Purpose

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Blue Ridge Community and Technical College must provide reasonable accommodations to ensure the participation of students in college classes and student activities to all qualified students with disabilities.

The Office of Disability Services prepares students for their transition to college and helps them develop self-management skills. We assist students with goal-setting, study skills, time management and organizational skills, and help students hold themselves accountable academically.

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 (S).

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.

MISSION

The Office of Student Success provides a variety of student services to foster the educational and personal growth of all students. To complement the institution’s mission, the Office of Student Success will support student engagement, academic support and career services as well as service to the community at large.

MANDATES

There are two legal mandates that protect students with disabilities from discrimination and ensure that they have equal access to all aspects of college life. These laws include Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act states: “No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States…shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

Title II of the ADA states: “A public entity shall make reasonable modifications in policies or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the public entity can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.”
In our efforts to provide appropriate services, the OSS works to make sure services are in compliance with the law.

**Rights and Responsibilities**

**Students with disabilities at Blue Ridge CTC have the right to:**

- Request reasonable accommodations ensuring equal access to courses, programs, services, jobs, activities and facilities available through the college.
- 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.
- Information available in accessible formats.
- File a grievance according to the Grievance Procedure, if s/he believes they have been treated unfairly.

**Students with disabilities at Blue Ridge CTC 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 a disability when an accommodation is needed and to seek information, counsel, and assistance within a reasonable amount of time.
- Document and/or demonstrate (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.
- Maintain communication throughout the semester with the Disability Coordinator

If changes to an individual’s accommodations are needed after the start of a term, arrangements can be made to provide appropriate accommodations; however, these accommodations will not be retroactive. To modify accommodations, a student needs to schedule a meeting with the Disability Coordinator.

**The Student Success Office is responsible for:**

- Evaluating and maintaining disability-related documents
- Certifying a student’s eligibility for services
- Determining reasonable accommodations
- Developing plans for the provision of accommodations
- Removing physical and programmatic barriers for students with disabilities
- Maintaining student confidentiality
Faculty and Staff will:

- Refer students to Disability Services as appropriate
- Provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations as recommended by OSS
- Consult and partner with OSS regarding student and community welfare
- Promote and maintain an accessible community

COUNSELING AND AUXILIARY AIDS SUPPORT

The primary goal of the Disability Coordinator in the OSS is to make sure that students with disabilities have equal access to an education at Blue Ridge Community and Technical College. This counselor can also assist instructors with making decisions about reasonable accommodations, curriculum modifications, class adjustments, and instructional strategies for working with students who have specific disabilities. The following are some of the job duties of the Disability Coordinator:

Counseling: Students are assigned to the Disability Coordinator who is trained and knowledgeable about specific disabilities. The counselor will work with students on issues of academic accommodations, disability adjustment, advocacy skills, learning strategies, and transition. The Disability Coordinator may act as an advocate for students to ensure access to appropriate accommodations/auxiliary aids. The counselor will serve as consultants to faculty and staff on disability-related issues and provide in-service training.

Accommodations/Auxiliary Aids Staff: The Disability Coordinator may assist students in accessing exam accommodations, getting printed materials converted to accessible formats, and learning how to use assistive technology.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Students with disabilities are expected to meet the same level of academic standards as all other students. Accommodations are frequently required which may alter the method of instruction or evaluation. The purpose of an accommodation is to minimize the impact of the disability, not to “water down” a course or requirements. To do otherwise would decrease the credibility of the institution and would also be unfair to the student.
Policies and Procedures

Who qualifies for disability accommodations?

A qualified individual with a disability is one who can provide documentation of such a disability. Acceptable documentation includes an I.E.P from high school, 504 plan, or documentation from a medical professional. All documentation must be less than 5 years old; however, special circumstances may be arranged with approval from the ADA Coordinator. If documentation cannot be provided, the Disability Coordinator may be able to arrange for formal testing.

Common Disabilities (Including but not limited to)

- Psychiatric / Psychological disorders
- Blindness / Low Vision
- Deaf / Hard of Hearing
- Learning Disabilities
- Emotional or Mental Illness
- Chronic Medical Illnesses
- Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder
- Mental / Physical Disabilities
- Speech Disorders
- Spinal Cord / Traumatic Brain Injury
- Autism

HOW TO REGISTER WITH OSS

1. Contact the OSS by phone or e-mail to request an accommodation request form or visit our website at www.blueridgectc.edu.

2. Submit the completed form with documentation of the disability.

3. Once approved for services, schedule an appointment with the Disability Coordinator to discuss goal(s)/objective(s) and the Disability Services Student Handbook.

