Accessibility Services – Student Handbook

Table of Contents

I. **Welcome to Accessibility Services**
- Mission Statements
- Accessibility Services Goals

II. **Accessibility Services Contact Information**
- Contact Us
- Office Hours
- Campus Office Locations
- Online Resources

III. **Eligibility for Accessibility Services**
- Step 1: Submit Documentation
- Step 2: Complete an Intake Appointment
- Step 3: Decision-Making Team Review
- Step 4: Interactive Process
- Step 5: Notification and Appeal
- Documentation Guidelines
- Temporary Accommodations
- Disabilities Supported by Accessibility Services

IV. **Student Rights and Responsibilities**
- Your Rights
- Your Responsibilities

V. **Legal Framework and Compliance**
- Federal Disability Laws
- What These Laws Mean for Students
- ADA/Section 504 Coordinator

VI. **Requesting and Receiving Accommodations**
- How to Request Accommodations
    - New Students
    - Returning Students
- When Accommodations Begin
- Reasonable Accommodations
- Implementing Approved Accommodations

VII. **Testing Accommodations**

- General Guidelines
- Semester Authorization
- Student Responsibilities
- Instructor Authorization
- Personal Belongings
- Lockdown Browser and Remote Proctoring

VIII. **Deaf/Blind Tuition Waiver**
- Initial Eligibility Requirements
- Maintaining Eligibility

IX. **Dual Credit Accommodations**
- How to Request Accommodations
- Step 1: Submit Documentation
- Step 2: Documentation Review
- Step 3: Intake Appointment
- Step 4: Accommodation Decision

X. **Transitioning from High School to College**
- Tips for a Successful Transition

XI. **Pregnant and Parenting Students at Dallas College**
- Pregnancy-Related Accommodations and Support
- When Should I Request Pregnancy-Related Accommodations?
- Examples of Pregnancy-Related Accommodations
- How to Request Pregnancy-Related Accommodations
- Resources for Parenting Students

XII. **Emergency Preparedness for Students with Disabilities**
- Emergency Evacuation Guidelines

XIII. **Grievance Resolution Process**
- What Is an ADA/Section 504 Accessibility Concern?
- Reporting a Concern
- Informal Resolution Process
- Formal Grievance Process
- How to File a Formal Grievance
- Appeal Process

XIV. **Available Services and Supports**
- Academic Accommodations
  - Testing Accommodations
  - Reader and Scribe Services
  - Notetaking Assistance
- Communication Access

    - American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreting
    - Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART)
    - FM Hearing Systems
  - Assistive Technology
    - Screen Readers
    - Notetaking Technology
  - Service Animals

XV. Case Management Services

  - Benefits of Case Management
  - What to Expect
  - Meeting Schedule

XVI. Welcome to Dallas College

I. Welcome to Accessibility Services

Welcome to Dallas College! We are excited that you have chosen to pursue your educational goals with us.

Accessibility Services is committed to ensuring that students with disabilities have equal access to the educational opportunities, programs, services, and activities offered by Dallas College. Our team partners with students to identify reasonable accommodations, assistive technology, and other support services that promote equal access and full participation in college life.

This handbook is designed to help you navigate the accommodation process by explaining:

- your rights and responsibilities as a student receiving accommodations.
- the process of requesting accommodations.
- the procedures used to evaluate accommodation requests; and
- the resources and support available through Accessibility Services.

Accessibility is a shared responsibility among students, faculty, and staff. We encourage you to contact Accessibility Services as early as possible so we can work together to ensure you have the support you need to achieve your educational goals.

Mission Statements

Dallas College Mission

Dallas College transforms lives and communities through higher education by fostering a vibrant and growing Dallas County and providing an exceptional learning environment that meets the needs of students, employees, communities, and employers.

Accessibility Services Mission

The mission of Accessibility Services is to promote equal access and inclusion by:

1. Ensuring students with disabilities have equal access to curricular and co-curricular opportunities.
2. Providing leadership and education that fosters awareness, understanding, and inclusion across the Dallas College community.
3. Supporting institutional compliance with applicable federal disability laws, including:
    - Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
    - the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990; and
    - the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008.

Accessibility Services Goals

Accessibility Services strives to:

1. Provide reasonable accommodations that promotes equal access and support student success.
2. Expand access to assistive technology and other accessibility resources that enhance learning.
3. Deliver accessible, responsive, and student-centered services that meet the diverse needs of our students.
4. Foster student engagement, independence, self-advocacy, and success both inside and outside the classroom.
5. Provide guidance to students, faculty, and staff regarding institutional policies and federal disability laws to ensure equitable access throughout the college experience.

II. Accessibility Services Contact Information

Accessibility Services is available to assist students with questions about accommodations, documentation requirements, assistive technology, and the accommodation process.

Contact Us

Phone: 972-669-6400

Email: DSSO@DallasCollege.edu

Office Hours

- **Monday–Thursday:** 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
- **Friday:** 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- **Saturday–Sunday:** Closed

Campus Office Locations

Accessibility Services has staff located at each Dallas College campus.

