



# **Student Accessibility Services**

## **A Guide for Students with Disabilities**

Academic Success Center  
271 Scott Swamp Road  
Farmington, CT 06032

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# Introduction

Tunxis Community College is committed to the full participation of all students in its programs. Students with disabilities who feel they may require specific academic accommodation or auxiliary support services are encouraged to contact the Associate of Student Accessibility Services or the Learning Disabilities Specialist in the Academic Success Center. This handbook will explain how students with disabilities request academic accommodations and access support services. It serves as a guide to help students understand the guidelines as well as the steps for obtaining reasonable academic accommodations and access to learning in a postsecondary setting.

## DEFINING REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

A reasonable accommodation is a modification or accommodation to a course, program, service, job activity, or facility that ensures an equal opportunity for qualified students with disabilities to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, a service, program, or activity. Aids, benefits, or services need not produce equal results, but must afford an equal opportunity to achieve equal results. When necessary, Student Accessibility Services (SAS) staff will consult with faculty regarding whether an accommodation would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program or activity or whether an academic requirement is essential to the instruction being pursued or to any directly related licensing requirement. In doing so, SAS will examine the following:

- Barriers between individuals with disabilities and the campus environment in accessing courses, programs, services, jobs, activities or facilities without accommodations;
- Requested modifications, accommodations, and auxiliary aids;
- Whether the proposed accommodations would fundamentally alter the nature of the course, program, service, job, activity, or facility;

Whether an academic requirement is essential to the instruction or to any directly related licensing requirement;

- Whether effective alternatives exist that would allow the individual with a disability to participate without lowering essential requirements or fundamentally altering the nature of the program.

When the University determines that a modification related to facilities or communication would result in a fundamental alteration or undue burden, SAS shall acquire the written opinion of the proper authority, i.e. department chair of impacted discipline, providing the reasoning supporting the decision.

# Philosophy and Mission Statement

Student Accessibility Services supports the educational experience of students with permanent and temporary disabilities. Our goal is to enhance self-advocacy and self-awareness in a comprehensively accessible environment.

While complying with the legislative guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) and Rehabilitation Act (1973), and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (2011)...

**Student Accessibility Services embraces a philosophy of self-actualization and recognizes that a student's search for personal fulfillment is driven by access to college academic programs and activities. Student Accessibility Services can assist students as they strive to maximize their potential.**

## What are the differences between high school and college accessibility and disability services?

<p align="center"><b>K-12 (IDEA)</b>  <b>Individual Disability Education Act</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>COLLEGE (ADA)</b>  <b>Americans with Disability Act</b></p>
<p align="center"><b>Education is a right and is provided in appropriate environments to all individuals.</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Higher Education is a choice and all students follow certain admission criteria.</b></p>
<p align="center"><b>School districts are responsible to identify students' disabilities.</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Students self-identify in higher education. At Tunxis, students contact Student Accessibility Services.</b></p>
<p align="center"><b>School districts provide free testing evaluation, and transportation to programs.</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Students arrange their own transportation and submit appropriate documentation. An evaluation is the student's responsibility</b></p>
<p align="center"><b>School districts develop Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>IEPs are not developed at college; college support is not called special education</b></p>
<p align="center"><b>School districts are responsible for providing all IEP supports and services.</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Students are responsible for activating approved services every semester and following the steps for access to approved accommodations.</b></p>
<p align="center"><b>Fundamental alterations of programs and curricula are required.</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>No fundamental alterations of course criteria or standards are required.</b></p>
<p align="center"><b>Personal services for medical/physical disabilities are provided.</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Personal services are the responsibility of the student.</b></p>

# Students New to Student Accessibility Services: How to Start the Academic Accommodation Process New Student Support Services Checklist



## Step 1: Admission, Financial Aid, Disability/ Accessibility Services

- Visit [www.tunxis.commmnet.edu/admissions](http://www.tunxis.commmnet.edu/admissions) for Admission and application information
- Upon acceptance, all students receive a (BANNER) Student ID Number to be used for all campus related transactions.
- If you are accepted into a degree or eligible certificate program, interested students may apply for student financial aid (grants, loans, work-study); information available online [tunxis.edu](http://tunxis.edu) and search financial aid.
- Students with a disability who are interested in requesting reasonable accommodations, please see STEP 4 (you may contact Student Accessibility Services at any time to discuss support services).



