

**STUDENTS  
WITH  
DISABILITIES**  
A GUIDE FOR FACULTY AND STAFF

**Colorado  
Mountain  
College**



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# THE COLLEGE STUDENT WITH DISABILITIES

When considering students who demonstrate disabilities, there is tendency to think of them as a homogeneous group with similar needs or limitations. However, the more opportunity we are given to interact with these individuals, the more we come to realize that disabled students are as diverse as any other group of students attending college. The differences as they relate to the disabling conditions themselves are numerous: the disability can be visible or invisible; some disabilities are the result of diseases, others traumatic injuries; some difficulties produce formidable challenges to everyday living, while others cause relatively minor inconveniences.

Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act describes a person with a disability as anyone who (1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities; (2) has a record of such impairments; or (3) is regarded as having an impairment. The term "disabled" usually brings to mind those with significant mobility, hearing, or sight impairments. However, some less obvious conditions such as learning disabilities, moderate hearing or vision loss, chronic heart disease, diabetes, epilepsy, some forms of emotional disorders, and even temporary conditions such as broken limbs must be considered disabilities. Individuals who suffer from temporary conditions may or may not be disabled according to the 1973 Rehabilitation Act; however, they often need special parking stickers, personal wheelchairs, and architecturally accessible buildings, as well as some modifications in class procedures.

Due to legal prohibition against requiring information about disabilities as part of any admissions decision, college records reflect information about only those students who voluntarily report disabling conditions. While many students will report such information, some students with disabilities are reluctant to do so. Some may be totally independent and neither want nor need special services offered by the college or rehabilitation agencies. Others may be embarrassed about their disabilities. Some students fear that their disabling conditions may appear on their transcript, thus endangering prospective advancement in their educational field or in employment opportunities. Still others may have never been properly diagnosed and may be unaware of specific conditions other than general academic difficulties. As a result, no firm figures regarding students with disabilities are available.

It is estimated that there are more than 250 students with disabilities enrolled at Colorado Mountain College. Those students currently have identified disabilities as follows:

physically impaired, blind/vision impaired, learning disabled, attention deficit disorder, deaf/hearing impaired, psychologically impaired, medically impaired, and those with multiple disabilities. The total number of disabled students being served by the college has increased steadily over the past years and we anticipate that this number will continue to rise. Research in the area of learning disabilities alone indicates this condition may exist in as much as 17% of the adult general population. As the majority of architectural barriers at Colorado Mountain College have been removed, attitudinal barriers are also being addressed. In conjunction with this growth, individuals with disabilities are increasingly seeing college as an option and are seeking our support.

## People-first Language

Persons with disabilities prefer a focus on their individuality, not their disability. The term "handicapped" should not be used. The preferred usage, "persons with disabilities," stresses the essential humanity of individuals and avoids objectification.

Never use the article "the" with a word to describe people with disabilities. For example, say, "a person who is deaf," not "the deaf." Say, "A person who is visually impaired," not "the visually impaired," and say "persons with disabilities," not "the disabled."

## Appropriate Terminology

The following terms are examples of appropriate terms to describe people with disabilities:

Persons *with* or who *have* ...

- Cerebral Palsy
- Down syndrome
- Mental illness
- Paraplegia or Quadriplegia
- Partial Hearing Loss
- Seizure Disorder
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech Impairment

Persons who *are* . . .

- Blind or Visually Impaired
- Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- Developmentally Disabled

Be careful not to imply that people with disabilities are to be pitied, feared, or ignored, or that they are somehow more heroic, courageous, patient, or special than others. It is inappropriate to use the term "normal" in contrast to

persons with disabilities. For example, use "Trina qualified for her swimmer certificate," not "Trina held her own while swimming with normal children."

Avoid terms that define the disability as a limitation. A wheelchair liberates; it doesn't confine. A person in a wheelchair "uses a wheelchair," he or she is not "confined to a wheelchair" or "wheelchair bound."

Never use the terms "victim" or "sufferer" to refer to a person with a disease or disability. These terms dehumanize the person and emphasize powerlessness. Use "person with HIV/AIDS," not "victim of AIDS" or "AIDS sufferer." Use "a person who had polio," not "a polio victim."

## ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS: MYTHS AND REALITIES

### Attitudes of Persons with Disabilities

Self-perceptions and perceptions about one's disability vary with each student. Factors influencing these perceptions include the type of disability, the age at which the disability was first discovered or encountered, and the overall impact of the disability on one's life. The level to which one has accepted a disability and embraced necessary accommodations depends greatly on personality and history. Each person will need individual attention to discover his or her degree and manner of adjustment.

### Attitudes of Others about Disabilities

Hidden disabilities, such as learning disabilities, are often confusing and lead some people to suspect that these students are not truly impaired. Lack of knowledge or fear about disabilities can cause other individuals to demonstrate unspoken prejudice, to be patronizing, to assume that intellectual capacities are compromised, or to place students in undeservedly exalted positions. Many people simply ignore or shy away from people with a disability, feeling that they should act in some mysteriously different way than they do with their peers who have no disabilities. Acquiring information about the disability itself is the only real way to deal appropriately with the situation. Often this information is best obtained from the person who has the condition.

## THE LAW AND THE COLLEGE STUDENT WITH DISABILITIES

### Requirements for Provision of Services

According to federal guidelines, appropriate documentation is required prior to determining eligibility for services. Appropriate documentation is an evaluative summary on an adult scale provided by a medical doctor or licensed diagnostician. This documentation is given to the Disability Services Coordinator at the respective campus and the Coordinator provides the student a letter to give to each instructor for the current semester. This letter provides information regarding accommodations appropriate for the student's success in your classroom.