Campus	Location
Brookhaven	S Building, Room S136
Cedar Valley	L Building, Room L123
Eastfield	B Building, Room B1600
El Centro	A Building, Basement, Room A071
Mountain View	S Building, Room S2080
North Lake	A Building, Room A428
Richland	T Building, Room T120

Online Resources

Students can visit the Accessibility Services website to:

- Apply for Accessibility Services
- Submit disability documentation.
- Review documentation guidelines.
- Learn about available accommodations and services.
- Access additional accessibility resources

When you are ready to begin, contact Accessibility Services by phone or email. Our staff will be happy to answer your questions and contact you with the appropriate case manager.

III. Eligibility for Accessibility Services

To receive accommodations through Accessibility Services, students participate in the following process.

Step 1: Submit Documentation

Students requesting accommodations may be asked to submit documentation that verifies their disability.

- Documentation must be provided by a qualified licensed professional (such as a medical doctor, educational diagnostician, psychologist, psychiatrist, licensed professional counselor, or licensed clinical social worker). Please see Documentation Guidelines on page 8.
- All documentation is maintained in a secure database and is used solely to determine eligibility for services and ensure equal access to educational opportunities at Dallas College.

Submit Documentation Early

Students may submit documentation at any time during the year. However, Accessibility Services strongly encourages students to submit documentation at least one month before the start of the semester to allow sufficient time for the review and accommodation approval process.

Step 2: Complete an Intake Appointment

Once documentation has been received, a case manager or senior case manager will schedule an intake appointment.

During the intake, the student and Accessibility Services staff will discuss:

- the functional limitations of the student's disability.
- barriers the student may experience in the educational environment; and
- potential accommodations, services, or assistive technology that may provide equal access.

Step 3: Decision-Making Team Review

After the intake appointment, the student's accommodation request is reviewed by the Decision-Making Team (DMT).

The DMT consists of the Associate Dean of Accessibility Services, the Director of Accommodations, Senior Case Managers, and Case Managers. The team meets weekly to promote consistent, equitable, and timely accommodation decisions across Dallas College's seven-campus system.

As part of its review, the DMT considers:

- the student's application for services.
- submitted documentation.
- information gathered during the intake appointment.
- the student's requested accommodations; and
- the essential requirements and learning objectives of the course or program of study.

Based on this review, the DMT may:

- approve reasonable accommodations.
- recommend alternative accommodations, services, or assistive technology.
- request additional documentation if more information is needed to evaluate the request; or
- determine that requested accommodation cannot be approved because it would not effectively address the functional limitations of the disability or because it would fundamentally alter an essential course or program requirement.

If additional documentation is needed, the student's case manager will contact the student with specific information regarding what is needed.

Step 4: Interactive Process

Before denying the requested accommodation, Accessibility Services will engage in an interactive process.

The purpose of the interactive process is to gather additional information, explore alternative accommodations, and ensure that all relevant factors have been considered before a final decision is made.

Depending on the circumstances, the interactive process may occur within the Decision-Making Team or as a separate meeting facilitated by the Dean or Associate Dean of Accessibility Services.

The process may include:

- review of course objectives and essential requirements.
- consultation with faculty and academic leadership.
- discussion of the student's functional limitations and accommodation needs; and
- consideration of alternative accommodations that would provide equal access without fundamentally altering the course or program.

When appropriate, participants may include the student, faculty member, department chair, Accessibility Services staff, and other individuals with relevant knowledge of the student's disability or the academic program.

Step 5: Notification and Appeal

Students will receive written notification of the final accommodation decision.

If the accommodation the student requested is denied, the notification will explain:

- the reason for the decision.
- any approved alternative accommodations, when appropriate; and
- the student's right to appeal through the Dallas College Informal and Formal ADA/Section 504 Concern Process.

Documentation Guidelines

If you are requesting accommodations through Accessibility Services, you may be asked to provide documentation that verifies your eligibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

- **Students with non-apparent disabilities** are generally required to submit documentation.
- **Students with apparent disabilities** may not be required to submit documentation if the disability and need for accommodations are readily observable.

Why is Documentation Needed?

Documentation serves two important purposes:

1. **Establish eligibility for services** by verifying a disability through a diagnosis or other appropriate information from a qualified licensed professional. (Accessibility Services does not employ medical doctors or educational diagnosticians.)
2. **Helps determine appropriate accommodations** by explaining how the disability affects your ability to access and participate in Dallas College's educational programs, services, and activities.

Documentation Requirements

To help us process your request as quickly as possible, documentation should:

- Include a diagnosis or other information sufficient to verify the disability and establish the need for accommodations.
- Be on professional letterhead or provided through a secure online medical portal.
- Include the date the documentation was completed.
- Include the name, credentials, and signature (when applicable) of the licensed professional who evaluated or treated you.

Helpful Information to Include

Although not always required, the following information helps the Decision-Making Team better understand your accommodation needs:

1. **Impact of the Disability**
   A description of how the disability affects your educational experience and participation in college programs, services, or activities.
2. **Current Information**
   The most recent documentation available, so accommodations can be based on your current functional limitations and needs.
3. **Expected Course of the Disability**
   Information about whether the condition is permanent, temporary, stable, progressive, or subject to change. Updated documentation may be requested if your condition changes over time.
4. **Treatment and Supports**
   Information about current treatments, medications, assistive technology, accommodations, auxiliary aids, or other supports that help address the functional impact of your disability.