## Step 2: English and Math Placement Tests

- Placement tests can be scheduled online by visiting [www.tunxis.edu/placetest](http://www.tunxis.edu/placetest). Scroll down to “Click to Schedule Your Placement Test.”
- Placement tests can also be scheduled by calling 860 773-1530.
- **If you need special accommodations, please contact Student Accessibility Services.**
- Tests are untimed (plan at least 2 hours for completion), computerized, and scratch paper is available for the math test. Sample English and math questions are online at [www.tunxis.edu/placetest](http://www.tunxis.edu/placetest).
- Bring a photo ID and your Banner ID number to the test.



## Step 3: Register for Classes

- Refer to the links noted in your acceptance letter to schedule an advising appointment at one of the New Student Registration sessions.



## Step 4: For an overview of disability or accessibility services, please call Debbie Kosior 860-773-1526 or email [tx-ds@txcc.commmnet.edu](mailto:tx-ds@txcc.commmnet.edu)



## Step 5: Schedule an appointment for an Intake Interview. Cathy Felice 860-773-1524. Please see details on below-thank you!

- At the Intake meeting you will complete a short questionnaire regarding your learning strengths. Be prepared to discuss your history of learning strengths, challenges and adaptive technology use in preparation to request semester academic accommodations. A Guide for Students with Disabilities is online –from main page [www.tunxis.edu](http://www.tunxis.edu) link to campus resources/academic success center/disability services.
- Provide a copy of your most recent documentation to the Learning Disabilities Specialist at the Intake meeting. Examples include: Psycho-educational Evaluation report and/or 504 Plan (if completed in high school) and/or medical documentation. Submitted documentation becomes part of a confidential file that is used in assessing the appropriateness of requested academic accommodations. School districts maintain confidential records on file for 7 years.
- The Intake Interview is generally 30- 45 minutes.

## Why is it necessary to contact the Learning Disabilities Specialist?

Tunxis Community College is responsive to the needs of students and we have a 2-step procedure for students who choose to contact Student Accessibility Services and establish eligibility for academic accommodations. (Please see steps 4 & 5 above)

Though not inclusive, we assist student who disclose:

- Learning Disabilities
- Autistic Spectrum Disorders
- Attention Deficit Disorders
- Psychiatric Disorders
- Mobility/Orthopedic Disabilities
- Traumatic Brain Injuries
- Chronic Health-Related Disabilities
- Blind/Low Vision Impairments
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing

**Documentation Guidelines** - While students are a vital source of information, in order to determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations, we may also request information from other sources in order to establish a disability and the impact it has on learning in a postsecondary environment.

- Students are encouraged to submit any prior assessments and/or evaluative reports conducted by evaluators, physicians, medical professionals, etc., which may assist in determining appropriate academic accommodations.
- **Documentation should be current and provide a clear and detailed comprehensive assessment of the disability and/or diagnosis provided by a qualified professional.**
- This documentation should substantiate the need for these services based on the individual's **current** level of academic functioning in an educational setting.
- Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), Summary of Performance (SOPs), or Section 504 plans from high schools may provide supportive information of a disability; however, students are asked to also submit the most recent Psychological/Educational Evaluation Report completed in high school.
- As requested, a Medical Verification Form is available to assist students who are currently working with a professional in the health field.

## **Documentation may include:**

1. Evaluation of possible alternative diagnoses or explanations by appropriate professionals such as clinical psychologists, educational therapists, special education teachers, licensed psychiatrists, neurologists, or physicians.  
Certified/appropriate professionals cannot be family members.
2. Background history and/or evidence of existing impairment.
3. Current impact of (or limitations imposed by) the present disability.
4. Treatments, medications, or services in place.
5. Expected duration, stability, or progression.
6. Neuropsychological or psychological-educational assessments that discuss academic area(s) of impact and/or limitation(s).
7. Recommended academic accommodations with rationale as related to the student's disability.
8. Integrated summary of medical documentation, related testing, and supportive information.
9. Name, title, address, and phone number of certifying professional, as well as, the date of diagnosis and/or evaluation included on typed letter head.