Documentation serves as a foundation that legitimizes a student's request for appropriate accommodations; therefore, it should be as current as possible. If documentation is not provided upon enrollment, the Disability Services Coordinator has the discretion to provide cursory services for one semester only. For this

reason, some students will qualify for services one semester and not the next. Once the student provides current documentation, they are eligible for services again.

### What is "504"?

In 1973 Congress passed the Rehabilitation Act (Public Law 93-112). This act guarantees civil rights for Americans with disabilities. The law is grounded in the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment and the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The reauthorization of this act in 2008 continued the actions granted in the original law. Section 504 is the section of the law that specifically refers to postsecondary and vocational education services. Public Law 93-112 provides that, "... no otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States shall, solely by reason of handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial

assistance." With respect to postsecondary and vocational education services, "otherwise qualified" means a person with disabilities who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the program or activity.

### **Does 504 mean lowering academic standards?**

It does not. Nothing in the language or intent of Section 504 abridges the freedom of an institution of higher education to establish academic requirements and standards. Under 504 guidelines, colleges and universities can require physical qualifications for certain clinical programs. For example, it would be reasonable to require students training as pilots or surgeons to have the needed level of visual acuity. However, the same vision level would not necessarily be required of students training as psychiatrists or as airline ground personnel.

A student's disabling condition may not be considered as part of any non-clinical admissions decision. Therefore, all students with disabilities at Colorado Mountain College have been admitted through the same process as other students.

### **What does 504 require of postsecondary institutions?**

Essentially, 504 requires that colleges and universities make those reasonable adjustments necessary to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability. For example, it may be necessary to remove classroom prohibitions against animals (in the case of dog guides) for blind students or those with balance problems. Other less obvious examples might include extending time limits on exams for a learning disabled student or allowing lectures to be tape recorded when disabilities impair a student's ability to keep up with the lecturer. Occasionally, a course requirement may have to be substituted (e.g., an art appreciation elective vs. a music appreciation elective for a deaf student). Classes enrolling students with mobility impairments may have to be relocated due to inaccessible facilities. The college may need to provide special services such as registration assistance, interpreters for hearing impaired students, mobility assistance, or specially proctored examination arrangements.

Note that the emphasis in each of these adjustments is on the "may." The key is accommodating the disability, not altering course content. The "may" means that, with the exception of removing architectural barriers, no set formulas exist for making adjustments which will be helpful in every case. For example, a computerized registration

procedure may provide easy access to students with hearing impairments or mobility difficulties, but may pose problems to some students with certain types of learning disabilities or with visual impairments. In the classroom, a student who has difficulties in reading due to a learning disability or visual impairment, or a student with a mobility impairment who has problems in the manner in which he or she is expected to respond to an exam question, may require additional time allotted on an examination. Thus the accommodation will be specific to the needs of the individual student. In every case, the intent is to accommodate the disability without altering academic standards or course content.

The law requires that an instructor adapt the course presentation to meet the unique needs of the student's disabling condition. However, accommodations of course procedures are not solely the instructor's responsibility. The student bears responsibility to make his or her abilities and limits known and to meet the instructor's expectations concerning attendance, class participation, performance, and work standards.

Obviously, specific accommodations will vary according to the student and the severity of the disability. It is important to meet with a student with a disability early in the semester to discuss course procedures and the specific accommodations that will be required. Topics that generally need to be addressed with any student with a disability include test-taking and note-taking procedures (for students with learning disabilities, hearing impairments, visual impairments, and mobility difficulties), reproduction of written materials and visual aids (for students with visual impairments and learning disabilities), and lecture procedures (for students with hearing impairments and certain learning disabilities).

### **What is the ADAAA?**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) was passed in 1990 to provide a "clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities." The ADA built upon existing legislation, particularly the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. This legislation was once again amended and reauthorized in 2008, and became known as the ADAAA. The ADAAA extends Section 504's mandate of nondiscrimination based on disability to most of the private sector and to state and local government agencies not covered by Section 504.

Both Section 504 and the ADAAA seek to dispel stereotypes and assumptions about disabilities, to ensure equal

opportunity and to encourage full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for persons with disabilities. (For a capsule summary of key definitions under the ADA, see Appendix B.)

An additional component to the new ADA is the determination of who is disabled. In the past individuals with a variety of medical conditions – obesity, high blood pressure, depression, may not have been considered as having disabilities which required accommodations or support from the Disability Services Office. However, with the new reauthorization, these individuals may now be eligible for services. For example, a student claimed that the University of Hawaii discriminated against her based upon her disability of Multiple Chemical Sensitivity. She asked the University to provide full spectrum fluorescent lighting (as opposed to standard fluorescent lighting) in all pathways she traveled and classrooms she attended. The University limited its compliance to classroom space and OCR determined that the University needed to comply with the full extent of the request. UH-Manoa (OCR No. 10-06-2001)

