



### **DISABLED STUDENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES (DSPS)**

#### **DSPS Program Plan**

The District maintains a plan for the provision of programs and services to students with disabilities designed to assure that they have equal access to District classes and programs. The program plan defines the long-range goals and short-term measurable objectives for the program along with activities to accomplish the goals.

#### **Academic Adjustments, Auxiliary Aids, and Services for Students with Disabilities**

The purpose of academic accommodations is to allow students with disabilities access to the same educational opportunities available to other students. The procedures herein are intended to provide for consistent and timely processing of requests for academic accommodations.

Examples of academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, accommodations, and services for students with disabilities may include, but are not limited to the following: extended time on tests, distraction-reduced test settings, note-taking assistance, sign language interpreters, real-time captioning, tape-recorded lectures, assistive technology and adaptive equipment, provision of instructional materials in alternative formats, academic and rehabilitation counseling, assessment of learning disabilities, and educational assistance classes. Educational assistance classes involve specialized instruction designed to help students mitigate educational limitations or acquire skills necessary for the completion of the goals set forth in the academic accommodation plan.

Requests for accommodations are determined on an individualized, case-by-case basis through an interactive process between the student and a DSPTS certificated staff member. The DSPTS certificated staff members include the DSPTS Counselor/Coordinator, Learning Disabilities Specialist, and DSPTS Counselor. Through this interactive process, the DSPTS certificated staff member will work in consultation with the student to develop an academic accommodation plan. DSPTS certificated staff members will respond to such requests in a timely manner. In the event that a student requests academic accommodations but chooses not to participate in DSPTS, then the District's assigned ADA/504 Coordinator shall be the contact point for students with professionally verified disabilities not participating in DSPTS who need reasonable accommodations in order to equally participate in the educational programs of the District. Requests for accommodations that would fundamentally alter the essential elements of a course or program will not be granted. Direct and open communication is encouraged early in the academic accommodation process.

#### **Request for Academic Accommodations**

1. Students who request academic accommodations are responsible for initiating contact with DSPTS. Students who make a request directly to instructional faculty should be referred to the DSPTS office.

2. Students are responsible for providing professional documentation of a verified disability to DSPS.
3. The DSPS office, in consultation with the student, shall recommend and authorize appropriate accommodations based on disability-related educational limitations and serve as a liaison between faculty, staff, and students. The authorized accommodations shall be documented in the student's file. The student shall provide this documentation in the form of an academic accommodations letter to his/her instructors.

### Academic Accommodation Resolution

The student or instructional faculty may dispute an accommodation. If there is a dispute, the accommodation(s) originally authorized by DSPS will still be provided throughout the problem resolution process and subsequent challenges.

#### A. Faculty Resolution Procedures

1. An instructor who has questions about or disagrees with an accommodation granted to a student with a verified disability shall promptly contact the DSPS certificated staff member who authorized the accommodation(s).
2. If the instructor feels that the matter has not been resolved by step one (1), the faculty member may dispute the accommodation with the Dean of Counseling and Student Programs.
3. If the matter has not been resolved by steps 1-2, the matter will be forwarded to the appropriate Vice President, and a final decision will be rendered within ten (10) days.

#### B. Student Resolution Procedures

1. A student who disagrees with the academic accommodation(s) authorized by the DSPS certificated staff member shall discuss his/her concern with the DSPS Counselor/Coordinator.
2. A student who is not provided an approved DSPS academic accommodation by the instructor shall notify the DSPS office so that an interactive meeting is scheduled for resolution.
3. If the student feels the matter has not been resolved by steps 1-2, then the student may submit a signed written grievance as soon as possible to the Dean of Counseling and Student Programs.
4. If the matter has not been resolved by steps 1-3, then the student should meet with the appropriate Vice President who will render a final decision within ten (10) days.

### **Eligibility for DSPS**

Eligible students include those with verified disabilities which result in a functional limitation in the academic setting. Verification of a student's disability must be provided by a professional certified to diagnose and/or treat the condition of the student applying for services. In some situations, the DSPS certificated staff member may verify the disability of the student by direct observation, through a review of medical and/or educational records, and through the interactive process.

