
- improve their quality of life.
- identify and utilize support resources and crisis services.
- understand and follow policy and procedures to appropriately access disability services.
- demonstrate self advocacy with an understanding of their rights and responsibilities.
- demonstrate greater independence.

Faculty and Staff will:

- refer students to Counseling Center/Disability Services.
- provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations as recommended by DS staff.
- consult and partner with CC/DS regarding student and community welfare.
- will promote and maintain an accessible community.

IV. The Law and College Student with Disabilities

Legal Issues:

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 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. Neither law requires that faculty change written and approved course standards; however, the faculty member may need to adjust teaching methods, evaluation tools and other instructional elements.

"Qualified" with respect to educational services, means "a person who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the education program or activity, 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."

"Person with a disability" means "any person who 1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities [including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, thinking, concentrating, and working], 2) has a record of such an impairment, or 3) is regarded as having such an impairment."

Disabilities covered by legislation include (but are not limited to) AIDS, Cancer, Cerebral Palsy, Diabetes, Epilepsy, head injuries, hearing impairments, specific learning disabilities, loss of limbs, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, psychiatric disorders, speech impairments, spinal cord injuries, and visual impairments.

Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities¹

More and more high school students with disabilities are planning to continue their education in postsecondary schools, including vocational and career schools, two- and four- year colleges, and universities. As a student with a disability, you need to be well informed about your rights and responsibilities as well as the responsibilities postsecondary schools have toward you.

¹ Reproduced with permission: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, *Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities*, Washington, D.C., 2006

This pamphlet is available online www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html

Being well informed will help ensure you have a full opportunity to enjoy the benefits of the postsecondary education experience without confusion or delay.

The information in this pamphlet, provided by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the U. S. Department of Education, explains the rights and responsibilities of students with disabilities who are preparing to attend postsecondary schools. This pamphlet also explains the obligations of a postsecondary school to provide academic adjustments, including auxiliary aids and services, to ensure the school does not discriminate on the basis of disability.

OCR enforces Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II), which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. Practically every school district and postsecondary school in the United States is subject to one or both of these laws, which have similar requirements.

Although both school districts and postsecondary schools must comply with these same laws, the responsibilities of postsecondary schools are significantly different from those of school districts.

Moreover, you will have responsibilities as a postsecondary student that you do not have as a high school student. OCR strongly encourages you to know your responsibilities and those of postsecondary schools under Section 504 and Title II. Doing so will improve your opportunity to succeed as you enter postsecondary education.

The following questions and answers provide more specific information to help you succeed.

As a student with a disability leaving high school and entering postsecondary education, will I see differences in my rights and how they are addressed?

Yes. Section 504 and Title II protect elementary, secondary and postsecondary students from discrimination. Nevertheless, several of the requirements that apply through high school are different from the requirements that apply beyond high school. For instance, Section 504 requires a school district to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to each child with a disability in the district's jurisdiction. Whatever the disability, a school district must identify an individual's education needs and provide any regular or special education and related aids and services necessary to meet those needs as well as it is meeting the needs of students without disabilities.

Unlike your high school, your postsecondary school is not required to provide FAPE. Rather, your postsecondary school is required to provide appropriate academic adjustments as necessary to ensure that it does not discriminate on the basis of disability. In addition, if your postsecondary school provides housing to nondisabled students, it must provide comparable, convenient and accessible housing to students with disabilities at the same cost.

Other important differences you need to know, even before you arrive at your postsecondary school, are addressed in the remaining questions.

May a postsecondary school deny my admission because I have a disability?

No. If you meet the essential requirements for admission, a postsecondary school may not deny your admission simply because you have a disability.

Do I have to inform a postsecondary school that I have a disability?

No. However, if you want the school to provide an academic adjustment, you must identify yourself as having a disability. Likewise, you should let the school know about your disability if you want to ensure that you are assigned to accessible facilities. In any event, your disclosure of a disability is always voluntary.

What academic adjustments must a postsecondary school provide?

The appropriate academic adjustment must be determined based on your disability and individual needs. Academic adjustments may include auxiliary aids and modifications to academic requirements as are necessary to ensure equal educational opportunity. Examples of such adjustments are arranging for priority registration; reducing a course load; substituting one course for another; providing note takers, recording devices, sign language interpreters, extended time for testing and, if telephones are provided in dorm rooms, a TTY in your dorm room; and equipping school computers with screen-reading, voice recognition or other adaptive software or hardware.

In providing an academic adjustment, your postsecondary school is not required to lower or effect substantial modifications to essential requirements. For example, although your school may be required to provide extended testing time, it is not required to change the substantive content of the test. In addition, your postsecondary school does not have to make modifications that would fundamentally alter the nature of a service, program or activity or would result in undue financial or administrative burdens. Finally, your postsecondary school does not have to provide personal attendants, individually prescribed devices, readers for personal use or study, or other devices or services of a personal nature, such as tutoring and typing.

If I want an academic adjustment, what must I do?

You must inform the school that you have a disability and need an academic adjustment. Unlike your school district, your postsecondary school is not required to identify you as having a disability or assess your needs.

Your postsecondary school may require you to follow reasonable procedures to request an academic adjustment. You are responsible for knowing and following these procedures.

Postsecondary schools usually include, in their publications providing general information, information on the procedures and contacts for requesting an academic adjustment. Such publications include recruitment materials, catalogs and student handbooks, and are often available on school Web sites. Many schools also have staff whose purpose is to assist students with disabilities. If you are unable to locate the procedures, ask a school official, such as an admissions officer or counselor.

When should I request an academic adjustment?

Although you may request an academic adjustment from your postsecondary school at any time, you should request it as early as possible. Some academic adjustments may take more time to provide than others. You should follow your school's procedures to ensure that your school has enough time to review your request and provide an appropriate academic adjustment.

Do I have to prove that I have a disability to obtain an academic adjustment?