## **What are academic accommodations?**

Academic accommodations are designed to provide students with disabilities equal access and opportunity to participate in programs, courses, and college activities.

An overview of some academic accommodations include:

- Note taking assistance
- Extended time for exams
- Audio recording of lecture format classes and review sessions
- Sign language interpreters
- Textbooks in alternate formats
- Assistive Listening Devices
- Material enlarged
- Wheelchair accessibility
- Request for accessible table/chair
- Adaptive technology and software
- Scribe/Reader for exams

Please note: an academic accommodation does not change the academic standard/s or criteria of a college course, nor does it provide a fundamental alteration of a program of study.

## What is a Learning Profile?

When a student has been approved for an academic accommodation such as; allowances for extended testing time, a written “Learning Profile” is developed with the Learning Disabilities Specialist.

Each semester the **Learning Profile is shared with faculty; students are responsible for requesting their profile each semester.**

## New Students-

### How to Request Semester Academic Accommodations:



**Step 1: If interested in disability/access support services, set-up an appointment with the Associate of Student Accessibility Services – Debbie Kosior for an overview of services 860-773-1526**



**Step 2: Schedule an appointment for an Intake Interview with the Learning Disabilities Specialist - Cathy Ann Felice 860-773-1524.**

## Returning Students-

### How to Request Semester Academic Accommodations:

1. Provide SAS staff with a completed *Semester Academic Accommodation Request* form – at least two weeks prior to the start of the semester or sooner if an interpreter/note-taker request is required. **Note: this form can be found in the ASC and also on the Tunxis website. Completed forms should either be dropped off in the ASC or emailed to [tx-ds@txcc.commnet.edu](mailto:tx-ds@txcc.commnet.edu).**
2. Returning students have a choice to pick-up their profiles in the Center or SAS will email directly to each professor with a C.c. to you. We use your Tunxis email for confidentiality reasons.
3. If you were previously approved for copies of notes and wish to receive this accommodation again, please add this to the *Semester Request* form and see page 12 for further information on note taking assistance.
4. If something changes with your schedule or your accommodation requests, notify a SAS Specialist at [tx-ds@txcc.commnet.edu](mailto:tx-ds@txcc.commnet.edu).

## Extended Testing Time

Extended time is usually considered to be 100% of the given test time plus additional 50% more time, i.e., if an exam is scheduled for 1 hour; the student with extended testing time has approval to test for 1 ½ hours.

Reduced distraction testing in the Academic Success Center (ASC) is an essential part of this accommodation. It provides a quieter space with fewer distractions than the classroom. Students approved for this accommodation may test in the ASC for all exams.

### All Students-Please Review These Steps for Testing in the Center!

1. Students who have met with the Learning Disabilities Specialist and have approval for extended testing time are asked to submit the Semester Academic Accommodation Request form to SAS.
2. A Learning Profile must be provided to the instructor so that they are aware of the testing accommodations. Choose one: sent by email or pick-them up!!
3. Request to take the exam in the ASC by completing the “*Academic Accommodation Testing*” form at least 2 business days before exam. Note: this form can be found in the ASC and also on the Tunxis website. Completed forms should either be dropped in the test request box in the ASC or emailed to tx-ds@txcc.commnet.edu.
4. Remind the instructor to make a copy of the exam available in the Academic Success Center (ASC).
5. Arrive on time for the test. Failure to arrive on time compromises the Student Accessibility Services (SAS) testing schedule for that day.
6. If a student is more than **30 minutes** late, you may need to reschedule another time to take the exam because of proctor availability. **The instructor must give SAS approval of the new time via email, phone, or in person.**
7. Call the ASC (860-773-1530) in advance if you need to cancel or reschedule the testing time. Also, it is the student’s responsibility to contact his/her **instructor**.

### Scribe/Reader for Exams

1. Follow the same request process as documented above for Extended Time on Tests, however, please submit testing request form at least **one week prior** to the exam date to ensure staff and space availability.
2. The SAS Specialist processes the requests and coordinates accordingly.