See Title 5 § 56032- 56042 for definitions and descriptions of specific disability categories within the California Community College system.

### **Student Rights and Responsibilities**

1. Participation by students with disabilities in DSPS shall be entirely voluntary.
2. Receiving support services or instruction authorized through DSPS shall not preclude a student from also participating in any other course, program, or activity offered by the District.
3. DSPS student records shall be subject to all other relevant statutes and regulations for handling of student records.

Students receiving support services or instruction from DSPS shall:

1. Provide DSPS with documentation necessary to verify the disability.
2. Use DSPS services in a responsible manner and adhere to written service provision policies and procedures adopted by DSPS.
3. Comply with the student code of conduct adopted by the District and all other applicable regulations to student conduct.
4. Make measureable progress toward the goals established in the academic accommodation plan.

DSPS policies may include provisions for suspension or termination of services where a student fails to comply with their responsibilities. Such policies shall provide written notice to the student prior to the suspension or termination and shall afford the student an opportunity to appeal the decision.

### **Mathematics Course Substitutions for Students with Disabilities**

A request for course substitution will only be considered once a student with a verified disability has exhausted all other options for a reasonable accommodation. The decision whether to grant a course substitution as an accommodation will be based upon careful review of the student's specific disability, functional limitations, and academic history. The intent of this procedure is to ensure a thorough review of the request and maintain a consistent evaluation process for each individual student. While the District has identified a list of allowable course substitutions, the institution will make every effort to ensure that essential elements of the certificate and/or degree program are not affected by a substitution. The petition, review, and decision to substitute a course will be made at the institution, and is valid for graduation from Mendocino College. This request is a one-time consideration and may not support any requirements for transfer to other colleges in higher education.

1. The following eligible courses were selected as acceptable substitution alternatives for the math competency for an associate degree because of their critical and analytical thinking components. Acceptable course substitutions include:
  - a. AST 200- Astronomy
  - b. BUS 200- Financial Accounting
  - c. COM 202- Argumentation and Debate
  - d. CSC 220- Introduction to Computer Science
  - e. CSC 221- Programming and Algorithms I
  - f. ENG 201- Critical Thinking Through Literature
  - g. ENG 205- Critical Thinking
  - h. GEL 201- Geology
  - i. PHL 220- Introduction to Philosophy
  - j. SOC 201- Social Problems

2. A Petition for Course Substitution as an Academic Accommodation is completed and submitted to the Course Substitution Review Committee. The Course Substitution Review Committee shall consist of the DSPS Counselor/Coordinator, LD Specialist, Dean of Counseling and Student Programs, and the Dean of Instruction. The committee's decision is reflected on the petition.
3. Once the committee has acted on the petition, copies will be sent to the following:
  - a. The student
  - b. The DSPS Counselor/Coordinator for inclusion in the student's file
  - c. The Director of Admissions and Records
4. The approval of a math substitution will be valid to only meet the math competency requirement, provided that the student maintains continuous enrollment at Mendocino College.
5. Appeal Process:

If the student is dissatisfied with the decision, he or she may appeal to the Vice President of Academic Affairs within ten instructional days of receiving a decision. The Vice President's decision is final.

### **Staffing**

The DSPS Counselor/Coordinator shall be responsible for the day-to-day operations of DSPS and meet the minimum qualifications established in Title 5 § 56048. All persons employed in DSPS as Counselors or Instructors of students with disabilities shall meet the minimum qualifications as set forth in Title 5 § 53414. DSPS may also employ classified and/or paraprofessional support staff. Support staff shall function under the coordination of the DSPS Counselor/Coordinator or Learning Disabilities Specialist as appropriate for the academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, services and/or instruction being provided.

### **Advisory Committee**

DSPS shall establish an advisory committee which shall meet no less than once per year. The advisory committee will provide recommendations, direction, and guidance to the DSPS program. The advisory committee shall be chaired by a DSPS faculty and, at a minimum, include students with disabilities and representatives from the disability community, agencies, and/or organizations. Documentation that the advisory committee has been formed and information discussed in meetings conducted shall be kept on file.

**References:** Title 5, Sections 56000 et seq.  
Education Code § 67310-67312, 84850  
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973  
Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990