Generally, yes. Your school will probably require you to provide documentation that shows you have a current disability and need an academic adjustment.

What documentation should I provide?

Schools may set reasonable standards for documentation. Some schools require more documentation than others. They may require you to provide documentation prepared by an appropriate professional, such as a medical doctor, psychologist or other qualified diagnostician. The required documentation may include one or more of the following: a diagnosis of your current disability; the date of the diagnosis; how the diagnosis was reached; the credentials of the professional; how your disability affects a major life activity; and how the disability affects your academic performance. The documentation should provide enough information for you and your school to decide what is an appropriate academic adjustment.

Although an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan, if you have one, may help identify services that have been effective for you, it generally is not sufficient documentation. This is because postsecondary education presents different demands than high school education, and what you need to meet these new demands may be different. Also in some cases, the nature of a disability may change.

If the documentation that you have does not meet the postsecondary school's requirements, a school official must tell you in a timely manner what additional documentation you need to provide. You may need a new evaluation in order to provide the required documentation.

Who has to pay for a new evaluation?

Neither your high school nor your postsecondary school is required to conduct or pay for a new evaluation to document your disability and need for an academic adjustment. This may mean that you have to pay or find funding to pay an appropriate professional for an evaluation. If you are eligible for services through your state vocational rehabilitation agency, you may qualify for an evaluation at no cost to you. You may locate your state vocational rehabilitation agency through the following Department of Education Web page:
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/index.html>.

Once the school has received the necessary documentation from me, what should I expect?

The school will review your request in light of the essential requirements for the relevant program to help determine an appropriate academic adjustment. It is important to remember that the school is not required to lower or waive essential requirements. If you have requested a specific academic adjustment, the school may offer that academic adjustment or an alternative one if the alternative would also be effective. The school may also conduct its own evaluation of your disability and needs at its own expense.

You should expect your school to work with you in an interactive process to identify an appropriate academic adjustment. Unlike the experience you may have had in high school, however, do not expect your postsecondary school to invite your parents to participate in the process or to develop an IEP for you.

What if the academic adjustment we identified is not working?

Let the school know as soon as you become aware that the results are not what you expected. It may be too late to correct the problem if you wait until the course or activity is completed. You and your school should work together to resolve the problem.

May a postsecondary school charge me for providing an academic adjustment?

No. Furthermore, it may not charge students with disabilities more for participating in its programs or activities than it charges students who do not have disabilities.

What can I do if I believe the school is discriminating against me?

Practically every postsecondary school must have a person—frequently called the Section 504 Coordinator, ADA Coordinator, or Disability Services Coordinator—who coordinates the school’s compliance with Section 504 or Title II or both laws. You may contact this person for information about how to address your concerns.

The school must also have grievance procedures. These procedures are not the same as the due process procedures with which you may be familiar from high school. However, the postsecondary school’s grievance procedures must include steps to ensure that you may raise

your concerns fully and fairly and must provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints.

School publications, such as student handbooks and catalogs, usually describe the steps you must take to start the grievance process. Often, schools have both formal and informal processes. If you decide to use a grievance process, you should be prepared to present all the reasons that support your request.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome from using the school's grievance procedures or you wish to pursue an alternative to using the grievance procedures, you may file a complaint against the school with OCR or in a court. You may learn more about the OCR complaint process from the brochure *How to File a Discrimination Complaint with the Office for Civil Rights*, which you may obtain by contacting us at the addresses and phone numbers below, or at <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/howto.html>.

If you would like more information about the responsibilities of postsecondary schools to students with disabilities, read the OCR brochure *Auxiliary Aids and Services for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities: Higher Education's Obligations Under Section 504 and Title II of the ADA*. You may obtain a copy by contacting us at the address and phone numbers below, or at <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/auxaids.html>.

Students with disabilities who know their rights and responsibilities are much better equipped to succeed in postsecondary school. We encourage you to work with the staff at your school because they, too, want you to succeed. Seek the support of family, friends and fellow students, including those with disabilities. Know your talents and capitalize on them, and believe in yourself as you embrace new challenges in your education.

To receive more information about the civil rights of students with disabilities in education institutions, you may contact us at :

Customer Service Team
Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Education
Washington, D.C. 20202-1100
Phone: 1-800-421-3481
TDD: 1- 877-521-2172
Email: ocr@ed.gov
Web site: www.ed.gov/ocr

You may be familiar with another federal law that applies to the education of students with disabilities—the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). That law is administered by the Office of Special Education Programs in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the U.S. Department of Education. The IDEA and its Individualized Education Program (IEP) provisions do not apply to postsecondary schools. This pamphlet does not discuss the IDEA or state and local laws that may apply.

V. Confidentiality

What is confidentiality?

Due to the sensitive and personal nature of counseling and/or Disability Services, all services are strictly confidential. This means that nothing that you share with your counselor is revealed to anyone outside of the Counseling Center without your written consent. We do not disclose names or other identifying information about our clients to any, including family or college officials, without consent.

In an effort to provide the highest quality of service to our students, your counselor may find it necessary to consult with other Counseling Center/Disability Services staff about your work together. The Counseling Center is comprised of staff who specialize in personal counseling and disability services. Our entire clinical staff, comprised of personal counselors, disability counselors, and graduate interns, may be included in this group consultation.

Are there limits to confidentiality?

Yes. There are some situations in which we are legally mandated to breach confidentiality. These include; 1. If we believe that you present an imminent danger to yourself or to others, 2. If we believe that a child or elder is being subjected to abuse, neglect, or exploitation, or 3. If we are required to present records or other information regarding a client as a part of any legal proceedings.

Are my counseling/disability records made a part of my permanent file?

No. No information about your contact with the Counseling Center/Disability Services is kept in your permanent academic or financial record held by the college.

Can counselors share information about me to others?