### **Section 508: The Technology Act**

In 1998, Congress amended the Rehabilitation Act to require Federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with

disabilities. Inaccessible technology interferes with an individual's ability to obtain and use information quickly and easily. Section 508 was enacted to eliminate barriers in information technology, to make available new opportunities for people with disabilities, and to encourage development of technologies that will help achieve these goals. The law applies to all Federal agencies when they develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology. Under Section 508 (29 U.S.C. ' 794d), agencies must give disabled employees and members of the public access to information that is comparable to the access available to others. Some of the key components of this legislation related to faculty are: 1) Software shall not use flashing or blinking text, objects, or other elements having a flash or blink frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz. 2) When electronic forms are used, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues. 3) When a timed response is required, the user shall be alerted and given sufficient time to indicate more time is required. 4) When animation is displayed, the information shall be displayable in at least one non-animated presentation mode at the option of the user. To view the entire Legislation go to: <http://www.section508.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=Content&ID=12>

## **FACULTY AND STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Referral to Disability Services**

Some disabilities are often hard to differentiate from other factors which could influence a student's overall academic performance. These factors may include a poor educational background, low motivation or poor attitude, inadequate study skills, cultural differences, emotional factors, or low cognitive abilities. If there are concerns about any student a referral should be made to the Campus Counselor and the Disability Services Coordinator. (Refer to Appendix C for characteristics common to certain types of disabilities).

### **Modifications vs. Accommodations**

Faculty and staff play important roles in the success of students with disabilities. Colorado Mountain College encourages and supports private and confidential discussions with students in an effort to identify and make reasonable accommodations. At the same time, it is recognized that modifications are not possible.

Modifications imply an alteration in the fundamental conditions needed to be successful in obtaining a goal. Postsecondary Institutions agree that academic standards must be maintained; however, the intent of an accommodation is to equalize educational opportunities. If a student approaches a faculty or staff member to request an accommodation due to his/her disability, the student should be asked if he/she has provided documentation for the disability to the Disability Services Coordinator.

- If the student has not provided such documentation, the student should be referred to the Disability Services Coordinator for guidance and assistance.
- If the student has filed documentation of the disability, the student will be provided with a letter to be shared privately with faculty and staff from whom accommodation is sought.

The Disability Services Coordinator is available to meet with faculty and staff when unusual accommodations are involved.

The Disability Services Coordinator will work with faculty and staff to assist in providing reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Refer to Appendix D for Reasonable Accommodations.

## Faculty Compliance

Faculty are an integral part of an institution's efforts to comply with §504 and the ADA. Just as faculty are not free to discriminate against students on the basis of race, religion, gender or ethnicity, so too, they cannot discriminate against students with disabilities. Part of not discriminating against individuals with disabilities is the provision of reasonable accommodations or "academic adjustments" and "auxiliary aids and services." Institutional compliance is a shared responsibility of which faculty are a necessary part. Unfortunately, some faculty have not yet come to terms with the fact that their employment is conditioned upon their assisting the institution in fulfilling its compliance responsibilities in connection with the ADA as well as other civil rights statutes.

Faculty have been known to engage in philosophical debates about the "fairness" to other, non-disabled students, and to allege that the provision of accommodations somehow violates their academic freedom. These arguments are unavailing for several reasons. First, philosophical debates about whether and how equal educational opportunities are provided to students with disabilities are meaningless. Congress has determined how we as a society should address equal access to education by passing federal civil rights statutes protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. Congress has been joined in this effort by most state legislatures as well. Second, academic freedom is a theory of academic governance, one which is deeply engrained, but is without the force of law and certainly not preemptive of federal civil rights statutes.

## Personal Liability

In addition, faculty should be aware that failure to cooperate in this effort may subject them to individual liability. In **Howe v. Hull**, 873 F. Supp. 72 (N.D. Ohio 1994), a doctor on call in the emergency room refused to treat a patient with AIDS and his failure to treat resulted in significant delays and the person's condition worsening. The court held, "[a]n individual may be subject to personal liability under the ADA. Given the broad remedial purposes of the ADA, allowing individual liability in some circumstances ... is consistent with both the plain language of the statute and congressional intent. To hold differently would allow individuals with both the authority and the discretion to make decisions based on a discriminatory

animus to violate the ADA with a degree of impunity not envisioned by Congress." Id. In the case of **Smith v. University of the State of New York** (LRP 3-12. 1998) the court allowed the personal liability claim against the professor to go forward resulting in a civil lawsuit in which the professor had to pay the plaintiff an undisclosed sum of money. The lesson that faculty and administrators should learn is that decisions involving accommodations should include input from Disability Services Coordinators and other officials, rather than act independently.

Faculty can and should raise appropriate questions; ones which involve such issues as whether a student is "qualified," whether an accommodation would result in a fundamental alteration of the educational program or the course in question, or whether the faculty member is being asked to address a "personal need." Faculty's raising of questions is not in and of itself sufficient to support denials of requested accommodations, but they may lead to an institution's addressing a request more consistently and more thoroughly. It is important that faculty understand that they are responsible for assisting students in following the college's policies, such as a requirement that all requests for accommodation be lodged with the Disability Services Coordinator and not individual faculty members alone. In reality, this type of policy protects students, faculty, and the institution by ensuring consistency, and it takes much of the burden off the individual faculty members, who are often ill-equipped to determine whether an accommodation is appropriate or how to provide it. Where faculty have not followed the institution's policies, knowingly or not, violations have been found. It is therefore the wise institution which not only establishes policies for the delivery of accommodations, but communicates them regularly to faculty and supports faculty members' use of them. In addition, faculty should be aware of the TECHNICAL STANDARDS that have been developed for every vocational program offered at CMC. These standards will provide further information to faculty regarding the requisite skills needed to be successful in a particular program.