Additional Information May Be Requested

If the documentation you provide is incomplete or does not clearly support your need for specific accommodations, you may be asked to submit additional or clarifying information.

Temporary Accommodations

Students with short-term medical conditions (e.g., injuries, surgeries, or temporary impairments) may be eligible for temporary accommodations. These are provided on a case-by-case basis and may require documentation from a healthcare provider. Temporary accommodations are typically limited in duration and are not intended to replace long-term disability services. The process for obtaining accommodations for a temporary impairment is the same process for students with disabilities, outlined on pages 6 and 13.

Disabilities Supported by Accessibility Services

Accessibility Services works with students who have a wide range of disabilities that may substantially limit one or more major life activities. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Learning disabilities (e.g., dyslexia, dyscalculia, or disorders of written expression)
- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Psychological or psychiatric disabilities (e.g., anxiety disorders, depression, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), or obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD))

- Physical or mobility disabilities
- Sensory disabilities (e.g., blindness, low vision, deafness, or hard of hearing)
- Chronic health conditions (e.g., diabetes, epilepsy, Crohn's disease, multiple sclerosis, migraine disorders, or lupus)
- Temporary disabilities or medical conditions that substantially limit a major life activity, when appropriate
- Other disabilities that may qualify for accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Students are encouraged to contact Accessibility Services if they have questions about eligibility or whether their disability may qualify for accommodations. Each request is reviewed on an individual, case-by-case basis.

IV. Student Rights and Responsibilities

Accessibility Services is committed to providing equal access to qualified students with disabilities while fostering a collaborative accommodation process. Students receiving accommodations have both rights and responsibilities that help ensure accommodations are implemented effectively.

Your Rights

As a student registered with Accessibility Services, you have the right to:

- Receive equal access to Dallas College's educational programs, services, activities, and facilities through reasonable accommodations.
- Have your disability-related information maintained confidentially in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Disability information is shared only with college employees who have a legitimate educational need to know.
- Choose whether to disclose your disability and request accommodations. Students are not required to register with Accessibility Services; however, accommodations cannot be provided until eligibility has been established, and accommodations are not applied retroactively.
- Be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness throughout the accommodation process.
- Appeal accommodation decisions through the Dallas College Informal and Formal ADA/Section 504 Concern Process.

Your Responsibilities

Students requesting or receiving accommodations are responsible for:

- Identifying themselves to Accessibility Services and requesting accommodations in a timely manner.
- Providing documentation when requested to establish eligibility for services.
- Participating in the intake process by discussing how their disability affects access to the educational environment.
- Communicating with Accessibility Services if accommodation needs change or concerns arise.
- Meeting the essential academic and technical standards of their courses and programs, with or without accommodations.
- Following the Dallas College Student Code of Conduct and all applicable college policies.

Accommodations are intended to provide equal access to educational opportunities. They do not alter essential course or program requirements or guarantee academic success.

V. Legal Framework and Compliance

Dallas College is committed to providing equal access to educational programs, services, and activities for qualified students with disabilities. Accessibility Services administers accommodations in accordance with applicable federal disability laws and college policies.

Federal Disability Laws

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability. It requires colleges to provide qualified students with disabilities equal access to educational opportunities through reasonable accommodations, when appropriate.

ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008

The ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) broadened the definition of disability and reaffirmed that disability determinations should be made in favor of broad coverage. The law recognizes many physical and mental impairments and ensures individuals with both apparent and non-apparent disabilities are protected.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. It requires colleges to provide reasonable academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, and services that ensure qualified students have equal access to educational opportunities.

What These Laws Mean for Students

Under these laws, Dallas College is required to:

- provide qualified students with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in educational programs, services, and activities;
- consider requests for reasonable accommodations through an individualized, interactive process;
- provide approved accommodations in a timely manner;
- protect the confidentiality of disability-related information; and
- ensure students are not discriminated against because of a disability.

Students who wish to receive accommodations must self-identify to Accessibility Services, request accommodations, and provide documentation when necessary to establish eligibility.

ADA/Section 504 Coordinator

The ADA/Section 504 Coordinator oversees the College's compliance with federal disability laws and serves as a resource for students, employees, and visitors regarding disability-related concerns.

The coordinator’s responsibilities include:

- monitoring compliance with the ADA and Section 504;
- providing guidance on disability-related policies and procedures;
- reviewing concerns or complaints related to disability discrimination or accommodations; and
- helping facilitate the resolution of accessibility concerns in accordance with Dallas College procedures.

Dallas College is committed to providing an accessible learning environment where qualified students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of college life.

VI. Requesting and Receiving Accommodations

Accessibility Services encourages students to begin the accommodation process as early as possible. Starting early helps ensure there is sufficient time to review documentation, determine eligibility, and implement approved accommodations before they are needed.