As previously stated, counselors are unable to release any information about you without your consent to do so. Therefore, if you feel that it is necessary or would be helpful for your counselor to talk with someone else (e.g. faculty, family, medical professionals, etc.), you have the option of signing an Authorization form (available in 201 A Carroll Hall or online). This legal document will enable your counselor to discuss any matter of your choosing to a specified person.

If I am a student using Disability Services, how does confidentiality work?

Confidentiality affects students using Disability Services (DS) in the same way as other students using our office. Students certified with DS may request accommodation letters for their professors each semester. Because we are unable to release information about your disability

to anyone without your written permission, you will be asked to complete and sign a Release of Information (along with the Rights and Responsibilities form), each semester. (These forms are available on line or from 201A Carroll Hall.)

What should I know about confidentiality if I am a parent or family member of a student using our services?

Meredith College is committed to providing an academic and living environment that fosters students' progress towards independence. While we welcome questions and can provide general information, confidentiality laws protect the privacy of all communications between a client and a counselor/therapist and we are often limited in the information we are able to share with families without the student's written authorization. In an effort to protect your student's confidentiality, we will not be able to provide you with information about your student. If you contact us with concerns, we will make every effort to contact your student. Our focus is on the student and assisting her in addressing her concerns as well as improving her communication with her family, faculty, and peers. Therefore, we will most often encourage your student to communicate her work with our office directly to you.

For more information about Meredith's expectations and partnerships with families, please visit our Parents and Families page on the website www.meredith.edu/students/counsel/disability/parents.htm.

What should I know about confidentiality if I am a faculty or staff member of a student using our services?

We encourage faculty and staff to direct any comments or concerns about their work with students to us. However, we are often limited in the information that we can provide without the student's written authorization. We are typically able to give general feedback, but will be restricted from discussing the specifics of our work with students. If you contact us with concerns, we will make every effort to contact the student to follow up with her. Please visit our Faculty and Staff page, for more resources and information.

VI. Rights and Responsibilities

Your Rights and Responsibilities are listed on a form you must sign every semester you request accommodations to ensure that you are aware of your role and Meredith's role in the provision of services. Please visit our website at <http://www.meredith.edu/students/counsel/disability/forms.htm> to find the Right and Responsibilities form.

Students with disabilities at Meredith College have the right to

- Equal access to courses, programs, services, jobs, activities and facilities offered through the college.
- Equal opportunity to work and to learn, and to receive reasonable accommodations.

- Appropriate confidentiality of all information regarding their disabilities and to choose to whom information about their disabilities will be disclosed, except disclosure that are required or permitted by law and
- Information available in accessible formats as warranted by documentation.

Students with disabilities at Meredith College have the responsibility to

- Meet qualifications and maintain essential institutional standards for courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities.
- Identify themselves as an individual with disability when an accommodation is needed and to seek information, counsel, and assistance within a reasonable amount of time.
- Demonstrate and/or document (from an appropriate professional) how the disability limits their participation in courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities.
- Follow policies and procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodations and services as defined by the Disability Services Handbook.
- Arrange testing accommodations with each faculty member a minimum of one week prior to each test/exam. If Disability Services will be asked to proctor, a minimum of five-business days notice is required. Ten business days if test will need to be administered on tape.

VII. FAQs

As a student, how does one obtain a reasonable accommodation?

1. Obtain official documentation from medical doctor/psychologist including diagnosis, prognosis, limitations imposed by the disability, maintenance plan, and recommended accommodation(s). Documentation must meet Disability Services guidelines. Documentation guidelines can be found at <http://www.meredith.edu/students/counsel/disability/forms.htm>
2. Schedule an appointment with Disability Services staff (919) 760-8427.

What are my responsibilities as a client of Disability Services?

Once you begin receiving services from Disability Services, you need to

- assume the responsibility for self-advocacy by talking with your instructors about your disability and reasonable accommodations,
- keep the Disability Services staff informed of your progress and concerns, and
- keep appointment times or contact the office as early as possible should you need to reschedule an appointment.

As a student, I have a disability but I don't want any of my friends or classmates to know. Are the services confidential?

Your disability is confidential and you determine to whom and when to disclose it. No one in the Counseling Center/Disability Services will disclose information about you or your disability.

All information is confidential, and you can be as discreet as you choose to be regarding your disability.

Do all my professors have to know about my disability?

No. None of your professors have to know that you have a disability. However, without disclosure accommodations cannot be made. Your instructors need to know only that you have a disability and the appropriate accommodation(s).

What can Disability Services provide for a student with disabilities?

Examples of accommodations/services that have been appropriate for some individuals include study buddies, self-advocacy training, readers, technical assistance, test taking, special residence hall arrangements, extended test time, sign language interpreters, notetakers, and test/study strategies.

What do I need to do in order for you to provide letters to my instructors?

A student is asked by the Disability Services staff during the intake review if she wants any or all of her instructors to be aware of her disability. Once she has signed a release indicating she wants her instructors notified, letters will be sent to the instructors.

Do I notify Disability Services prior to attending Meredith College and orientation?

Yes, if possible. You may make an appointment with Disability Services staff by calling the Counseling Center as soon as you have been accepted for enrollment. During orientation, all students take math, English and foreign language Placement Tests. If you need accommodations to take these tests, Disability Services must have your documentation several weeks before you take the tests. If parents or students need any additional accommodations (such as interpreters or wheelchair access), please contact Disability Services at least ten business days before your arrival.

What services can Disability Services provided for a student with a temporary illness?

We can explain the procedures, assist the student in obtaining the appropriate documentation, and notify her instructors of her illness. However, if a student is able, we always recommend that she contact her instructors to discuss arrangements. Then, the instructors can make the necessary accommodations for the student. Accommodations are provided on a case by case basis.