Faculty may not simply decide not to provide academic adjustments approved by the institution's mechanism for doing so, and where a faculty member's refusal to do so results in a failing grade, for example, the student must be able to retake the exam and receive an adjustment in his/her grade if warranted. An administration's fears of litigation from unhappy faculty are not acceptable reasons to violate students' civil rights. (**Solano Community College**, OCR Complaint No. 09-94-2064-1 (1995). See also **Marsha Kay Beauty College (Ark.)** Case No. 06-962040 (OCR Region VI 1996). Similarly, a student complained that, even though he had registered with the college's disability

services and provided documentation of his disability, he was denied the extended time he was entitled to. The student was allowed to retake the exam. (*Letter re: Housatonic Community College*. No. 01-08-2022 (OCR 2008)).

Students may be expected to take on a certain amount of responsibility for the securing of accommodations. Students can be expected to ask a professor to identify a fellow student to take notes, etc. However, where this does not prove successful, e.g., the professor fails to follow through, or no one volunteers to provide note-taker services, the institution must make it clear that it will take charge and make sure that note-taking services are provided. In other words, students are not to be penalized (left without accommodations) because the system was unsuccessful in a

particular situation. By the same token, the student is responsible for reporting back to the Disability Services Coordinator that the established procedure did not work out. (**Highline Community College**, OCR Complaint No. 10-92-2010, 3 NDLR ¶ 151, **Solano Community College**, OCR Complaint No. 09-94-2064-I (1995)).

In another case, after a student alleged that a professor refused to provide enlarged copies of handouts, to orally describe information written on the chalkboard, to provide access to computers, and other different treatment, OCR and the university entered into an agreement to remedy these allegations. (**Purdue University - Calumet**, Case No. 05-95-2074 (OCR Region V, 1995). See also **University of Pittsburgh**. 8 NDLR ¶ 180 (OCR 1995)).

## WORKING TOGETHER: FACULTY AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

### Useful Teaching Techniques

Below you will find examples of teaching techniques in the classroom, laboratory, examinations, and field work that benefit all students, but are especially useful for students who have disabilities.

#### Classroom

- Select course materials early so that students and the campus disabled student services office staff have enough time to translate them to audiotape, Braille, and large print.
- Make syllabi, short assignment sheets, and reading lists available in electronic format (e.g., CD, email, online).
- Design course WebPages to be accessible to students with disabilities. For further information, refer to <http://www.washington.edu/computing/accessible/howto.html>.
- Face the class when speaking. Repeat discussion questions.
- Write key phrases and lecture outlines on the blackboard or overhead projector.

#### Laboratory

- Take the student on a tour of the lab she or he will be working in. Discuss safety concerns.
- Assign group lab projects in which all students contribute according to their abilities.

- Arrange lab equipment so that it is accessible to and visible by everyone.
- Give oral and written lab instructions.

#### Examination and Fieldwork

- Ensure that exams test the essential skills or knowledge needed for the course or field of study.
- Some students will require extra time to transcribe or process test questions. Follow campus policies regarding extra time on examinations.
- Consider allowing students to turn in exams via email or CD.
- Attempt to include student in field work opportunities, rather than automatically suggesting non-field work alternatives. Ask students how they might be able to do specific aspects of field work.
- Include special needs in requests for field trip vehicle reservations.

#### Video

The videos, *Working Together: Faculty and Students with Disabilities*, *Building the Team: Faculty, Staff, and Students Working Together*, and *Equal Access: Universal Design of Instruction* may be freely viewed online at <http://www.washington.edu/doi/Video/>, or purchased in DVD format.

## Universal Design

Universal design has been defined by Ron Mace at the Center for Universal Design as "the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design"

([http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/about\\_ud/about\\_ud.htm](http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/about_ud/about_ud.htm)). Applications of universal design are described at the *Center for Universal Design in Education* at <http://www.washington.edu/doi/CUDE/>.

Universal design principles can be applied to the overall design of instruction as well as to specific instructional materials and strategies to improve access for everyone. For example, captions on multimedia benefit students with hearing impairments, those whose first language is not English, and people with some types of learning disabilities. Examples of how universal design of instruction can improve class climate; physical access, usability, and safety; delivery methods; information resources; interaction; feedback; and assessment can be found in *Equal Access: Universal Design of Instruction* at <http://www.washington.edu/doi/Brochures/Academics/eq>

[ual\\_access\\_udi.html](#). Universal design minimizes, but does not eliminate the need for accommodations.

## Accommodations

The student with a disability is the best source of information regarding necessary accommodations. In postsecondary settings it is the student's responsibility to request disability-related accommodations, but a faculty member must include a statement on the class syllabus inviting students who have disabilities to discuss academic needs which reads " If you have a disability protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and feel you may need classroom accommodations based on the impact of your disability, please contact the Disability Services Coordinator on your campus.