4. Appropriate accommodations and the OSS policies and procedures are discussed.

5. The Disability Coordinator provides the instructors and student with a copy of the accommodation letter.
Accommodation Examples

The OSS will determine accommodations as mandated under federal law. Please remember that student needs are highly individualized and what works for one student with a particular disability may not be effective for another student with the same disability. Examples of accommodations are numerous. Below is a list of some common accommodations:

- Extended time for exams
- Reduced distraction environment for exams
- Large print exams
- Test reader/writer
- Interpreters
- Notetakers
- Copies of overheads and/or PowerPoint
- Taping lectures
- Accessible room and/or desk
- Calculator

Documentation

Students must provide one of the following types of documentation that is less than five years old. Special circumstances may be considered on a case-by-case approval by the Disability Coordinator.

- 504 Plan
- Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- Psychological Evaluation
- Medical and all other documentation will be reviewed by Disability Coordinator

Issues with Accommodations

Students are encouraged to speak to instructors immediately about any problems that arise during the semester. If the situation cannot be resolved, students should follow the Grievance Policy which can be found in this Disability Services Handbook.

All students who receive accommodations sign a receipt stating they have been provided a copy of the Disability Services Handbook. This handbook informs students of their rights, the law, and all policies within Disability Services. This can be found on the website or in the Office of Student Success. It is the student’s responsibility to know all information within the handbook.
Academic Accommodations Procedures

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

1. **Complete the request form.** The accommodation process is student initiated and begins with the student completing the appropriate paperwork and submitting it to the Disability Coordinator. The Release of Information Form gives the Disability Coordinator permission to communicate with appropriate faculty.

2. **Each semester, meet with a Disability Coordinator for an Accommodation Review.** To ensure the most accurate and appropriate accommodations for each course, the student is required to meet with the disability coordinator to discuss accommodations needed.

3. **Accommodation letters are processed.** The Disability Coordinator will email accommodation letters the first week of classes to appropriate faculty members.

4. **A meeting between the student and instructor is arranged.** Faculty is encouraged to set up individual meetings with disability students 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.** The signed accommodation letter serves as a contract between instructor and student.

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 requires that the professor complete a test proctoring form at least five business days prior to the test date. This is necessary for staff to make all necessary arrangements.

Student Responsibilities

- Finding out when all tests are scheduled
- Arrange a meeting with your instructor to discuss testing
- Show up on the appropriate test date and time.
Instructor Responsibilities
- Meet with student and discuss testing schedule and then filing of the proctoring form.
- Provide test in alternate format (if noted on accommodation letter).
- Provide Disability Services a copy of the test (24 hours in advance) or personally take the test to the Disability Coordinator at 8:30 a.m. the morning of the scheduled test date.

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.

Accommodations Policies

Extended Test Time Procedure

**Time Allotment:** The extended time should be time and a half of the original time allotted for the test.

**Class Instruction:** If class is scheduled to have lecture after a test, the instructor should do so as planned. Once the student has completed his/her test, it will be the student’s responsibility to speak to the instructor or another classmate to get caught up on the lecture. When possible, the student should arrive earlier than the start of class to begin the test so that the student can fully participate in the class. The testing center may be utilized so the student does not miss class lecture.

American Sign Language Procedure

**Within the Classroom:** Arrange seating that allows for appropriate viewing of the interpreter. The interpreter is not to be involved in a dual role inside the classroom. The student should not request an interpreter to engage in the following roles: counselor, tutor, friend, confidant, in class assistant, note taker, transportation provider, professor, or other roles that are unrelated to interpreting services. The student is responsible for all course content, exams, assignments, and other course requirements. The interpreter is not responsible for the grade the student receives. If the student has questions about course material, grades, or related course aspects, he/she should speak to the instructor. Personal conversations with the interpreter are inappropriate during class time. Students should reserve personal communications to times before or after class.

**Scheduling an Interpreter:** If the student needs to speak with the instructor or with other students after class for a meeting or tutoring, the student must inquire if the interpreter is available. If the interpreter is not available, the student will need to schedule an appointment for a later date. If interpreting services are needed for an institutional related activity or program other than academic classroom interpreting, the student should contact Jennifer Jordan to request interpreter services.
**Problem Resolution:** Discuss any issues regarding interpretation services that arise with the interpreter. All issues regarding class material are to be first directed to the instructor. If the problem cannot be resolved, the student will then need to speak to the Disability Coordinator. Should the interpreter be absent from class or another scheduled event, the student will need to report to the Office of Student Success immediately.

**Notetaking Procedures**

**Finding a Notetaker:** Instructors will assist students in finding a competent notetaker. If the student is not able to secure a notetaker at the end of the second week of classes, or as soon as possible, then instructors are asked to provide photocopies of their notes. The instructor may provide feedback to the notetaker on the quality and consistency of their notes.

**Recording Lecture Procedure**

**Recording the Lecture:** Students are required to let the instructor know that they will be recording the class lecture.