Section 2: Disability Services – Policies and Procedures

- I. Certification Process
- II. Provisional Status
- III. Documentation Guidelines
- IV. Academic Accommodation Process
- V. Test Proctoring Procedures
- VI. Priority Registration
- VII. Interpreters
- VIII. Note Takers
- IX. Course Substitution Accommodation
- X. Residence Hall Accommodation
- XI. Grievance Procedure**

I. Certification Process

Students requesting disability services are required to complete the following certification process:

1. Return the Disabilities Disclosure and Request for Accommodation. (For students new to Meredith College only) This form can be located in the Advising and Early Registration Handbook or may be obtained from Counseling Center/Disability Services. Once you complete the form, send it to:

Meredith College
Counseling Center / Disability Services
3800 Hillsborough St.
Raleigh, NC 27607

2. Submit documentation of the disability from an appropriate licensed/certified professional. A letter or summary statement will not suffice. A complete evaluation is required, dated within three years of the request for disability services. Specific guidelines for each disability are available from the Counseling Center/Disability Services, 919.760.8427 and may be found on-line at <http://www.meredith.edu/students/counsel/disability/forms.htm>. Please note that if we receive this information during the summer, we can begin preparing for your needs even before you arrive on campus.

3. Complete an intake interview with Disability Services staff. An intake interview takes about one hour during which the student will provide information about how the disability impacts her life functioning. The intake also provides an opportunity for the student to become acquainted with support services that are offered through Disability Services. When possible, documentation should be submitted before the intake session. Students may make an appointment by calling 919.760.8427.

II. Provisional Status

Once you have completed the steps for certification it is possible that your documentation may not be sufficient for full certification. In some cases, a provisional status is allowed which enables students to receive disability services for one semester while she pursues obtaining current and complete documentation.

III. Documentation Guidelines

Documentation required for certification with Disability Services is reviewed based on guidelines that were set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). These guidelines are followed to provide consistency among post-secondary institutions with regard to acceptable documentation for disability certification. They are available from 202 Carroll Hall as well as on the Disability Services website at <http://www.meredith.edu/students/counsel/disability/policies.htm>.

IV. Academic Accommodations Procedures

In order to receive academic accommodations the following steps must be completed each semester the student requests accommodations:

- 1. Complete Rights and Responsibilities form and Release form.** The accommodation letter process is student initiated and begins with her completing the appropriate paperwork and submitting it to the Disability Services office. The Release form gives Disability Services permission to communicate with her faculty. These forms can be printed from our website at <http://www.meredith.edu/students/counsel/disability/forms.htm> or can be picked up in Carroll Hall.
- 2. Each semester, meet with a Disability Counselor for an Accommodation Review.** To ensure the most accurate and appropriate accommodations for each course, the student is required to meet with a DS Counselor to discuss which accommodations she will need for each course. We recommend that students attend class before coming to this meeting. This meeting takes approximately 15-20 minutes.
- 3. Accommodation letters are processed.** The student will pick up her letters from Disability Services. Students are required to hand deliver accommodation letters to their faculty so that the student may gain experience in self-advocacy.
- 4. The student requests a meeting to discuss her letters with each faculty member.** The student and faculty will meet privately to discuss the implementation of appropriate accommodations for the particular class; however, it is possible that not all accommodations will apply to each class.
- 5. The student and faculty member both sign the accommodation letter and send it back to the Disability Services.** The signed accommodation letter serves as a contract and

must be kept on file by the Counseling Center/Disability Services. A second copy is provided for the faculty member to keep.

V. Test Proctoring

For students who need testing accommodations, a need may arise when the professor of the course will not be able to provide those accommodations (i.e. extra time, separate setting, alternate format) within the department. The student and professor may request test proctoring from Disability Services if no other alternative will suffice.

In order to assist with test proctoring services, Disability Services (DS) requires that the student and professor complete a test proctoring form at least five business days notice prior to the test date. If student will need a reader or scribe, DS will need seven business days notice. This is necessary for staff to make all necessary arrangements. The Test Proctoring Form can be downloaded from the DS website at <http://www.meredith.edu/students/counsel/disability/forms.htm>. Contact DS with any questions at 760-8427.

Expectations

- For consistency, DS will not provide test proctoring to students who do not submit completed paperwork five business days in advance.
- Student and instructor can schedule all proctoring test dates on one form, given all information is completed and turned in on time.
- All proctoring dates/times must be scheduled during weekly business hours, Monday through Friday 8:00am-5:00pm.
- Proctoring is not available on Saturday or Sunday (this includes semester finals).
- DS will do its best to schedule test proctoring as close to class time however, this is not always possible.
- DS provides accommodations for test but not testing materials. The student is required to bring required additional materials with her to the test.
- When testing, the student will only take permitted materials into testing room. Items not allowed are cell phones, book bags, purses, etc. DS will hold these items but will not be held responsible.
- Since the student will not have immediate access to their instructor; DS will make every effort to contact them when the need arises. Any anticipated need to contact instructor during testing should be discussed ahead of time and noted on proctor form.
- All test procedures are based on the materials and time allotted to the class in general.
- Student will not be provided “as much time as needed for tests/exams” unless all students in the class are provided this option. Student is provided extended time as noted on accommodation letter.

Student Responsibilities

- Finding out when all tests are scheduled

- Obtain test proctor form from Disability Services or from website www.meredith.edu/students/counsel/disability
- Arrange a meeting time with your instructor and together fill out proctor form completely
- Turn in completed form to Disability Services in Carroll Hall and schedule proctoring in a timely manner.

Instructor Responsibilities

- Meet with student and together fill out test proctor form.
- Provide test in alternate format (as noted on accommodation letter).
- Provide Disability Services a copy of the test (24 hours in advance) or personally walk the test over first thing in the morning of the scheduled test date.