- Alpine and Vail-Eagle Valley Campuses:  
Deb Farmer at 970-870-4450
- Aspen, Roaring Fork, and West Garfield Campuses:  
Anne Moll at 970-947-8256
- Timberline, Summit County, and Chaffee County Campuses: Sandi Conner at 719-486-4200

# EXAMPLES OF ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

*(Accommodations are developed on a case by case basis as supported by a student's documentation)*

**Low Vision:** Students with visual impairments may include the totally-blind, the partially-sighted, and those with vision somewhere between the two. Students with partial sight have some vision, can usually read in large print, and may use a cane for mobility. A student who is totally blind has no functional vision and will rely upon mobility devices such as a cane or dog guide. Both students who are blind and who are partially-sighted may use volunteer readers or assistive devices such as tape recorders, typewriters, computers, Braille print, or talking books. Some suggestions for accommodations are:

- Seating near front of the class
- Large print handouts, lab signs, and equipment labels
- TV monitor connected to microscope to enlarge images
- Class assignments made available in electronic format

- Computer equipped to enlarge screen characters and images

## Blindness

- Audio-taped, Braille, or electronic-formatted lecture notes, handouts, and texts
- Verbal descriptions of visual aids
- Raised-line drawings and tactile models of graphic materials
- Braille lab signs and equipment labels, auditory lab warning signals
- Adaptive lab equipment (e.g., talking thermometers, calculators, light probes, and tactile timers)
- Computer with optical character reader, speech output, Braille screen display, and printer output

**Hearing Impairment:** Hearing impairments may vary in severity from mild losses to total deafness. A hearing aid may help the individual to hear and understand speech, but never restores hearing to normal. Certain kinds of hearing losses may create distortion of sounds as well as a reduction in loudness. Classrooms typically have considerable background noise which increases the difficulty experienced by students with hearing impairments. Some suggestions for accommodations are:

- Interpreter, real-time captioning, FM system
- Note taker
- Visual aids
- Written assignments, lab instructions, summaries, notes
- Use of email for class and private discussions
- Visual warning system for lab emergencies

**Learning Disability:** The term "learning disabled" describes a person with normal or high intelligence who does not achieve at the expected level in academic areas. This gap in performance is assumed to stem from neurological origins and is not the result of mental retardation, physical handicaps, emotional disturbance, cultural differences, or educational deprivation. Persons with learning disabilities often acquire, integrate, and express information in ways which differ from the norm. Some suggestions for accommodations are:

- Note taker and/or audio-taped class sessions
- Captioned films
- Extra exam time, alternative testing arrangements
- Visual, aural, and tactile instructional demonstrations
- Computer with voice output, spellchecker, and grammar checker

**Mobility Impairment:** A student who is mobility-impaired is usually an individual who cannot walk, or has some kind of difficulty in walking. The student may use a wheelchair, cane or crutches, or simply walk at a slower pace. In addition, some students with mobility impairments also have limited use of arms and hands and may use adaptive equipment. Some suggestions for accommodations for these students are:

- Note taker, group lab assignments
- Classrooms, labs, and field trips in accessible locations
- Adjustable tables, lab equipment located within reach
- Lengthened pull-chains on safety showers

- Class assignments made available in electronic format
- Computer equipped with special input device (e.g., voice input, alternative keyboard)

**Psychological Disabilities:** A psychological disability is defined as any persistent psychological or psychiatric disorder or emotional or mental illness resulting in impairment of educational, social, or vocational functioning. Some common types of psychosocial behavior which students may present include depression/withdrawal, denial, frustration, anger, restlessness, anxiety, or apathy. These manifestations may be triggered by the disability, medications, environmental influences, nutrition patterns, fatigue, and/or stress. The student may exhibit symptoms, such as being easily distracted, poor concentration, difficulty focusing for extended periods of time, difficulty formulating and executing a plan of action, difficulty overcoming unexpected obstacles, and/or panic in unfamiliar surroundings and situations. With appropriate treatment, psychological disorders often can be controlled. Treatment frequently combines medication and psychotherapy. However, students may require temporary or ongoing additional academic support services. Some accommodations that may support these students are:

- Expect requests for lectures and/or texts on tape, extended time for exams, and change of location of exams.
- Allow incomplete or late withdrawals rather than failures in the event of prolonged illness-related absences.
- Flexible attendance requirements.
- Change environmental barriers; e.g., students may need to sit by the door, or bring liquids into the classroom to relieve extreme thirst associated with medication side effects.

**Traumatic Brain Injuries:** Disabilities resulting from head injuries involve brain trauma, which can be caused by direct injury to brain tissue (as in a car accident), hemorrhage from a ruptured blood vessel, or swelling of the brain due to infection or concussion. The trauma may be the result of a combination of causes and can affect several areas of the brain. Complications which can arise from brain trauma include seizures, muscular spasticity, and/or excess fluid in the brain (hydrocephalus). Because various areas of the brain control different functions, such as muscular control, speech, memory, or personality, and damage to any area can be permanent, brain trauma can significantly alter one's abilities. It is extremely frustrating to find oneself unable to perform a task which one could perform easily in the past. The Disability Services Coordinator can assist in making specific accommodations

depending on the individual case. Some general suggestions are:

- Provide lectures, assignments and communication to student in multiple formats, repeated over several days
- Extra time on exams, alternative testing arrangements
- Seating near front of the class

**Health Impairment:** Students with Health Impairments have recurring chronic illnesses that challenge their ability to maintain their stamina, concentration, and skill levels on a regular basis. Some chronic illnesses include: multiple sclerosis (MS), systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), heart or respiratory disease, cancer, diabetes, tuberculosis, arthritis, cystic fibrosis (CF), muscular dystrophy (MD), chronic fatigue syndrome, scleroderma, HIV, and AIDS. Some suggestions are:

- Note takers
- Flexible attendance requirements
- Extra time on exams
- Assignments made available in electronic format
- Use of email to facilitate communication

### **Autism Spectrum Disorder or Aspergers:**

Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder or Aspergers Syndrome typically have difficulties communicating in social situations. The ability to make eye contact, derive meaning from facial expressions, carry on a conversation,

or interact appropriately in a social setting are extremely difficult for these individuals. Some of them may also display abnormal repetitive behaviors, such as rocking, hand flapping or verbal or facial tics. Students may be more successful if:

- Class structure follows a set routine, with clear goals and expectations.
- Alternative ways of completing tasks, rather than working in a group.
- Information and assignments presented in more than one format - e.g., written and verbal.
- Use of literal, rather than metaphorical or figurative language.
- Detailed instructions are provided for all assignments.
- Testing accommodations may include additional time, or a private test area with minimal distraction.
- Depending on their needs, students may also need to tape record lectures, have notes from a classmate, or sit in a location where distractions are minimal.