How to Request Accommodations

New Students

To request accommodations for the first time:

1. Complete the Accessibility Services application through the online Accommodate portal or contact Accessibility Services by phone, email, or by visiting a campus office.
2. Submit documentation that verifies your disability, if required. (see pages 8 and 9)
3. Meet your assigned case manager or senior case manager for an intake appointment to discuss:
    - the impact of your disability;
    - barriers you may experience in the educational environment; and
    - potential accommodations, services, or assistive technology.
4. Your case manager will present your request to the Decision-Making Team (DMT) for review and determination.
5. Once accommodations are approved, your case manager will:
    - notify you of the approved accommodations,
    - prepare your Accommodation Notification Letters,
    - assist in coordinating approved accommodations and services, and
    - notify faculty of your approved accommodations.

Returning Students

Students must renew their accommodations each semester.

To renew accommodations:

1. Submit a semester renewal request through the online Accommodate portal or contact Accessibility Services by phone, email, or in person. (see page 5)
2. If there has been no change in your disability or accommodation needs, your case manager will prepare and distribute your Accommodation Notification Letters to your instructors.
3. If your disability, documentation, or accommodation needs have changed, your case manager may schedule a follow-up meeting and request updated documentation before considering modifications to your accommodations.

When Accommodations Begin

Accommodations are **not retroactive** and cannot be applied to coursework, exams, attendance, or grades that occurred before accommodations were approved.

Approved accommodations become effective after:

- all required documentation has been received and reviewed;
- the intake appointment has been completed;
- the Decision-Making Team has determined eligibility and approved accommodations; and
- Accommodation Notification Letters have been made available to instructors.

Students are encouraged to begin the accommodation process as early as possible each semester to avoid delays in receiving services.

Reasonable Accommodations

Accessibility Services provides reasonable accommodations that offer equal access to educational programs while preserving the essential academic requirements of a course or program.

The requested accommodation may not be approved if it would:

- fundamentally alter an essential course or program requirement; and/or
- lower or waive essential academic standards.

When a student requests an accommodation that cannot be approved, Accessibility Services will engage in the interactive process to explore alternative accommodations that provide equal access whenever possible.

Implementing Approved Accommodations

Once accommodations have been approved, students, faculty, and Accessibility Services share responsibility for successful implementation.

Students are responsible for:

- communicating with their instructors regarding approved accommodations when appropriate;
- following established procedures for services such as testing accommodations, assistive technology, note-taking support, captioning, or interpreting services; and
- notifying Accessibility Services if approved accommodations are not being provided or if accommodation needs change during the semester.

Accessibility Services will continue to assist students and faculty throughout the semester to ensure approved accommodations are implemented effectively.

VII. Testing Accommodations

Accessibility Services partners with the Testing Center, faculty, and students to ensure that approved testing accommodations are implemented fairly, consistently, and in a manner that maintains the academic integrity of each course.

General Guidelines

Semester Authorization

Testing accommodations must be renewed each semester. Once approved, your Accommodation Notification Letter will be provided to your instructor and will identify your approved testing accommodations.

Student Responsibilities

Students are responsible for:

- scheduling exams with the appropriate Testing Center, when required;
- scheduling exams early enough to meet instructor deadlines and Testing Center scheduling requirements;
- following all Testing Center policies and procedures; and
- notifying Accessibility Services as soon as possible if problems arise with scheduling or implementing accommodations.

Students who miss a scheduled testing appointment should contact Accessibility Services and the Testing Center as soon as possible. Rescheduling is subject to instructor approval and Testing Center availability.

Instructor Authorization

Students may use only those materials authorized by the instructor (such as notes, textbooks, calculators, or formula sheets) during an exam unless otherwise specified in the approved accommodations.

Personal Belongings

To maintain a secure testing environment, personal belongings are generally not permitted in the testing room. Prohibited items include, but are not limited to:

- cell phones;
- smartwatches;
- other electronic devices;
- purses, backpacks, and jackets; and
- flash drives or other unauthorized materials.

Lockers are available for storing personal belongings during testing.

Items such as water, snacks, highlighters, scratch paper, or other materials may be permitted only when approved as part of a student's accommodation or authorized by the instructor and Testing Center.

Lockdown Browser and Remote Proctoring

Some instructors require the use of a Lockdown Browser or other remote proctoring technology for online exams.

If a student's approved accommodations cannot be effectively provided while using a Lockdown Browser, Accessibility Services will work with the student and instructor to identify an appropriate alternative testing arrangement.

Depending on the student's circumstances, alternative testing may include:

1. **Students who live within the Dallas College service area** may complete their exam in person at a Dallas College Testing Center.
2. **Students who live outside the Dallas College service area** may arrange to test at an approved proctored testing site, such as another college or university, a public library, or a professional testing center.

Students are responsible for identifying an appropriate proctoring location for approval. Any fees charged by the proctoring site are the responsibility of the student unless otherwise authorized by Dallas College.

Examples of professional proctoring providers include:

a. ETC Testing / Learning Centers
b. Other proctoring services approved though the Dallas College Proctoring Approval Process.

VIII. Deaf/Blind Tuition Waiver

The State of Texas provides a tuition waiver for eligible students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or have significant visual impairments who attend state-supported colleges and universities.