Procedure

1. Student obtains test proctor form in 202 Carroll Hall or downloads from DS website.
2. Student meets with instructor and together they completely fill out proctor form.
3. Student returns completed form to Disability Services (Carroll Hall) in required time and schedules proctoring. *** DS will not provide proctoring services with less than required days notice.**
4. A notification from Disability Services will go out to student and instructor by e mail confirming that proctoring request has been scheduled.
5. Instructor will provide DS will a copy of the test in advance of scheduled proctor time.
6. Student will report to Disability Services on time and with materials only permitted for testing.
7. Student will sign in test proctor log to verify use of proctoring services and to begin testing.
8. DS proctor will show student to proctor location, provide test and contact instructor with any questions that arise.
9. When test is completed or time has ended, student will turn all papers into DS proctor and will sign out in proctor log to verify use of proctor services.
10. DS proctor will place test in a sealed manila envelope with their initials and return to instructor's office

VI. Priority Registration

Some students who are served by Disability Services require that they register for classes before the rest of the student body. Priority Registration eligibility is based on disability related criteria only. In order to receive priority registration, students must meet at least one of the following disability related criteria:

- Requires pre-arranged support services, such as pre-recorded audio, large print, Braille materials, readers or interpreters that are necessary for accommodation,
- Imposes geographical constraints due to mobility speed and/or endurance,
- Imposes physical or cognitive restrictions due to fatigue, medication side-effects, sustained concentration verified by the physician or medical reports,
- Necessitates preferential seating, selection of professors with certain speech patterns or teaching styles due to communication/learning issues as verified by the Coordinator of Disability Services on a semester by semester basis, and/or
- Requires extensive therapy or other medical treatment/ intervention, which impacts scheduling flexibility significantly (such as chemotherapy, renal dialysis, etc.).

VIII. Interpreters

Disability Services will provide sign language interpreters for qualified students with hearing impairments. Interpreters can be provided for both academic and non-academic courses and/or activities. It is the students' responsibility to provide Disability Services with ample notice when an interpreter is needed. Students are also required to complete an Interpreter Request Form and return to 201-A Carroll Hall. Requests made with less than 48 hours notice cannot be guaranteed.

In some cases, paid note takers will be provided to students in addition to the interpreter in order to guarantee that the student has access to all information covered in the course (please read section below for more information about note takers.) Disability Services will work with the professor and/or department to find qualified note takers for the course.

IX. Note Takers

Volunteer Notetaker Program

When a student has a disability that affects their ability to take notes adequately the accommodation of a note taker may be deemed reasonable and appropriate. When approved for this accommodation, it will be included on the students accommodation letters. It is the student's responsibility to discuss her need for note takers with her professor and ask his/her assistance in identifying a suitable match. Most of the time those who are identified to be suitable volunteer note takers are other students in the class who exhibit proficiency in class attendance and note taking. Once the student agrees the volunteer note taker and the student or the volunteer note taker and the professor agree to the terms for ensuring the student has access to these notes.

Notetaker Stipend Program

Disability Services coordinates a Notetaker Stipend Program that is designed as an accommodation for students with hearing and/or visual impairments. Students who are Visually Impaired or use interpreters often find it difficult to observe the interpreter while simultaneously taking notes; hence, a notetaker is an additional accommodation that is typically utilized. The primary reason for this extra measure is to ensure that students with hearing impairments or those with visual impairments will have access to the information presented in class should the interpreter not show up (this could happen due to sudden illness, accident, etc) or should the student need to focus on their own technology to follow lecture. The Stipend Program is different from the accommodation of notetaker, which other students may require based on their disability. As is evident in the name, the Stipend program is a paid program, whereas the note taker accommodation is not. Note takers going through the stipend program must be approved through Disability Services and complete a required training session during which they will complete paperwork for Accounting.

X. Course Substitutions Accommodation Policy

Course substitutions may be determined as reasonable and appropriate for students with disabilities when other accommodations do not remove barriers within the course. Course substitutions are determined on a case by case basis following the procedure below. Students are encouraged to initiate the course substitution procedure as early as possible in their academic career because of the time required to complete the process. The length of this process may include factors such as timing of academic course offerings, scheduling necessary meetings, as well as obtaining any documentation that may be required. Please note: a separate and more specific policy has been created for students seeking a course substitution in foreign language.

1. For a student to be eligible to seek a course substitution on the basis of disability, the student must be certified with Disability Services. In order to become certified to use Disability Services and to qualify for accommodations, she must:
 - a. complete a disability intake. An intake is a student's initial appointment with a Disability Counselor during which the disability, limitations, and possible accommodations are discussed.
 - b. submit professional clinical documentation that meets the Documentation Guidelines. *In addition, this documentation must specifically address how the student's disability impacts her ability to learn the content of the course and/or perform essential learning activities being considered for substitution.* These Guidelines may be found online at the following webpage <http://www.meredith.edu/students/counsel/disability/forms.htm>. Also refer to

Disability Services Certification Process and Academic Accommodation Process Flow Chart.

- c. Disability Services will initiate the process of determining if it is possible to reasonably accommodate the student in order to provide equal access to the learning environment. Disability Services may consult with appropriate faculty members or department heads. Refer to Disability Services Certification Process and Academic Accommodation Process Flow Chart.
2. Before determining that a course substitution is an option, the faculty member will determine whether an accommodation within a course is appropriate. There are generally two situations in which a student and faculty member may determine that reasonable accommodation may or may not be made within the context of a course.
 - a. Once enrolled in a course, student is responsible for seeking accommodation to any assignments or course requirements within the course. As soon as possible during the course the student should present the faculty member with her accommodation letter and discuss the accommodations requested with the faculty member.
 - i. If a professor determines that the accommodation is unreasonable, the faculty member will inform the student, department head and Disability Services. In courses related to general education requirements, the Director of General Education may also need to be informed. (Typically, an accommodation is considered to be unreasonable when providing it gives the student an advantage over other students or would alter the fundamental elements of the course.)
 - ii. At this point, a course substitution may be considered. Disabilities Services and Department Head collaborate to determine if a reasonable substitution is possible. The School Dean will be informed. In situations related to CORE courses, the Associate Vice President for Academic Programs (AVPAP) will be informed.
 - b. Prior to being enrolled in a course, the student may recognize that accommodation within a required course will be needed. In this situation the student should meet with the Department Head to discuss if reasonable accommodation can be made. In courses related to general education requirements, the Director of General Education may also be required to be involved in the discussions.
 - i. If a Department Head, or Department Head in consultation with the Director of General Education determines that the accommodation is unreasonable, the department head will inform the student and Disability

Services. Typically, an accommodation is considered to be unreasonable when providing it gives the student an advantage over other students or would alter the fundamental elements of the course.