**Recordings:** The recordings are sources which are governed by rules of academic conduct. All academic integrity policies are in effect for this accommodation. Please see the Blue Ridge Community and Technical College Student Handbook for the full academic integrity policy.

**Respect for Instructor:** Upon the request of the instructor, the student will delete the recordings when they are no longer needed for academic work. The class lecture is property of the instructor and should not be used for anything other than the purpose of the specific class. Students are held to Academic Integrity and are subject to academic actions if violations occur.

**Test Reader Procedure**

**Test Reader:** Due to wordage and a better understanding of the criteria on the test, it is best if the instructor can do the test reading. This may have to be done at a separate time from the original testing time. Should an instructor be unable to read the test for the student, a member of the Office of Student Success may read the test for the student. Notification must be submitted to the Office of Student Success at least one week prior to the test. At no time is a student permitted to provide their own test reader.

**Test Items:** Students will not be permitted to have any other items with them during the test (cell phones, backpacks, IPods, purses, etc.).

**Completed Test:** Once the student has completed the test he/she should leave the test with the test reader. The test reader will submit the test back to the instructor via his or her mailbox in
their respected division. Students should never keep a test in their possession after it has been completed.

**Testing in Private Procedure**

**Testing Area:** The student may come to the Office of Student Success or to another assigned place to test in private. The student and instructor need to agree on a place for the testing to occur.

**Completed Test:** Once the student has completed the test he or she should leave the test with the test reader. The test reader will submit the test to the instructor via his or her mailbox in their respected division.

**Testing Duration:** Students are not permitted to receive help from any other person, including other faculty, staff members, or other students during the test. Students are simply leaving the room to test in private, not for assistance.

**Testing Time:** Unless other arrangements are made, students should take the test at the regularly scheduled class time. If students are taking the test in the Testing Center, they will need to check availability of the center.

**Waiver of Absence Procedure**

**Documentation:** Students will need to submit proper documentation to the Office of Student Success in order to receive the accommodation for Waiver of Absence. Documentation, when possible, should be submitted in advance or as soon as possible after the date of the class missed. The Waiver of Absence accommodation will not be provided to any student without documentation on file in the Student Success Office.

**ACFN:** Academic Foundation classes are mandated by the State of West Virginia. Blue Ridge Community and Technical College must follow the guidelines in place and has very little control over the procedures for ACFN courses.

**Student’s Responsibility:** It is the student’s responsibility to work with the instructor on any issues or concerns that arise with emergency situations or health issues. The Office of Student Success will serve as a vessel in support for the student during the time of absence.

**Class assignments:** All work must be submitted by the end of the semester. Incompletes will be limited and will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Students who miss class and fall behind are encouraged to work with the Office of Student Success.
Scope and Application of Grievance Procedure

Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to discrimination on the basis of disability or has been denied access or accommodations required by law shall have the right to invoke this Grievance Procedure. In general, this procedure is designed to address the following issues:

- Disagreements or denials regarding requested services, accommodations, or modifications to practices or requirements;
- Alleged inaccessibility of an institution program or activity;
- Alleged harassment or discrimination on the basis of a disability;
- Any other alleged violations of the ADA and/or Section 504.

The focus of this Grievance Policy does not and will not supersede any other institutional procedure or policy which may exist for addressing issues such as grade appeal or any other issue of concern in which the college has already established policies and procedures. Students are encouraged to consult the Disability Coordinator regarding the most appropriate procedure to address a particular concern.

With all due respect to the formal grievance procedure, Blue Ridge Community and Technical College expects all students to first attempt to resolve his or her complaint informally by meeting with the Disability Coordinator, located in the Office of Student Success, or his or her designee, and filing an Informal Grievance Report. Such a meeting must take place within 15 business days of the original occurrence of the complaint. If the grievance is not resolved informally, then the student has the right to invoke the appropriate Formal Grievance Procedure.

Formal Grievance Procedure

Upon completion of the Informal Grievance Procedure, any qualified student with a disability, as defined by the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act, shall have the right to request that the Disability Coordinator review the denial of any requested academic accommodation or service by fully complying with the procedure outlined below.

The student shall fully complete a Formal Grievance Report, obtained from the Office of Student Success. The completed form must be submitted to the Disability Coordinator, or his or her designee, within 15 business days of completion of the Informal Grievance Procedure. Please note a timely Formal Grievance Report will not be considered to have been filed unless it contains all of the required information regarding the complaint.

Upon receiving a timely, completed Formal Grievance Report, the Disability Coordinator, or his or her designee, will arrange a time with both the student and the instructor in question to meet.

