



Home About SWTJC Admissions Academics Student Life Directory

Search

Student Life Menu

- ⊕ **Activities & Events**
- ⊕ **Athletics**
- Bookstore**
- ⊖ **Counseling & Advising**
 - Complaints
 - Disability Support Services
 - International Students
 - Links - Counseling
 - Transfer Information
 - Tutoring Centers
 - Veterans/Military Students
- Housing**
- Multimedia**
- Parking Permit Express**
- Police**
- ⊕ **Student Business Office**
- ⊕ **Student Success Services**

Disability Support Services

- [Disability Support Services Welcome](#)
- [Differences between K-12 and Higher Education](#)
- [DSS Application and Forms](#)
- [Legislative Law](#)
- [First Time Students](#)
- [Documenting Your Disability](#)
- [Student Responsibility](#)
- [Accommodations](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct](#)

Disability Support Services Welcome

The Disability Support Services (DSS) provides a broad range of services to ensure that every student receives equal access to both an education as well as all aspects of campus life. DSS strives to provide services that will enable students with disabilities to participate fully in university life and ensure that a person with a disability will not, on the basis of that disability, be denied full and equal access to academic and co-curricular programs. We look forward to working with you!

If you would like a hard copy of the "Handbook for Students with Disabilities", please contact [Krystal S. Ballesteros](mailto:Krystal.S.Ballesteros@swtjc.edu) at 830-591-2908.

If you have any questions, or need more information, please contact the DSS representative at the campus you plan to attend.

Disability Support Services
Fly Memorial Building
 Southwest Texas Junior College
 2401 Garner Field Road
 Uvalde, TX 78801
 Tel: 830-591-2908

DSS Office Contacts

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Differences between K-12 and Higher Education

Transitioning to College

Transition to college can be challenging for students with disabilities. The laws governing disability services for individuals with disabilities in post-secondary institutions are significantly different than those mandated for K-12 education. It is important for students and families to understand the major differences between these two learning environments.

Differences Between High School and College Disability Services

At the elementary and secondary levels, the IDEA- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act- mandates the school districts to provide support services including: identifying students with special needs, evaluating them, and providing accommodations. It is the special educator's responsibility to meet with the parents and faculty, draw up an individual Education Plan (IEP) for each student, and attempt to help students meet their goals. Classroom teachers work closely with the special educator to implement IEP goals and objectives. The overall objective of K-12 education is academic success.

At the college level, however, procedures change dramatically. The responsibility shifts to the student and the student becomes responsible for self-identification. While SWTJC is responsible for providing students with reasonable accommodations, students must demonstrate eligibility by providing appropriate documentation, as for services, and fully participate in the process.

| High School | College |
|--|--|
| Services provided under IDEA or Section 504. | Services provided under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. |
| School district identifies and evaluates disability at no cost to the student or family. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You must self-identify and provide documentation of disability You must pay the cost of evaluation. The college is responsible for most, but not all costs involved |
| You have fewer responsibilities. | You are expected to live more independently. |
| You are assisted with decisions. | You become responsible for an increasing number a decisions. |
| Limits and goals are set for you by parents and teachers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are expected to make independent decisions. More self-evaluation and monitoring required. More independent reading and studying is required. You are more responsible for managing time commitments. You establish and attain your own goals. You determine when you need help. Interest in learning must be generated by you, the student. You must motivate to yourself to succeed. |
| Attendance and progress is well monitored. | You are responsible for attendance and awareness of your progress or lack thereof. |
| Your time is structured by home and school. | You manage your own time. |
| Special education teacher is the liaison between students, parents, and teachers. | You are responsible for self-advocacy. |
| Students with disabilities are placed in "special education" and possibly served separately from other students. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You must self-identify disability and request services from postsecondary institution. You are required to provide recent documentation of disability and documentation must clearly support desired accommodations. You are not labeled or served separately from others. Other students and faculty will not know about your disability unless you choose to reveal such information. Faculty is only notified about required accommodations. |

Compiled from: Claire E. Weinstein, Karlalee Johnson, Robert Malloch, Scott Ridley and Paul Schuls, Innovation Abstracts (vol. X No.21; Sept. 30, 1988); National Institute for Staff & Organizational Development, the University of Texas, Austin, Texas.

DSS Application and Forms

[Disability Support Services Application](#)

[Welcome Letter](#)

Legislative Law

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that: "No otherwise qualified individual in the United States... shall, solely by reason of... handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

A "qualified person" is defined as one who meets the requisite academic and technical standards required for admission or participation in the postsecondary institution's programs and activities. Section 504 protects the civil rights of individuals who are qualified to participate and who have disabilities such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Blindness or visual impairments
- Mobility impairments
- Physical impairments
- Deafness or hearing impairments
- Psychological or psychiatric impairments
- Attention Deficit/Hyperactive disorder
- Specific learning disabilities
- Other temporary disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is the civil rights guarantee for persons with disabilities in the United States. It provides protection from discrimination for individuals on the basis of disability. The ADA extends civil rights protection for people with disabilities to employment in the private sector, transportation, public accommodations, services provided by state and local government, and telecommunication relay services.