- ii. At this point, a course substitution may be considered. Disabilities Services and Department Head will collaborate to determine if a reasonable substitution is possible. The Dean of the School, and *Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (AVPAP)*, in cases related to *CORE* courses, will be informed.
3. Disability Services will collaborate with the appropriate Department Head or with the Director of General Education (for *CORE* courses) to determine what is reasonable and appropriate based on the impact of the disability. They will collaborate to determine whether or not a substitution for the requirement is appropriate. Together, a plan will be determined on an individual, case by case basis.
 - a. If a substitution is determined to meet the reasonable basis for an accommodation, the Department Head will contact the student and Disability Services to inform them of the status of the approval. If a course substitution is approved, the appropriate Department Head will submit the course substitution approval for major requirements to the Registrar's office on behalf of the student. The Department Head in consultation with the Director of General Education will submit approved course substitutions related to general education, and the Director of General Education will submit approved course substitutions for *CORE* courses to the Registrar's office on behalf of the student.
4. If a course substitution is not considered reasonable, the student and Disability Services will be notified. The Dean of the School will also be informed. In cases related to the *CORE* curriculum the AVPAP will be informed.
 - a. For courses required for a major, the Department Head, academic advisor and Disabilities Services will meet with the student to discuss the academic options with the student since such decisions impact the ability to meet graduation requirements.
 - b. For courses required for general education, the Department Head, Director of General Education, academic advisor and Disabilities Services will meet with the student to discuss the academic options with the student since such decisions impact the ability to meet graduation requirements.
 - c. For *CORE* courses, the Director of General Education, academic advisor, and disabilities Services will meet with the student to discuss the academic options with the student since such decisions impact the ability to meet graduation requirements.

After completing the procedure above, the student retains the right to appeal the decisions made regarding her request for a course substitution. Appeals should be made in writing and should be directed to the Dean of the School who oversees the department in which the substitution is being sought. For CORE curriculum, the appeal should be directed to the Associate Vice President for Academic Programs (AVPAP). If further appeal is necessary, the student makes that appeal to the Vice President for Academic Programs whose decision is final. At the request of the student, Disability Services or the Dean of Students may serve as an advocate throughout this process.

X. Residence Hall Accommodations

Students requesting residence housing accommodations must be certified with Disability Services. Meredith College provides support services and reasonable accommodations to students with medical and/or psychological disabilities pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In order to ensure the provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodations and services for students with disabilities, students requesting housing accommodations **must** complete the following steps:

1. **Meet with a Disability Counselor.** Call 919-760-8427 to schedule an appointment. (During your meeting you will complete an intake interview which will take about an hour.
2. **Submit documentation of your disability directly to Disability Services** (located in Carroll Hall). While it is not required, you may prefer to submit documentation prior to your appointment so that the Disability Counselor will have time review it before your intake. This documentation should be on letterhead and include the following information:
 1. Specification of diagnosis;
 2. Date of diagnosis;
 3. Identification of the instruments and procedures used to make the diagnosis;
 4. Accounting of the “major life activities” impacted by the student’s impairment and level of severity;
 5. Description of the student’s functional limitations in a college residential setting (i.e. how does the impairment significantly limit a major life activity in a residential setting); and
 6. Recommendations regarding effective accommodations to equalize the student’s educational opportunities at the post-secondary level.
 7. Signature of qualified evaluator who is trained to make the diagnosis and recommendations

Both of the previous steps must be completed by March 1st if you are a returning student and by June 20th if you are a new student. This is to allow time for your request to be reviewed by a committee who will make a recommendation that is reasonable and appropriate based upon the intake interview and documentation. The information you provide may be shared with appropriate staff, including but not limited to Residence Life and Facility Services at Meredith College, to the extent required to evaluate the request and make a recommendation. It is important to note that not all requests are determined appropriate or reasonable accommodations under ADA and Section 504. Requests submitted after this date will be reviewed but may not be able to be granted.

XI. Grievance Procedure

Students are strongly encouraged to pursue every means possible to resolve a grievance informally before filing a formal request with the Disabilities Panel.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) protects individuals with disabilities against discrimination in such areas as employment, housing, public accommodations, education, transportation, communication, health services, and access to public services.

Please note that the burden of proof rests with the student filing the grievance to prove that she has been subject to unfair treatment and/or injustice, which has adversely affected the student's status, rights, or privileges at the College. All grievance letters and supporting documentation must be filed within 60 working days of the alleged violation. Further, external deadlines (pending graduation, etc) will not factor into the grievance timeline or decision-making process. If there are extenuating circumstances that would warrant the grievance to be filed past 60 working days, this appeal would be submitted to the Dean of Students for approval.

Students are responsible for following the grievance procedure below if they are unable to resolve the situation informally.

- I. Students are responsible for contacting the Counseling Center/Disability Services if reasonable accommodations are not implemented in an effective or timely way. The Counselor(s) will work with college personnel and students with disabilities to resolve the complaint.
- II. If the issue cannot be resolved or the student is not satisfied with the outcome, the student can submit a formal written grievance to the Dean of Students following the guidelines published at the end of this document and on the Counseling Center/Disability Services web site at <http://www.meredith.edu/students/counsel/disability/grievance.htm>. Alternative

formats of these procedures are available upon request in the Counseling Center/Disability Services.