Eligibility for the waiver is established in accordance with Texas law and the requirements of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Initial Eligibility Requirements

To receive the tuition waiver, students must:

1. Be a Texas resident for at least one year before enrollment.
2. Obtain written certification as a blind person from your local Vocational Rehabilitation Program - Texas Workforce Commission
3. Obtain written certification as a person who is deaf or hard of hearing from Texas Health and Human Services.
4. Submit a written statement of purpose describing the intended certificate or degree program or explaining the professional benefit of the planned course of study.
5. Have earned a high school diploma or its equivalent.
6. Submit a letter of recommendation from a high school principal, public official, or another responsible individual familiar with the student.
7. Meet all admission and enrollment requirements of Dallas College.

Maintaining Eligibility

To continue receiving the tuition waiver, students must:

- Successfully complete at least **67%** of all attempted credit hours each semester.
- Maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of **2.0** or higher on a 4.0 scale.
- Complete the degree or certificate program within **150%** of the minimum credit hours required for the program.

Students who do not meet the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirements but continue to meet all other eligibility criteria may submit an appeal to continue receiving the tuition waiver. Accessibility Services case managers are available to assist students with the appeal process.

IX. Dual Credit Accommodations

Students enrolled in Dallas College Dual Credit courses who have a disability may be eligible to receive accommodations through Dallas College Accessibility Services.

Because Dual Credit students are enrolled in college courses, accommodation requests are evaluated under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act—not under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). As a result, college accommodations may differ from the accommodations or services a student received in high school through an IEP or Section 504 Plan.

To receive accommodations, students must complete the Dallas College Accessibility Services process and be determined eligible. (see pages 8 and 13)

How to Request Accommodations

Step 1: Submit Documentation

The student, parent or legal guardian (for minor students), or high school counselor may assist with submitting documentation to Accessibility Services.

Documentation must:

- verify the student's disability;
- be completed by a qualified licensed professional; and
- provide sufficient information to support the need for accommodations.

Step 2: Documentation Review

Accessibility Services will review the submitted documentation to determine eligibility for services.

The Decision-Making Team evaluates:

- the student's documentation;
- the functional limitations resulting from the disability;
- the student's requested accommodations; and
- the essential requirements of the Dual Credit course(s).

Accommodations are determined individually and may vary based on the student's disability-related needs and the requirements of each course.

All disability-related documentation is maintained confidentially and is used only to determine eligibility for accommodations and coordinate approved services.

Step 3: Intake Appointment

After documentation has been received, Accessibility Services will schedule an intake appointment.

During the intake meeting, the case manager will discuss:

- the impact of the student's disability;
- barriers to accessing the educational environment; and
- accommodations that may provide equal access to the Dual Credit course(s).

Parents or legal guardians may participate in the intake meeting only with the student's written consent.

Step 4: Accommodation Decision

Once the intake is complete, the Decision-Making Team will review the students' request.

If accommodations are approved, Accessibility Services will prepare and distribute the Accommodation Notification Letter to the appropriate Dallas College instructor(s). Students are encouraged to communicate with their instructors, case manager, and/or senior case manager regarding the implementation of approved accommodations.

Students must renew accommodations each semester they wish to receive services.

X. Transitioning from High School to College

Students often find that receiving accommodations in college is different from receiving services in high school. While both systems are designed to support students with disabilities, the laws, responsibilities, and accommodation processes are different.

The table below highlights key differences.

High School	College
Services are provided under IDEA and/or Section 504.	Accommodations are provided under the ADA and Section 504.

Schools identify students who may need services.	Students **must self-identify** and request accommodations through Accessibility Services.
IEPs and Section 504 Plans may include curriculum modifications.	Accommodations provide equal access but do not modify essential course or program requirements.
Parents are actively involved in educational decisions.	Students are responsible for communicating with Accessibility Services and their instructors. Parents may participate only with the students' written consent, as permitted by FERPA.
Teachers frequently monitor student progress and remind students of assignments.	Students are expected to manage their time, complete assignments independently, and seek assistance when needed.
Schools may modify assignments or testing requirements.	Professors maintain academic standards. Approved accommodations may change how students access learning or demonstrate knowledge but do not lower academic expectations.

Tips for a Successful Transition

Students are encouraged to:

- Contact Accessibility Services as early as possible.
- Request accommodations before they are needed.
- Review course syllabi carefully and plan ahead.
- Communicate with instructors when questions or concerns arise.
- Utilize campus resources such as tutoring, academic coaching, counseling, and Accessibility Services.

Accessibility Services is here to support you throughout the accommodation process.

XI. Pregnant and Parenting Students at Dallas College

Many Dallas College students balance their education while growing their families. Whether you are pregnant, recovering from childbirth, or raising children, Dallas College is committed to helping you continue making progress toward your educational goals.

A. Pregnancy-Related Accommodations and Support

If you are pregnant or experiencing a pregnancy-related medical condition, you may be eligible for reasonable accommodations through Accessibility Services. Staff will work with you to identify accommodations or supportive measures based on your individual needs, explain the process, and communicate approved accommodations to your instructors.

Dallas College provides reasonable accommodations for students affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions in accordance with federal law.