After meeting with both the student and instructor, the Disability Coordinator, or his or her designee, will review all information necessary to render a written resolution. If requested, the student is responsible for providing any additional information/documentation as requested by
the Office of Student Success. The Disability Coordinator, or his or her designee, will issue the written resolution within 10 business days of the formal meeting. Furthermore, the Disability Coordinator, or his or her designee, shall provide the student and instructor with a copy of the written resolution and take any steps necessary to implement his or her decision.

Within 10 business days following the receipt of the Disability Coordinator’s written resolution, the student has the right to seek review through the Vice President of Enrollment Management, or his or her designee.

If a student should exhaust all of Blue Ridge Community and Technical College’s Grievance Procedures, he or she may contact:

**Mid-Atlantic ADA Center**

1-800-949-4232

**Mental Health Services with EastRidge Health Systems**

The college has contracted with EastRidge Health Systems for all mental health needs. These services are available for students, faculty, and staff. For staff and faculty the first three sessions are at no cost. Should you require additional sessions, they would be charged to your medical insurance plan. Once the first three sessions have been utilized and charges are going to your medical insurance plan you would be responsible for any co-pay.

The students visits will be covered by the college regardless of the number of visits. However, prior to the fifth visit, students will be completing a financial paper to determine if they have insurance or qualify for charity care. If they do not have insurance or qualify for charity care, then the college will continue to be billed for their sessions. Students will not become self-pay for therapy services.

All students, faculty, and staff must have a current Blue Ridge student/employee ID with them at their first visit. The front desk at EastRidge is aware of this so they, too, will be checking.

At the first visit an initial clinical evaluation will be completed. The goal is to get the student/faculty/staff into see someone within 24 hours of the referral from the college. If there is an emergency it can be treated as a crisis walk-in and they will be seen immediately.

In the event of a mental health crisis, the 24 hour hotline is 304-263-8954 ext. 0. Should this take place after hours you will dial the same number above and then press option #4. You will be immediately transferred to a person. At that time they will take your information and a counselor will call you back within 20 minutes.

For faculty and staff, should you need to arrange these services, or be assisting a student, you will need to contact Sharon Neubauer (ext. 125) at 304-263-8954. EastRidge Health Systems is
located at 235 South Water Street, Martinsburg, WV 25401. If there is a serious issue please notify Leslie See, Brenda Neal, or Michelle Smith.

**Disability Counseling**

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

**Mediation**

The Disability Coordinator is available to assist a student in self advocacy when his or her attempts have not been as successful as she would have hoped. We welcome meeting with students to discuss strategies to help 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.

**Mentorship**

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.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

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

A. Obtain official documentation from medical doctor/psychologist including diagnosis, prognosis, limitations imposed by the disability, maintenance plan, and recommended accommodation(s). A student may also request their IEP or 504 Plan from their previous high school.

Q. What are my responsibilities as a client of Disability Services?

A. Once you begin receiving services from Disability Services, you need to assume the responsibility for self-advocacy by talking with your instructors about your accommodations, and keeping the Disability Coordinator informed of your progress and concerns.

Q. As a student, I have a disability but I don't want any of my friends or classmates to know. Are the services confidential?
A. Your disability is confidential and you determine to whom and when to disclose it. No one in 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.

Q. Do all my instructor need to know about my disability?

A. 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 accommodation(s).

Q. Do I notify Disability Services prior to attending BRCTC and orientation?

A. Yes, if possible. You may make an appointment with Disability Services by calling the Office of Student Success as soon as you have been accepted for enrollment. Prior to orientation, we encourage all students take math, and English 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.

Q. What services can Disability Services provide for a student with a temporary illness?

A. We can explain the procedures, assist the student in obtaining the appropriate documentation, and notify instructors of the illness. However, if a student is able, we always recommend that he/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.

Q. 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?

A. 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 educational 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.

Q. May a postsecondary school deny my admission because I have a disability?
A. No. If you meet the essential requirements for admission, a postsecondary school may not deny your admission simply because you have a disability.

Q. Do I have to inform a postsecondary school that I have a disability?
A. 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.

Q. What documentation should I provide?
A. 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.

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan may also be used as proper documentation.

Q. Who has to pay for a new evaluation or if I feel I have a learning disability?
A. The student and the Disability Coordinator will meet and do a Disability Services Screening that will determine if an evaluation is needed. If an evaluation is needed, BRCTC will pay for testing.

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

Q. Are my disability records made a part of my permanent file at BRCTC?

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

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

A. BRCTC 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 and we are often limited in the information we are able to share with families without the student's written authorization. Without written authorization, in an effort to protect your son or daughter's confidentiality, we will not be able to provide you with information about him or her. If you contact us with concerns, we will make every effort to contact your son or daughter. Our focus is on the student and assisting his or her in addressing her concerns as well as improving her communication with family, faculty, and peers. We will encourage your son or daughter to communicate directly with you.

Contact the Office of Student Success Disability Coordinator to discuss specific situations or need for clarification about accommodations.

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