- III. The Dean of Students will work with the student to select 1-2 members of the Disability Service Panel to serve on the Disability Grievance Subcommittee to hear the grievance. In addition, the Disability Panel will appoint two members from an approved list to serve on the Disability Grievance Subcommittee annually. The Disability Grievance Subcommittee and the Dean of Students will select a member to serve as the Chair of the Subcommittee.
- IV. After the Disability Grievance Subcommittee has reviewed the formal written grievance, the student will be asked to meet in order to present her case and answer questions at a grievance hearing. Grievance hearings will take place within 20 working days after the student files the formal written grievance. The Dean of Students will be present as a neutral party. As a part of their decision-making process, the subcommittee may ask Disability Services staff and/or other faculty/staff to submit information and/or present at the grievance hearing. The subcommittee will take all information into consideration in making their decision. The Grievance Subcommittee will make a decision which will be communicated in writing to the student, Dean of Students, and Disability Services. Decisions will be made within 10 working days, unless the process is delayed due to extenuating circumstances.
- V. If the grievance is not resolved, the student will have an opportunity to appeal the subcommittee's decision through the appropriate Vice President within 5 working days of the Grievance Subcommittee's decision. The Dean of Students will assist the student in determining the appropriate Vice President based on the grievance issue. The appropriate Vice President will make a decision about the grievance and will communicate this decision in writing to the student, the Dean of Students, and Disability Services within 10 working days, unless an extension is warranted. The Vice President's decision will be final.

Although students are encouraged to attempt to resolve complaints pertaining to disabilities by using this Grievance Procedure, they have the right to file a complaint directly with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR).

Grievance Letter Format:

On separate sheets of paper, please provide information relating to the areas noted below. The student should include all information she wishes to have considered by the Panel, including written witness statements and other supporting documents. It is also useful to provide a copy of the course syllabus where appropriate. Incomplete grievances will either be sent back to the student with a request for more information, or denied without further review.

The grievance should be formatted as follows:

- Date of act or decision you are challenging.
- Briefly describe the alleged act or decision.
- Explain the basis for your challenge. These are limited to:
 - Academic grievances - give the course/department/college regulation or policy which you feel has been violated by the act or decision. Be sure to include a copy of the course syllabus and an explanation of the course requirements, grading criteria, etc...as appropriate.
 - Non-academic grievances -state the college regulation or policy, individual right which you believe has been violated.
 - For both academic and non-academic grievances, clearly and concisely state why you believe the act or decision being challenged is contrary to the policy, regulation, or right you have cited.
- Provide the chronology in narrative form of all pertinent events leading up to the act or decision being challenged. Include names and dates wherever relevant.
- Attempted Informal Resolution of Grievance:
 - Describe your discussion(s) regarding the complaint with the person/office against whom the grievance is being filed. Include date(s) of discussion(s).
 - Describe your discussion(s) regarding the complaint with the chairperson/supervisor. Include date(s) of discussion(s).
 - Describe any other informal attempts to resolve the conflict.
- State explicitly what outcome/action/remedy you are seeking via this grievance petition.
- Provide any additional information that you believe is relevant to your grievance. Written statements from witnesses may be included. Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of those persons who have explicitly agreed to speak to the Disability Grievance Subcommittee on your behalf should also be included.
- Include all documents and information you wish to have considered.

Section 3: Services

Services Provided and Sponsored by the Counseling Center/Disability Services

- I. Disability Counseling
- II. Coaching
- III. Mediation
- IV. Mentorship
- V. Assistive Technology
- VI. Outreach, Advocacy, Training
- VII. Disability Support Organization (DSO)
- VIII. Disability Panel
- IX. Disability Awareness
- X. Preview Orientation

Services Provided by other offices at Meredith

- XI. Learning Center
- XII. Academic and Career Planning
- XIII. Commuter & Diversity Life
- XIV. Dean of Students

I. Disability Counseling

The Counseling Center/Disability Services offers counseling to all students that is **free and confidential**. Sometimes students with disabilities, like many other students, have difficulty coping with the challenges that comes with being a college student. Disability counseling is available in order to provide support and offer an avenue for students to process their emotions.

II. Coaching

Coaching is a supportive, practical, concrete process in which the coach and client work together to identify and pursue the client's goals. It is a collaborative process that supports individuals in improving their everyday performance by gaining knowledge, structure, and power. Coaching helps individuals develop the structure necessary to function effectively and teaches practical approaches to the challenges of life through inquiry and goal setting. Typical topics in coaching include but are not limited to; time management, organizational skills, medication titration, building self-esteem, and interpersonal skills and techniques.

III. Mediation

DS staff are available to assist a student in advocacy when her attempts have not been as successful as she would have liked. We welcome meeting with students to discuss strategies to make her interactions with faculty and staff more successful. We are also available to meet with students with faculty/staff as a means of facilitating communication and understanding.

IV. Mentorship

The Disability Support Organization (DSO), which is a student led for student with disabilities, has devised a mentorship program where students can be paired with another student with a disability who will serve as their mentor in order to help students with self-advocacy and other concerns that may arise.

In addition, Disability Services will make every effort possible to pair students who may have similar interests or disabilities together, when requested. Confidentiality laws make this process somewhat difficult, but we are glad to connect students to one another once the student has given us permission to do so.

V. Assistive Technology/Reading Technology

Disability Services provides Assistive Technology to qualified students. Assistive technology (AT) is technology used by individuals with disabilities in order to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible. Assistive technology can include mobility devices such as walkers and wheelchairs, as well as hardware, software, and peripherals that assist people with disabilities in accessing computers or other information technologies.

Disability Services mostly provides AT software in the form of Reading Technology or text to speech software to our students. This software is useful for students with *and* without disabilities as it proves to enhance comprehension of any print material required for class. This concept is referred to as Universal Design.