B. When Should I Request Pregnancy-Related Accommodations?

You should consider requesting accommodations if pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition is affecting your ability to fully participate in your classes or college activities. Examples include:

- Morning sickness, nausea, or vomiting
- Fatigue or pregnancy-related pain
- Hyperemesis gravidarum
- Pregnancy complications require medical treatment or bed rest.
- Recovery following childbirth, including cesarean delivery.
- Postpartum conditions, such as depression, anxiety, or panic disorders
- Any other pregnancy-related medical condition that impacts your academic participation.

C. Examples of Pregnancy-Related Accommodations

Accommodations are determined on an individualized basis. Examples may include:

- Flexibility with attendance due to pregnancy-related medical appointments or health conditions
- Extensions on assignments when medically necessary
- Opportunities to make up exams or coursework missed because of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions.
- Preferential classroom seating
- Permission to record lectures.
- Reduced-distraction testing
- Additional restroom breaks
- Permission to have food or water during class.
- Other reasonable accommodations based on your individual circumstances.

D. How to Request Pregnancy-Related Accommodations

Getting started is easy.

- **Email:** DSSO@DallasCollege.edu or
- **Online:** Complete the Accommodation Request Application.

Once Accessibility Services receives your email or application, an Accessibility Services administrator will typically contact you within one business day to discuss your needs and explain the next steps in the accommodation process.

E. Resources for Parenting Students

Dallas College's Family Care Program offers a variety of services to support students who are raising children while pursuing their education.

Available resources include:

- Free family care supplies and support services
- Childcare resource referrals
- On campus childcare at Brookhaven, Cedar Valley, Eastfield, El Centro, and Mountain View campuses (available at no cost to eligible Dallas College students, as space permits)
- The EPIC Program, which may provide childcare assistance for eligible students enrolled in Career and Technical Education (CTE) associate degree or certificate programs.
- Designated expectant mother parking available on every campus.
- A dedicated Parenting Liaison to help connect students with available resources and services.

Family Care Program Contact Information

- **Email:** Connections@DallasCollege.edu
- **Phone:** 214-860-5800 (ask for the Connections team)

EPIC Program Contact Information

- **Email:** EPIC@DallasCollege.edu
- **Phone:** 214-860-5800

XII. Emergency Preparedness for Students with Disabilities

Your safety is important. During an emergency, such as a fire, severe weather event, or other situation requiring evacuation or sheltering, it is important to know what to do before an

emergency occurs. Students with disabilities are encouraged to plan ahead and become familiar with emergency procedures for the buildings where they attend classes.

A. Emergency Evacuation Guidelines

Students Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision

Students who are blind or have low vision may need assistance during an evacuation.

To prepare for an emergency:

- Discuss your evacuation needs with your instructor at the beginning of each semester.
- Identify classmates, faculty, or staff who may be able to assist if an evacuation is necessary.
- Follow the instructions of college personnel and emergency responders during an emergency.

Students with Mobility Impairments

Students who use wheelchairs or have other mobility impairments may be unable to use stairs during an emergency.

If evacuation is required:

- Do **not** use elevators unless directed to do so by emergency personnel.
- If it is safe to do so, proceed to the nearest stairwell, which serves as a designated Rescue Assistance Area.
- If the nearest stairwell is inaccessible, move to the next closest stairwell that can be safely reached.
- Once you are in a Rescue Assistance Area, notify a member of the College Emergency Response Team (CERT), who can be identified by a yellow safety vest. If a CERT member is not available, ask another person evacuating the building to notify emergency responders of your location.
- Remain in the Rescue Assistance Area unless your safety is immediately threatened.
- Firefighters or other emergency responders will assist with evacuation from the Rescue Assistance Area when it is safe to do so.

For more information about campus emergency procedures, visit the Dallas College Emergency Management webpage or contact Campus Police.

XIII. Grievance Resolution Process

Dallas College is committed to providing an accessible, inclusive learning environment where students with disabilities have equal access to programs, services, activities, and educational opportunities.

If you believe you have experienced disability discrimination or that approved accommodation has not been provided or is not working effectively, we encourage you to report your concern. Whenever possible, concerns are resolved through open communication. However, formal grievance procedures are available when needed.

A. What Is an ADA/Section 504 Accessibility Concern?

You may submit an ADA/Section 504 accessibility concern if you have experienced any of the following:

- **Physical barriers to access** – Inaccessible facilities, such as broken automatic doors, inaccessible routes, sidewalk obstructions, or malfunctioning elevators.
- **Accommodation concerns** – Questions or disagreements regarding the approval, denial, implementation, or effectiveness of an accommodation or auxiliary aid.
- **Privacy concerns** – Unauthorized disclosure of information related to your disability or accommodations.
- **Discrimination or harassment** – Being treated unfairly or harassed because of your disability.
- **Program or activity inaccessibility** – Being unable to fully participate in a class, program, service, or campus activity because appropriate access was not provided.

B. Reporting a Concern

Students who believe they have experienced disability discrimination or have concerns about accommodations are encouraged to report the issue as soon as possible. Complaints should be submitted in writing and include a description of the concern, the individuals involved, relevant dates, and any supporting documentation.

C. Informal Resolution Process

Most concerns can be resolved through the Informal Resolution Process, which encourages open communication and collaborative problem-solving.

The process generally includes the following steps:

1. Discuss your concern with your Accessibility Services case manager.
2. If the issue is not resolved, submit an informal complaint to the Dean of Accessibility Services.