**Temporary Disabilities:** Students who are temporarily disabled due to accidents, injuries, or illnesses are typically not entitled to accommodations during the course of their temporary disability. However, temporary disabilities lasting longer than 6 months, may be considered like any other disability, but will need to be documented. These students will be assisted on a case by case basis.

## **COLLEGE SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Colorado Mountain College currently provides a network of services intended to promote self advocacy in students with various disabilities. In order for these students to succeed in their educational pursuits, direct support services are required. The institution must provide these varying levels and forms of assistance in order to afford equal access to educational experiences as required by Section 504.

### **Disability Services Coordinators**

There is a coordinator that covers each residential campus as well as other Commuter campuses. Please make sure you contact the individual who is associated with your campus if you have questions or concerns:

- Alpine and Vail-Eagle Valley Campuses:  
Deb Farmer at 970-870-4450
- Aspen, Roaring Fork, and West Garfield Campuses:

Anne Moll at 970-947-8256

- Timberline, Summit County, and Chaffee County Campuses: Sandi Conner at 719-486-4200

### **Learning Labs/Alpine Bank Centers**

The Learning Labs offer tutorial assistance to all students in Developmental Studies who have a learning disability or who qualify for the Student Success Center (TRIO) program. They offer tutoring which is focused on learning strategies as well as content areas and is implemented in conjunction with content area tutoring. Developmental Studies also offers credit courses which are appropriate for any student but are especially helpful for students who demonstrate learning difficulties which are sometimes a result of a disability. DES courses include Fundamentals of Math, Basic English, Reading Improvement, Study Skills, etc.

For more information contact the learning lab at each campus.

### **Student Success Center Program (TRIO)**

Students with disabilities may also qualify for the SSS Program. Tutoring, mentors, and variety of support services are provided for students in this program.

### **Career Counseling and Placement**

Counselors at Colorado Mountain College work closely with counselors from other support agencies and campus staff and faculty. CMC offers a variety of career-oriented services, from counseling and testing for students unsure of their career paths to workshops on resume writing, interviewing, and the job search.

### **Learning Resource Center/Library**

The Learning Resource Center has a variety of resources for students with disabilities, including special orientation tours and computerized research, as well as access to alternate formatted texts. Contact the Reference Department of the library for specific information.

### **Assistive Technology Workstations**

These workstations, located in the Learning Labs, feature the latest in computer hardware, software, and networking technology.

**Dragon Dictate** - a voice recognition programs in the computer system via voice input. In less than two hours, the on-line tutorial teaches you enough to dictate text.

**Kurzweil** - allows access to a computer system via voice output. Designed to interact specifically with Dragon Dictate for a tight integration between voice input and output.

**ABBYY FineReader** - a software character recognition program that turns a PC with a scanner and an access device into a reading machine. The scanner captures a picture of the page and it is converted into text that can be read, stored in a library, or formatted for use in one of many popular PC applications, such as WordPerfect or Microsoft Word.

**Zoom Text Plus**-a screen magnification program specifically tailored for the needs of the visually impaired. ZTP works with most character based software including word processors, data bases, spreadsheets, graphics, and Microsoft Windows.

Each residential campus has one workstation with a 21 inch monitor and software that produces larger print for the visually impaired, speech synthesizing hardware, and software that reads what is displayed on the screen for those who cannot read enlarged print. Other workstations currently have standard monitors on which larger print can be displayed by choosing a large font.

In addition to adjustable tables, mobility impaired users are aided by software that reduces keystroke commands to one keystroke. Student with learning disabilities can utilize two software packages: a grammar assistance software package and one that includes an as-you-type spell checker and a thesaurus. Lab consultants are trained on all the hardware and software available for the disabled workstations and can answer any questions from students, faculty, or staff.

### **Admissions and Registration**

Colorado Mountain College staff will assist students with special needs who are having difficulty in completing their applications to Colorado Mountain College.

### **Financial Aid**

The student who demonstrates a disability has the same eligibility for financial assistance as any other student attending Colorado Mountain College. The Financial Aid Office can help students obtain information on financial assistance and help complete the financial aid forms. An appointment with a counselor is necessary. Student employment positions are also open to students with disabilities at Colorado Mountain College. The financial Aid Office can help students obtain a work study position if they are found to be financially eligible. Contact the Financial Aid Office located at each campus. Additional resources for financial aid information may also be available for the residential campuses through the Student Support Services program. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation may also be able to help students whose disability prevents employment.

### **Parking and Transportation**

Any student with a disability who has a valid, state-issued handicapped plate may park at any marked parking slot, except for fire lanes and reserved parking.

### **Building and Grounds**

The Physical Plant office is responsible for the removal or modification of architectural barriers (in accordance with A.N.S.I. 117-1, 1986) throughout the campus. This office can be reached through the main office at each campus.

### **Office of Affirmative Action/Student Services**

This office serves to ensure that all students, faculty, and staff, as well as applicants for those positions, receive equal treatment under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. It is also a contact point for suggestions and/or observations on

architectural modification and accessibility issues.