## Alternate Format Textbooks Requests

Textbooks are available in alternative formats for those students who qualify with a print or processing disability that affects reading accuracy. Alternative formats may include e-texts and audio books, both of which make the content more accessible through features such as text to speech with highlighting. If requesting alternate format textbooks, contact Student Accessibility Services staff at least 3 weeks prior to the first day of classes.

## Accessible Furniture

Accessible Furniture is defined as a chair and/or table placed in the classroom for use by the approved student. For example, a student who uses a wheelchair may request a table that provides an accessible writing surface. A person who has severe back pain may request a free-standing chair if the classroom only provides attached seats. Accessible Furniture is simple, un-cushioned furniture provided as a means to improve classroom access.

### Request Process

1. Students must provide us with a completed *Semester Academic Accommodation* form indicating the classes they are requesting accessible furniture in **at least one month prior to the start of the semester**.
  2. Student Accessibility Services will email the TCC Facilities Department with a request for accessible furniture.
  3. Facilities will contact Student Accessibility Services once the request has been fulfilled.
  4. It is up to the student to communicate with Student Accessibility Services if any issues arise.
- **Accessible furniture is not prescriptive; it is provided only to improve classroom access.**
  - **Students are responsible for bringing any needed cushion or orthopedic support; the college is not responsible for items left in the classroom.**
  - Students must contact Student Accessibility Services immediately if their schedule or classroom location changes.
  - Students must contact Student Accessibility Services immediately if they find accessible furniture is missing or has been moved to another classroom.

# **Interpreting Services and Assistive Listening Devices**

If sign language services or assistive listening devices are deemed appropriate, Student Accessibility Services will hire qualified providers through approved vendors. Students may also request the accommodation of a note taker in their classes to provide written notes. **Please refer to the Interpreting Services Guidelines for specifics on how to request these services.**

## **Request Process**

Students must provide us with a completed *Semester Academic Accommodation* form indicating the classes they are requesting services in as well as a completed *Interpreting Request/Assistive Listening Device Request* form that provides information about current schedule and needs.

- Students in need of interpreting services should make their request at least 4-6 weeks prior to the first day of classes.
- If requests are not made early, students risk services being unavailable at the start of the semester.
- Students requesting services for specific events must follow the same procedures as they would when requesting services for classes.

## **Note Taking Assistance**

If a student is approved for note taking assistance, a SAS staff member, in collaboration with the student (and instructor if applicable), will determine the appropriate method of assistance for each class. Students should schedule a consultation with a SAS Specialist as soon as possible if they believe they will be requiring note taking assistance. If comprehensive notes are available from the instructor, on Blackboard, or through the use of technology (audio recording), additional note taking assistance may not be indicated.

Contact SAS staff as soon as possible if you require additional training or you have concerns with the technology you are using for note taking assistance.

# Assistive Technologies

Student Accessibility Services retains hardware and software to aide students with both specific and nonspecific learning disabilities.

- READ&WRITE GOLD** A software program to support reading and writing with a customizable toolbar that floats on top of commonly used Applications including Microsoft Word and Google Docs. The software includes many features such as text to speech, vocabulary list builder, dictation, and fact mapper.
- NATURALLY SPEAKING** A computerized speech recognition system allowing you to dictate text in any Windows applications and the internet by simply speaking. This enables “hands free computer use” by automatically transcribing speech to text.
- JAWS** A screen reading software that reads everything that appears on the computer screen. This assistive technology allows users access to a wide variety of information.
- INSPIRATION** Inspiration helps students in the process of brainstorming and organizing ideas for written documents. Students can use a “rapid fire” approach to get the ideas mapped out and then the software will organize the ideas into an outline.
- EZ-MAGNIFIER** Magnifies a computer screen.
- ECHO SMART** The Echo Smart Pen can record everything you write, hear, or Say. Lectures may be replayed by tapping on your notes. Notes May be transferred to your computer via a USB cable and Live Scribe Desktop. Smart pens may be loaned out for a semester, the only charge that would incur is if a device is lost, damaged, or otherwise not returned.