3. The Dean will review the concern, gather any necessary information, and work with the appropriate parties to seek a fair and timely resolution.
4. If the concern cannot be resolved informally, you may proceed with the Formal Grievance Process.

D. Formal Grievance Process

You may file a formal grievance when:

- The concern was not resolved through the Informal Resolution Process; **or**
- The concern involves serious allegations of disability discrimination or a significant violation of rights under the ADA or Section 504 that warrant immediate formal review.

E. How to File a Formal Grievance

To initiate the Formal Grievance Process:

1. Complete the **ADA/Section 504** Concern Form.
2. Submit the completed form within **30 calendar days** of the incident or the date you became aware of the concern.

After the form is received, the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator or another appropriate college official will promptly review the complaint, investigate the allegations as appropriate, and communicate the outcome.

F. Appeal Process

If you believe the Formal Grievance Process did not adequately resolve your concern, you may appeal the decision.

How to Submit an Appeal

- Request an **Appeal Form** from the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator.
- Submit the completed Appeal Form within the timeframe provided by the coordinator.

Appeal Review

The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance will review the appeal to:

- Determine whether the investigation and grievance process were conducted appropriately;
- Evaluate whether the findings were supported by the available information; and
- Determine whether the resolution should be upheld or modified.

A written decision will normally be issued within **thirty business days** after the completed Appeal Form is received. The final determination will be provided to the student in writing.

XIV. Available Services and Supports

A. Academic Accommodations

1. Testing Accommodations

Testing accommodations are individualized based on a student's approved accommodations and may include:

- Extended testing time
- Reduced-distraction testing environments
- Reader and/or scribe services
- Other approved testing accommodations as appropriate

2. Reader and Scribe Services

Students approved for reader and/or scribe services will be provided trained Accessibility Services staff. Family members, friends, or other personal assistants may not serve in these roles.

Reader Responsibilities

- Read test questions exactly as written.
- Repeat questions upon request.
- Do not interpret, explain, or reword test content.
- Adjust reading pace, tone, or volume based on the student's preferences.

Scribe Responsibilities

- Record responses exactly as dictated by the student.
- Do not organize, edit, or paraphrase responses.
- Assist with basic spelling and end-of-sentence punctuation as appropriate.
- Allow the student to review the completed exam and request corrections before submission.

3. Notetaking Assistance

Students approved for notetaking assistance may receive support through one or more of the following:

- **Classroom Assistant:** A trained individual assigned by Accessibility Services to take notes during class.
- **Smartpen or Digital Recorder:** Equipment that allows students to record lectures for personal study.
- **AI-Supported Notetaking Tools:** Approved software, such as Genio, that records lectures and generates searchable notes.

Accessibility Services will provide instructions on how to access and use the approved notetaking method.

Important: Audio recordings and notes are provided solely for the student's educational use and may not be shared, posted online, or distributed. Misuse of recordings or notes may result in the loss of this accommodation.

B. Communication Access

Accessibility Services provides a variety of communication access services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Services are approved based on a student's documented needs and may include American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting, Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART), or FM hearing systems.

1. American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreting

Qualified ASL interpreters facilitate communication between students and instructors during classes and other approved college activities.

Interpreters and transliterators employed by Accessibility Services adhere to the professional Codes of Conduct established by the **National Association of the Deaf (NAD)** and the **Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID)**. These standards require interpreters to maintain confidentiality, remain impartial, and uphold professional boundaries.

What to Expect

- Interpreters provide complete and accurate communication without adding, omitting, or changing the meaning of the message.
- Students have the right to receive the same information as their hearing peers, even when the content includes sensitive, controversial, or strong language.
- Interpreters facilitate communication but do not participate in classroom discussions or provide instruction.

Interpreter Limitations

Interpreters do not:

- Explain or teach course content.
- Assist with homework or assignments.
- Take class notes.
- Comment on student behavior or academic performance

Students should communicate directly with their instructor, and instructors should communicate directly with the student. The interpreter's role is to facilitate communication between both parties.

Questions or concerns regarding interpreting services should be directed to Accessibility Services.

2. Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART)

CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation) provides real-time captioning of spoken communication during class, allowing students who are deaf or hard of hearing to read a live transcription of classroom discussions.

CART providers accurately transcribe spoken communication but do not participate in class discussions, answer questions on behalf of the student, or provide instruction.

Student Responsibilities

Students receiving CART services are responsible for:

- Attending class and participating in coursework
- Communicating directly with their instructor
- Notifying Accessibility Services of schedule changes, class cancellations, or absences as soon as possible

3. FM Hearing Systems

FM hearing systems amplify an instructor's voice and reduce background noise, improving access for students with hearing loss. Accessibility Services will provide instructions for using approved FM equipment.

C. Assistive Technology

Accessibility Services provides a variety of assistive technology to help students access course materials, participate in class, and complete academic work independently.

1. Screen Readers

Screen readers convert digital text into synthesized speech or refreshable Braille, enabling students who are blind, have low vision, or have print disabilities to access electronic course materials. Screen readers are compatible with accessible Microsoft Word documents, PDFs, websites, email, and other digital content.