First Time Students

If you are coming to SWTJC for the first-time you will need to complete an "Application for Admission" and return it to the Admissions Office, with an official copy of a high school transcript or GED in a sealed envelope and make arrangements to take a placement test before you can finish enrolling. Placement tests are administered to all incoming students to find out your current level of reading, mathematics, and English skills. The results of these tests will determine which English, mathematics, and/or reading classes you qualify to enroll in.

Students majoring in Education must take the THEA while all other students must take the Accuplacer. The Accuplacer is given at various times throughout the week in the Testing Center (located in the Miller Building). To find the times of the test, you can call the Testing Center at (830) 591-7346 or visit their website.

Requesting classroom accommodations requires a minimum of 30 days in advance to process a student's file and letters, meaning, the office of the Disability Support Services should have your disability document already in file.

Learn about your disability, and how it affects you in school and in work. You will want to be able to describe your disability, your strengths, and areas of difficulty. Also, be prepared to describe strategies that help you.

Special Accommodations for the Placement Test:

Individuals with certain type of a disability may request to take the Accuplacer supported by documentation based on their disability. To set up accommodations, you must submit a copy of your latest Comprehensive Individual Assessment or Full and Individual Evaluation, and a copy of your last ARD meeting to the DSS representative at the campus you plan to attend. Submission for requests and all necessary documentation for special accommodations must be made 2 weeks in advance prior to testing. Because of staff and time constraints, there can be no assurance that requests received after this deadline can be accommodated.

All timely and complete alternative testing arrangement requests and accompanying documentation are reviewed on a case-by-case basis upon receipt. In some cases, the submitted documentation may not be sufficient to make a determination regarding the requested accommodation(s) or may not support the requested accommodation(s). Additional information or test results may be needed.

Individuals requesting special accommodations to take the Quick THEA must take the Official THEA.

Individuals requesting special accommodations to take the ACT or the Official THEA, must pick up a Registration Bulletin for further information requesting special accommodations at the Testing Center.

Registering with Disability Support Services:

After you have been accepted to SWTJC, and you would like to request accommodations in the classroom due to a disability, you may proceed to Disability Support Services.

The following steps should be taken to ensure adequate time to arrange for appropriate accommodations:

1. Download the Application [here](#) or stop by the DSS office to pick up a copy from the DSS representative at your respective campus.
2. Submit your application and appropriate documentation to verify your disability to the DSS representative.
3. Once all documentation is reviewed to determine the appropriate accommodations for the student, an appointment will be scheduled by the DSS representative.
4. Student must pick up his/her Accommodation Request Forms at the scheduled appointment.
5. It is the student's responsibility to deliver the accommodation request forms in a timely manner to the instructor for each of the student's classes where accommodations are required. Failure to provide the forms may result in a delay in implementation of accommodations.
6. Students are responsible for discussing their accommodations with each instructor. The Request Forms

must then be signed and dated by each of the instructors and returned by the student to the DSS representative for filing.

For further information, see the section titled "Student Responsibilities."

Documenting Your Disability

To establish the existence of a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the severity of a disability or degree of impact on life functions (particularly in an academic setting) is more important than the name of the impairment or diagnosis, though both are important. To establish eligibility for accommodation as a student with a disability, a student must present documentation that meets guidelines that have become standard among colleges and universities throughout the country and are recommended by the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD).

Depending on the nature of your disability, various forms of documentation are necessary. See the "Documentation Guidelines" here, in order to view acceptable forms of documentation. If you should need further clarification, contact the DSS office as soon as possible.

[Documentation Guidelines](#)

Student Responsibility

Southwest Texas Junior College (SWTJC) is committed to the spirit and intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The subject of both is nondiscrimination against individuals with disabilities and as such the College has instituted administrative policies, practices and procedures to ensure qualified individuals are provided equal access for its programs, facilities and activities.

To be eligible for disability related services, students must have a documented disability condition as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Under both laws, a person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one of more of major life activities (examples include walking, standing, speaking, and hearing, breathing, writing or reading).

Student's Responsibility

Students are encouraged to make arrangements for accommodations well in advance of the semester for which services are being requested. Accommodation Request Forms (ARF) *are issued at the beginning of each semester* for the classes you are taking.

Waiting until the semester begins may cause undue hardship on the student during the period it takes to implement particular accommodations. Initial requests for accommodations *require a minimum of 30 days* to process a student's file and letters. Requests for services (such as an interpreter, readers, scribes) requiring preparation may need at least 60 days to process.