Students who would like to use Reading Technology must complete a Scanning Agreement Form and a Reading Request Form (for each text). Both forms are found on the Disability Services website at <http://www.meredith.edu/students/counsel/disability/reading-technology.htm>

VI. Outreach, Advocacy, and Training

The Disability Services staff members offer a variety of outreach to the campus community. These programs include guest lectures in academic courses, faculty trainings and disability awareness programs. The staff also provides coaching training each year to new interns as well as interested staff on campus. Additionally, disability counselors work with students to develop self advocacy skills.

VII. Disability Support Organization (DSO)

The Disability Support Organization (DSO) is an SGA-recognized organization of Meredith College. Membership is open to any Meredith student. Membership can be rewarding for both the student with a disability and the student who is interested in advocating for individuals with disabilities. The mission of the organization is to provide education, support and friendship through meetings, programs, workshops and socials. The organization also provides education for the campus during an annual Disabilities Awareness Day.

VIII. Disability Panel

The Disability Panel is a committee comprised of faculty, staff and student members who are responsible for addressing disability related issues on campus. The Disability Panel is also responsible for hearing grievances related to disability issues filed through the grievance procedure.

The panel has been responsible for past projects including creating a grievance procedure,

securing grants for adaptive technology such as Braille machines and computer software, improving facility accessibility, educating the campus about disability issues, sponsoring Disability Awareness Day, and adapting campus policies to reflect current legal and ethical trends. The Disability Panel is an essential component in creating the diverse atmosphere that Meredith strives to cultivate.

IX. Disability Awareness

Disability Services, the Disability Panel and DSO sponsor Disability Awareness Day to promote campus awareness of disability issues. Past events have included guest speakers, experiential learning programs, movie presentations, Chapel services and student panels. Disability

Disability Services also conducts and sponsors other awareness activities on campus. These programs can be integrated into the curriculum of a course or may be related to other awareness and/or diversity programs on campus.

X. Preview Orientation

Preview is a program designed specifically for students with disabilities who will be attending Meredith for the first time or who are unfamiliar with the resources available through Disability Services.

This unique opportunity offers students a chance to move in early and get a jump on the transition to college through special programs, activities and introduction to Preview Mentors. Many past participants reported feeling better prepared for a success after their Preview experience.

Services Provided by others at Meredith

XI. Learning Center

www.meredith.edu/learn
919.760.2800
122 Jones

The Learning Center provides free one-on-one tutoring to Meredith students. We specialize in tutoring mathematics, grammar, and writing for all subjects. Help in other subjects varies by semester. Learning Center tutors are Meredith students who have excelled in their coursework and have been trained to assist their peers.

Subjects tutored are listed on the web at www.meredith.edu/learn/

Appointments

There are three ways to make an appointment.

1. Sign yourself up on one of the bulletin boards in the hallway outside of The Learning Center. Here you can see the full range of times and tutors available. Blank schedule sheets are generally posted 1-2 weeks in advance.
2. Call 760-2800 to sign up with a Learning Center representative. If you reach voice mail, please leave the date and time you would like an appointment, as well as the subject and class you are taking. Someone will call you back to confirm.
3. Make an appointment online. This method has the longest turnaround time, so try one of the others if you are looking for an appointment soon. You will receive a confirmation email when your request has been processed.

If you must cancel an appointment, please do so 24 hours in advance. You may cross your name off the schedule, call The Learning Center at 760-2800, or cancel online.

Drop-In Policy

You are welcome to come in without an appointment. If a tutor is available and is not expecting an appointment, she will be glad to help you.

*Information taken from the Learning Center website.

IX. Academic and Career Planning

www.meredith.edu/students/advising

919.760.8059

Cate Center

Academic & Career Planning empowers students and alumnae to make academic and career decisions through reflection of skills, values, and interests, major and career exploration, and implementation and evaluation of action plans. Students develop confidence, competence and assume responsibility for achieving their goals by utilizing academic and career counseling, workshops, courses, events and experiential opportunities. Through collaboration with faculty, staff, employers and communities, we create a supportive yet challenging environment that prepares students with a foundation for success.

*Information taken from the Academic Advising website.

XI. Commuter Life & Diversity Programs

www.meredith.edu/students/commuter

919.760.8633

Cate Center

Student life at Meredith is shaped by more than 2,200 students from 29 states and 18 countries. The purpose of the Office of Commuter Life and Diversity Programs is to help all students make the most of their Meredith experience.

The office develops and maintains supportive programs and events for the development and advancement of commuter students and diverse populations.

This office provides a comprehensive program of social, cultural, intellectual and leadership programs on campus to bring awareness, support and understanding of differences.

Mission: The mission of the Office of Commuter Life and Diversity Programs is to develop and maintain supportive programs and events for the development and advancement of commuter students and diverse populations.

This office provides a comprehensive program of social, cultural, intellectual and leadership programs on campus to bring awareness, support and understanding of differences.

Our ethnically diverse population includes African American, Asian American, Latino, international, multiracial, Native American and Pacific Islander students.

This office provides a comprehensive program of social, cultural, intellectual, and leadership programs on campus to bring awareness, support and understanding of differences.

XII. Dean of Students

Dean Gleason
www.meredith.edu/students/dos
(919) 760-8521

Meredith College is proud of its traditions, new ideas, and a long history of providing the "Meredith Experience." As a member of this community, you will find that opportunities for participation, leadership, and learning abound in all facets of campus organization, sharing a meal in the dining hall, taking part in athletics, attending social events, or learning life skills, the "Meredith Experience" is always present.

Members of the Meredith community, like family, support and challenge each other to develop and learn. The staff in the Dean of Students Office is here to help facilitate each student's growth and development. Please call on any of our staff when you need assistance.

The Dean of Students advises the Honor Council, serves as the ADA coordinator, chairs the Incident Management Committee, participates in retention research and assessment, and supervises the directors of residence life, first year experience, and commuter life and diversity programs.

Mission: The staff of the Office of the Dean of Students are committed to the development and growth of all students at Meredith College. The staff provide support and assistance to students through both social and educational programs and interventions.

*Information taken from Dean of Students website.