## Frequently Asked Questions

<p><b>How do I request academic accommodations for an online course?</b></p>	<p>To request extended testing time for an online course please follow the same process by submitting the semester academic accommodation form and check the online option. The extended testing accommodation allows additional time to complete the online exam, but does <b>not</b> allow access to the test once it is closed (unless arranged otherwise). Once the online test is open, the student is expected to complete the exam. This academic accommodation does <b>not</b> allow access to the test beyond the designated testing date/s posted by the instructor.</p>
<p><b>When do I request Semester Academic Accommodations?</b></p>	<p>As soon as possible. Requests are processed in the order received. Some requests such as interpreters, audio books, and copies of notes require advance notice to allow for time to coordinate.</p>
<p><b>Do I need to request a Learning Profile each semester?</b></p>	<p><b>Yes.</b> If you plan to request an academic accommodation, such as extended testing time, you will need to request Learning Profiles for your classes each semester. You may not sign up to take tests with extended time if you have not requested an academic accommodation.</p>

<p><b>How do I request a Learning Profile?</b></p>	<p>Provide SAS staff with a completed <i>Semester Academic Accommodation Request</i> form as soon as possible. Upon receipt, SAS staff will either provide you with a copy of your learning profile(s) so that you can forward it to your assigned instructor(s) or if you are a returning student, SAS staff can email the profile directly to your instructor(s) with a copy to you.</p>
<p><b>Do I have to use extended time for testing and reduced distraction testing on every test?</b></p>	<p>No. You do not have to use this academic accommodation. You can always choose to test in the classroom without extended time for testing.</p>
<p><b>Can I test in the classroom with extended time for testing instead of going to the Academic Success Center?</b></p>	<p>If approved for extended time, the Academic Success Center is available. However, if you make arrangements with your Professor in advance and agree to a different format for the extended time, this is your choice.</p>
<p><b>What should I do if an exam or quiz takes place at the beginning or end of the class?</b></p>	<p>Quizzes are generally taken in class without extended time arrangements; contact Student Accessibility Services to discuss further as needed.</p>
<p><b>What should I do if a professor suggest that I take a test without extended time?</b></p>	<p>You have the right to use extended time on your tests for all exams. You can agree with your professor's suggestion if you feel comfortable doing so. However, you can also tell your professor, "I have been approved for this academic accommodation and prefer to use it." If you encounter any difficulties, please contact Student Accessibility Services.</p>

<b>Why do I need to remind my professor that I am taking my test/exam in the ASC?</b>	Your professor will need a reasonable amount of time to deliver your test to the ASC and to complete paperwork prior to your testing.
<b>Can I start my exam in the classroom and decide to use extended time in the ASC?</b>	Once you start the exam in class, it must be completed in class. However, if arranged in advance, some students will start an exam in class & complete in the Center.



## **Grievance Procedure**

Students with disabilities who feel they are not receiving the services they are due by law should address their concerns with the Director of the Academic Success Center, Kathleen Schwager ([kschwager@txcc.commnet.edu](mailto:kschwager@txcc.commnet.edu) or 860.773.1523). If that is uncomfortable or the response they receive is not acceptable they should address their concern to the Dean of Student Affairs and ADA/504 Coordinator, Kirk Peters ([kpeters@txcc.commnet.edu](mailto:kpeters@txcc.commnet.edu) or 860.773.1483).

## **Student Accessibility Services Contact Information**

**Please contact Cathy if you have any questions regarding Student Accessibility Services.**

Cathy Ann Felice  
Learning Disabilities Specialist  
860-773-1524  
[cfelice@txcc.edu](mailto:cfelice@txcc.edu)

Debbie Kosior  
Associate of Student Accessibility Services  
860-773-1526  
[Dkosior@txcc.edu](mailto:Dkosior@txcc.edu)

# Student Resources

Academic Success Center/Placement Testing	773-1533
Admissions	773-1490
Advising Office	773-1510
Bookstore	773-1338
Business Office	773-1320
Computer Center	773-1390
Counseling	773-1510
Dean of Student Services	773-1483
Information Center	773-1300
Financial Aid Services	773-1422
Library	773-1550
Registrar/Records	773-1440
Student Activities	773-1361
Transfer Information (from Tunxis)	773-1510
Tunxis Weather Line	773-1301

# NOTES