Questions and comments concerning the above issues are welcomed. The office also provides assistance in filing a discrimination grievance when needed. AAO is located with the office of Human Resources at the District Office and can be reached at 970-945-8304.

## **A FINAL NOTE ON CONFIDENTIALITY**

The issue of confidentiality is critically important when interacting with any student. A student who demonstrates a disability may be extremely guarded in the information that he or she may want to share. It is important to respect the student's right to exercise personal discretion in the Disclosure of individual difficulties. In this regard, **the student's right to privacy should be respected as much as that of any other student in class.**

# APPENDIX A

## **General Policy Statement**

In accordance with Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Colorado Mountain College will implement procedures both in the spirit and the letter of the law to ensure equal access to educational opportunities for persons with disabilities. The requirements for such access will be offered through both a centralized and a departmental or unit approach that emphasizes mainstreaming and ongoing self-evaluation. The accessibility procedures will include, but not be limited to, the following features:

1. Provision of appropriate support services.
2. Provision of appropriate referrals to diagnostic services as needed for service identification.
3. Modification of administrative requirements to comply with Section 504.
4. Appropriate accommodations in classroom operations.
5. In-house policies / procedures development: self-evaluation and re-evaluation.

### **Provisions of Appropriate Support Services**

A number of support services are needed for some (otherwise qualified) students to benefit from their educational experiences at Colorado Mountain College. These may include but are not limited to tutors, readers, note-takers, interpreters, textbook tape-recording, class testing under modified conditions, computer access, and restricted typing periods. Equipment and aids such as cassette players, cassette tapes, lined or carbon paper, adaptive devices for computer use, talking calculators, and a telecommunication device may also be essential for accessibility. Development of new services will be implemented according to students' needs or as current research mandates.

### **Provision of Appropriate Diagnostic Services**

Colorado Mountain College must ensure that the most beneficial support services are provided to the right individuals, e.g., those who truly need them. Therefore, provisions must be made for (1) review of any previous diagnostic findings, if available, (2) referral for partial (as needed) or complete diagnostic testing by a certified diagnostician in the case of a suspected learning disability, and (3) planning for individual program needs. Expansion of these services will be necessary as faculty awareness and student need increases and as research indicates.

### **Modifications of Administrative Requirements in Line with Section 504**

Certain administrative requirements may hamper a student's ability to benefit from postsecondary education or may unintentionally penalize a student for having a disability. For example, a particular course required in a program may be so tied to the student's disability that passing the course is impossible. In such cases, how essential that course is to the program should be evaluated by the advisor and department chair; waivers or substitutions may be appropriate at times. Other administrative requirements that might require further examination include certain course arrangements or testing procedures.

### **Appropriate Accommodations in Classroom Operations**

Departments should help instructors learn a cadre of instructional and testing accommodations that are appropriate for student needs but which do not compromise the educational process (particularly content). Procedures for determining appropriate accommodations should be implemented and monitored by individual departments with the assistance of the Disability Services Coordinator as needed. The student is responsible for making arrangements for the appropriate modifications with the faculty involved.

### **In-house Policy / Procedures Development: Self-evaluation and Re-evaluation**

It is necessary for departments and other units to develop their own policies and procedures for accommodating the instructional needs of students. These policies can then serve as self-evaluation criteria for each department / unit to gauge its responses to student needs. Each unit's policies and procedures should be in compliance with Section 504 at minimum and fully responsive to the spirit of the law at best.

## APPENDIX B

### Definitions of "Learning Disability"

#### **I. Approved by the National Joint Council for Learning Disabilities (January 15, 1990)**

Learning disabilities is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span.

Problems in self-regulatory behaviors, social perceptions, and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability.

Although learning disabilities may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (for example, sensory impairment, mental retardation, serious emotional disturbance) or with extrinsic influences (such as cultural differences, insufficient or inappropriate instruction), they are not the result of those conditions or influences.

#### **II. Approved by the American Council on Learning Disabilities Board of Directors (September 22, 1984)**

Specific Learning Disabilities is a chronic condition of presumed neurological origin which selectively interferes with the development, integration, and/or demonstration of verbal and/or non-verbal abilities.

Specific Learning Disabilities exists as a distinct handicapping condition in the presence of average to superior intelligence, adequate sensory and motor systems, and adequate learning opportunities. The condition varies in its manifestations and in degree of severity.

Throughout life the condition can affect self-esteem, education, vocation, socialization, and/or daily living activities.

Rationale for definition: Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) was selected to emphasize the fact that this condition has multiple manifestations but is not one of a generalized nature. Also, this term is the term used in the Education of the Handicapped Act, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504.

#### **III. AHEAD Definition**

Learning Disability (LD) - a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities. Individuals diagnosed with learning disabilities have average or above average intelligence. Some examples include: dyslexia (reading), dysgraphia (writing), and dyscalculia (mathematics). Problems with self regulatory behaviors, social perception, and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability.

#### **IV. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), 4\* Edition, Definition**

Disorders characterized by academic functioning (in reading, writing, and mathematics) that is substantially below that expected given the person's chronological age, measured intelligence, and age-appropriate education.

## APPENDIX C

### Types of Learning Disabilities

#### **Dyslexia (Reading)**

- Difficulty with any task in which reading is an essential component, i.e.: reading texts, articles, exams, notes, etc.

#### **Dysgraphia (Writing)**

- Difficulty with the physical act of writing.