Common screen readers available at Dallas College include:

- **JAWS (Job Access With Speech):** A widely used screen reader for Windows.
- **NVDA (Nonvisual Desktop Access):** A free, open-source screen reader for Windows.
- **VoiceOver:** A built-in screen reader available on Mac computers, iPhones, and iPads.
- **FUSION:** Combines JAWS screen reading with ZoomText screen magnification for students with low vision.

2. Notetaking Technology

Smartpens and Digital Recorders

Students approved for this accommodation may check out Smartpens or digital recorders to capture classroom lectures for personal educational use. These devices help students review course content and create more effective study materials.

AI-Supported Notetaking Tools

Students may also be approved to use AI-supported notetaking software, such as **Genio**, to record lectures, generate searchable notes, and organize class content. Accessibility Services will provide instructions for accessing and using approved software.

Important: Audio recordings and AI-generated notes are intended solely for the student's educational use and may not be shared, published, or distributed without permission.

D. Service Animals

Dallas College welcomes service animals in accordance with the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**.

What Is a Service Animal?

Under the ADA, a **service animal** is a dog that has been individually trained to perform work or tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability. The work or task performed must be directly related to the individual's disability.

Back to Table of Contents

Emotional support, comfort, therapy, or companion animals are **not** considered service animals under the ADA and are not covered by this policy.

Student Responsibilities

Students who use service animals on campus are responsible for ensuring that the animal:

- Remains under the handler's control at all times through a leash, harness, tether, or effective voice or signal commands when these devices cannot be used.
- It is appropriately supervised, cared for, and cleaned up after by the handler.
- Behaves appropriately in classrooms and other college facilities.
- Does not disrupt college operations or pose a threat to the health or safety of others.

Service animals are **not** required to wear a vest, harness, identification tag, or other identifying equipment.

Removal of a Service Animal

A service animal may be required to leave campus if it:

- is out of the handler's control and the handler does not take effective action to regain control.
- is disruptive to the learning environment (for example, excessive barking or wandering).
- displays aggressive behavior or poses a direct threat to others.
- is not housebroken or presents a health or sanitation concern.

Reporting Concerns

Questions or concerns regarding a service animal should first be addressed with the handler whenever appropriate. If additional assistance is needed, concerns may be reported to Accessibility Services for review and resolution.

XV Case Management Services

At Dallas College, receiving accommodations is just the beginning. Students registered with Accessibility Services have the opportunity to participate in **voluntary case management services** designed to provide ongoing support throughout the semester.

Your case manager is more than someone who helps implement your accommodations; they are a partner in your academic success. Through individualized meetings, case managers help students navigate challenges, develop effective strategies, connect with campus resources, and build the skills needed to thrive in college.

Whether you are adjusting to college, managing a disability, balancing school with work or family responsibilities, or simply looking for additional support, case management can help you stay on track and achieve your educational goals.

Benefits of Case Management

Students who participate in case management can:

- Maximize the effectiveness of their approved accommodations.
- Develop practical strategies for academic success, including time management, organization, and study skills.
- Identify and overcome barriers that may affect academic performance.
- Receive guidance in navigating disability-related, academic, and personal challenges.
- Connect with campus and community resources, such as tutoring, counseling, financial aid, success coaching, basic needs support, and career services.
- Strengthen self-advocacy, problem-solving, and decision-making skills.
- Build confidence and independence while learning to successfully navigate the college environment.
- Establish realistic goals and remain accountable for achieving them through ongoing support and encouragement.

What to Expect

Case management is based on a **solution-focused, student-centered approach** that emphasizes strengths, collaboration, and achievable outcomes. Rather than focusing on past challenges, sessions concentrate on identifying practical solutions and developing strategies that support your success now and in the future.

Together, you and your case manager will:

- Identify specific, meaningful, and achievable goals.
- Develop strategies to address current academic or personal challenges.
- Monitor your progress throughout the semester.
- Adjust plans and connect you with additional resources as your needs change.

Case management is a collaborative process. Both you and your case manager play an active role in developing solutions and celebrating progress.

Meeting Schedule

Most students meet with their case manager:

- **Three to five times** during a 16-week semester.
- **Two to three times** during an 8-week semester.

Appointments typically last **45 to 60 minutes**. During the beginning of the semester or when additional support is needed, meetings may occur more frequently.

Participation in case management is voluntary, but students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this service. Regular meetings with a case manager can help you stay engaged, address challenges early, and make the most of your college experience.

XVI. Welcome to Dallas College

At Dallas College Accessibility Services, our goal is to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to educational opportunities and the resources they need to achieve their academic goals.

The accommodation process is a partnership between students, Accessibility Services, faculty, and college staff. Students play an important role by communicating their needs, using approved accommodations, and advocating for their success.

Remember, Accessibility Services is here to support you throughout your college journey. Whether you are requesting accommodations for the first time, navigating changes in your disability-related needs, or seeking guidance about available resources, our team is available to help.

We encourage you to contact Accessibility Services early, ask questions, and take advantage of the support available to you. Your success is our shared commitment.

Welcome to Dallas College—we look forward to partnering with you on your path to success.

Back to Table of Contents