Students with disabilities have the responsibility to:

- Identify themselves as needing an accommodation and to seek information, counsel, and assistance as needed;
- Meet qualifications and maintain essential institutional standards for courses, programs, services, and activities;
- Provide documentation (from an appropriate professional) regarding the nature of the student's disability; and
- Follow published procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodations, academic/work adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services or when requesting barrier removal.
- Meet all registration requirements deemed necessary by Disability Support Services (See "Registering with Disability Services")

Maintaining Services

To continue receiving services and accommodations from Disability Support Services, students with disabilities are expected to follow the following procedure each semester to continue receiving services and accommodations.

1. Students are responsible for submitting accommodation request forms every semester. Requests should be made in person, not by phone.
2. Provide the DSS representative a copy of their schedule for the semester, so that appropriate Accommodation Request Forms can be prepared.
3. Meet with the DSS representative during scheduled appointments to receive Accommodation Request Forms to take to instructors.
4. Meet with the DSS representative after mid-terms to follow up and assess needs.
5. Keep the DSS representative informed about academic status, needs, problems with services and/or accommodations and/or changes in their disability.

Medical Emergency Response Procedure for Students with Disabilities

It is the student's responsibility to notify the DSS representative and his/her individual instructors of a medical condition that might result in an emergency situation. Medical conditions that a student should give notice of include, but are not limited to, seizure disorders, heart disease, abnormal heart rhythms, diabetes, hypoglycemia, cardiomyopathy, asthma, other breathing disorders, fainting spells, blackouts, chronic fatigue syndrome, severe arthritis, and head injury.

If a medical emergency should occur while a student is on campus, 9-1-1 will be called and an ambulance requested. The student will be transported to an emergency room at a nearby hospital.

The DSS representatives are not medical personnel. Therefore, 9-1-1 should be called immediately for the student to receive appropriate medical attention. Campus nurse and the DSS representative should be called to offer support for the student, which includes notifying designated individuals of the emergency and providing health information if the student is unable to do so.

Disabled Parking

Disabled Parking spaces at SWTJC are designated by appropriate signage and painted identification. Individuals who park on campus must obtain a parking decal from the Business Office. State permits (hang-tag or plate) are required to park in those parking spaces. Any vehicle not displaying the proper disability plate or placard and SWTJC parking permit will result in ticketing.

Accommodations**Academic Adjustments and Auxiliary Aids**

Documentation is required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 in order to provide requested academic accommodations. Until appropriate documentation is provided, the DSS representative cannot support the student's request for services. Faculty members are not expected to provide services unless students present verification letters of needs from the DSS representative.

Accommodations are interventions that students may utilize to support their academic performance. Interventions may include reasonable modifications, accommodations, or auxiliary aids. Accommodations are identified for each student on an individual bases. Accommodations are adjustments or modifications made in course materials, testing, or instructional methods that do not change the essential nature or academic and technical standards of a course. Auxiliary Aids can also be called accommodations but more commonly refer to devices or services that help students with disabilities gain access to the classroom.

Accommodations (academic adjustments and auxiliary aids) are determined for each individual for each semester. A particular disability type does not determine them. While several students with either the same or different disabling conditions may utilize a particular accommodation, there is no established "matching" of disability and accommodation. *One size does not fit all!*

Although the entire college community is engaged in providing and improving access for students with disabilities, the DSS representative is the designated person that receives and maintains disability-related documents, certifies students' eligibility for services, determines reasonable accommodations/auxiliary aids and develops plans for providing them. All accommodations/services being requested must be supported by appropriate documentation.

Understanding Your Classroom Accommodations

As an adult, YOU are the ONLY ONE who can request accommodations for yourself.

You will first be expected to maintain the standards that apply to everyone else in the course. In the words of the law, Americans with Disability Act (ADA), you must be "otherwise qualified" to do the work *with or without accommodations* (emphasis added).

Accommodations should apply to course procedures and processes, not to course content. Most necessary modifications are simple techniques that promote participation by all students. With minor exception of minor adjustments in presenting the requirements of the course, *the essential content will not be altered*. The class will probably not be any "easier" for you than it would be for any other student.

Before you can receive them, though, you must decide to "disclose" the fact you have a disability to your instructor(s). Choosing to tell instructors that you have a disability is a very personal decision. No one can tell you when it is right for you to do so. Being penalized for having a disability is unacceptable; it is also unacceptable to expect more than *reasonable accommodations* for the disability.

Student Code of Conduct

All students, regardless of disability, are responsible for adhering to the Student Code of Conduct published annually in the Southwest Texas Junior College Student Handbook. The Code can be summarized by:

The student shall not verbally threaten or abuse college personnel or other students, physically threaten or assault others, willfully damage college property, misuse drugs or alcohol on college property, or interfere with the learning environment by disruptive verbal expressions or actions.

Students who participated in special education programs while in elementary, middle, or high school were able to receive modifications in the school's behavior code. This option is not available at the college level. When registering for classes at SWTJC, the student must consider whether he/she will be able to adhere to the Code of Conduct. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not excuse or protect an individual from penalty for emotional or violent outbursts blamed on the impairment. (*Hamilton v. Southwestern Bell Telephone*, 136 F.13d 1047, 1052 (5th Cir. 1998)).