#### **Dyscalculia (Math)**

- Difficulty with calculators.
- Difficulty with rapid processing math facts.

#### **Language Deficit**

- Difficulty articulating words.
- Difficulty recalling words to express a feeling or event.
- Difficulty communicating similarities and differences.
- Difficulty distinguishing past, present, and future forms of verbs.

#### **Visual Perception**

- Difficulty taking information in through the sense of sight.
- Difficulty processing the information.
- Trouble seeing a specific image within a competing background such as picking a line out of a book.
- Trouble seeing the difference between two objects.
- Trouble seeing how far away or near an object might be.
- Difficulty filling in computerized exam forms. • Difficulty copying information from the board.

#### **Auditory Deficits**

- Difficulty taking information in through the sense of hearing and/or in processing this information.

- Difficulty discriminating similar sounds.

- Difficulty related to listening and to remembering verbal instructions.

- Trouble hearing sounds over background noise. • Fatigue when trying to listen to a talk or lecture. • Difficulty hearing sounds in the correct order and problems taking phone messages.

#### **Attention Deficits**

- Difficulty concentrating for long periods of time. • Easily distracted.
- Difficulty organizing work and budgeting time. • Problems staying at a desk or task for long periods of time.

#### **Memory Deficits**

- Difficulty remembering problems, retaining numerical information such as multiplication tables, dates, etc.
- Difficulty remembering rote facts.

Reasoning Deficits • Trouble thinking in an orderly, logical way.

- Difficulty prioritizing and sequencing tasks.

- Difficulty applying learned skill to a new task.

#### **Spatial Organization Deficits**

- Problems perceiving the dimensions of space. • Trouble distinguishing left from right, north from south, up from down, ahead from behind.

#### **Social Skills Deficits**

- Difficulty discriminating visual cues such as facial expressions and body language.

- Difficulty with auditory clues such as voice intonation, enunciation, and voice quality.

- Difficulty accepting constructive criticism and interpreting humor or sarcasm.

## APPENDIX D

### Assistive Technology for Students with Disabilities

#### **CD PLAYERS**

With High Speed Searches, indexing capability, and headphones.  
Can be used with the Library of Congress CDs and the Recording for the Blind CDs.

Available from: The Learning Resource Center/Library or from the Disabilities Services Coordinator

#### **TAPE RECORDERS**

For recording lectures

Available from: The Disabilities Services Coordinator

#### **MP3 PLAYER'S**

For listening to audio textbooks converted by the Assistive Lab Technician.

Available from: The Disabilities Services Coordinator

**BOOKS ON CD** Students must complete and submit an application for books on CDs to the Disability Services Coordinator PLUS, a copy of the receipt for each book being requested, must be on file.(Copyright)

Available from: Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic, 1-800-635-1403, [www.rfbid.org](http://www.rfbid.org)  
If a book is unavailable from RFB&D, then the Publisher will be contacted for the book's files to make our own CD's. If both of these options fail, then the student may start scanning the book in order to be manually converted.

#### **VICTOR READER WAVE OR MP3 STREAMER**

For the use of RFB&D CD's

Available from: DSC on Campus [http://www.humanware.com/en-usa/products/blindness/dtb\\_players](http://www.humanware.com/en-usa/products/blindness/dtb_players)

#### **COMPUTERS (Large Screen, Enlarges Text, Voice Input/Output, Scanner)**

Various programs are available for students with vision impairments, mobility-impairments, and learning disabilities.

Available at: Learning Labs/Alpine Bank Centers

#### **DICTIONARYS (Large Print)**

Dictionary in large print for easier reading for low-vision readers.

Available at: DSC on Campus  
CMC College libraries

#### **CCTV**

Enlarges text for low-vision readers.

Available at: Some CMC campuses. Check with the Disability Services Coordinator.

#### **ENLARGING COPIERS**

To make large-print single copies of syllabi, tests, brief reading, and handouts.

Available at: Disability Services Coordinator on Campus

#### **NOTE-TAKING PAPER**

No-carbon-required (NCR) paper

Available at: DSC on Campus or <http://www.clarkeschools.org/uploads/files/clinic/notewriter.pdf>

**TDD (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf)**

Enables individuals who are deaf or hearing-impaired to communicate by telephone if the other party being called also has a TTY/TDD.

Available at: All residential campuses.

**COLORADO RELAY**

Enables an individual who is deaf or hearing-impaired to communicate by telephone if the person he or she is calling does not have a TTY/TDD system.

Available at: Any Phone 1-800-659-3656

**COLOR OVERLAYS**

Available at: DSC on campus or <http://www.irlencolo.com/home.html>

**PULSE SMART PEN**

Available at: DSC on campus or <http://www.livescribe.com/en-us/smartpen/index.html>

**FRANKILN SPELLER**

Available at: DSC on campus or [http://www.franklin.com/dictionaries\\_spell-correctors/](http://www.franklin.com/dictionaries_spell-correctors/)

**WILLIAMS SOUND HEARING HELPERS**

Available at: DSC on campus or <http://www.williamssound.com/education.aspx>

**BIG KEYS KEYBOARD**

Available at: DSC on campus or [http://hooleon.com/miva/merchant.mvc?Screen=CTGY&Category\\_Code=A-KBS](http://hooleon.com/miva/merchant.mvc?Screen=CTGY&Category_Code=A-KBS)

**BIG TRACK MOUSE**

Available at: DSC on Campus or <http://webaim.org/articles/motor/assistive>