



# Student Disability Services Handbook

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## Purpose of Student Disability Services

The Student Disability Services Office (SDS) provides support to Piedmont Technical College students who have documented disabilities. SDS is responsible for accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The ADA defines disability as “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity; a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment.”

Appropriate and reasonable accommodations are available to assist any student who has a documented disability while attending PTC. Students must self-identify as a student with a disability to the SDS coordinator and provide appropriate documentation in order to receive accommodations. The college is committed to providing equal access and opportunity to all students so that each might realize their full potential.

The services provided to registered students with disabilities may include, but are not limited to:

- Providing support for students with documented disabilities
- Coordinating services for students with disabilities
- Verifying eligibility for academic accommodations based on documentation
- Educating and training students on assistive technology resources
- Providing exam accommodations
- Assisting students with academic strategies
- Assisting with the diagnostic evaluation referral process
- Providing assistance to members of the campus community in responding to disability- related issues and concerns
- Working with the larger campus community to overcome architectural, attitudinal, and administrative barriers

Services are available to students who have disabilities including, but not limited to, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), learning disabilities, chronic medical conditions, psychological disabilities, mobility disabilities, neurological disabilities, orthopedic disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and sensory disabilities (hearing, vision). Services are available for all students attending PTC, including Dual Enrollment, Continuing Education, and Technical Education students.

## Disability Laws in Postsecondary Education

Many students with disabilities and their parents have learned the basics of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). However, as students and their families prepare for the transition from high school to college they often find they are less familiar with the protections provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act for post-secondary education.

In seeking to understand the differences between ADA, Section 504 and IDEA, students and parents need to take into consideration that the education of all children, from K-12 is mandatory; therefore, school districts need to ensure that the guidelines set by IDEA are met. In other words, the school districts need to ensure that they provide accommodations and modifications which will help students succeed and finish high school.

However, post-secondary education is discretionary, which means that colleges need to comply with ADA, and/or Section 504. In other words, colleges need to ensure that they provide “equal access” and “equal opportunity” to education. Unlike IDEA, Section 504 for post-secondary and ADA do not require that a student with a disability receive an individualized educational program (IEP) but rather the student is provided with equal access to college programs.

### Differences in high school and college

When navigating the transition from high school to college, it is important for students to consider the differences between high school and college. First and foremost, in college you are expected to speak for yourself, which means that you must first meet with staff from SDS to self-identify that you have a disability. It is the student’s choice to disclose this information and/or register with SDS as a student with a disability.

There are a number of additional differences as well. How you learn course information may be different, so students often need to learn new academic strategies to address a more challenging academic rigor. You may need to utilize new resources such as tutoring and time management support, while in college. Students with disabilities are expected to learn all the information every other student is required to learn, therefore course work is not modified in the same way as it may have been in high school. Most importantly, students must advocate for themselves during their time at PTC.

For more information about the differences between high school and college, please refer to the chart on page 8.

## **Rights and Responsibilities of Students with Disabilities**

As a student with a disability at Piedmont Technical College you have the right to:

- equal access to courses, programs, services, and activities offered through the College.
- reasonable accommodations and adjustments which will be provided when needed to achieve equal access.
- determine whether to use the accommodations for which you have been approved
- all other rights and privileges available to other students at PTC.

As a student with a disability at Piedmont Technical College you have the responsibility to:

- self-identify as an individual with a disability when an accommodation is needed and to seek information, counsel, and assistance as necessary and in a timely fashion.
- demonstrate and/or provide documentation (from an appropriate professional) on the manner in which the disability limits participation in courses, programs, services, and activities.
- follow college procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodations, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- request and discuss approved accommodations with instructors every semester.
- meet the minimum standards as set forth by the program of study, with or without accommodations, keeping in mind that instructors are not expected to compromise the essential course requirements nor to fundamentally alter a course.
- adhere to all PTC standards of conduct as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct (refer back to Student Handbook)
- inform your SDS coordinator of any concerns about classroom accommodations, disparate or disparaging treatment related to disability, or access issues on campus as soon as the issue arises.

## **Rights and Responsibilities of Piedmont Technical College**

PTC has the right to:

- identify and establish essential functions, abilities, skills, knowledge, requirements, and standards for courses, programs, services, and activities, and to evaluate students on this basis.
- request and receive, through SDS, current documentation that supports requests for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- deny a request for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services if the documentation demonstrates that the request is not warranted, or if appropriate documentation is not provided.

- select among equally effective accommodations, adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- refuse an unreasonable accommodation, adjustment, and/or auxiliary aid or service that imposes a fundamental alteration of a program or activity of the College.

PTC has the responsibility to:

- provide information to students with disabilities in accessible formats upon request.
- ensure that courses, programs, services, and activities, when viewed in their entirety, are available in the most integrated and appropriate settings.
- evaluate students on their abilities and not their disabilities.
- provide or arrange for reasonable accommodations and/or auxiliary aids and services for students with disabilities in courses, programs, services, and activities.
- maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication except where permitted or required by law or when the student requests in writing that such information be shared.

### **Documentation required to receive accommodations**

Student Disability Services (SDS) is committed to providing accommodations and services to students with disabilities in order to ensure a comprehensively accessible college experience. We engage in an interactive process with each student and review requests for accommodations on a case-by-case basis. In determining reasonable accommodations, we consider each student's disability, history, experience, and request. In addition to a one-on-one interview with the student, SDS may need information from other sources in order to establish a disability and the impact it has on learning in a postsecondary environment.

If the submitted documentation is incomplete or does not support the accommodation request, the student will need to provide additional or updated information. If the student does not have documentation, please meet with the SDS Coordinator to discuss the situation and possible referral for documentation. Please keep in mind that professionals may suggest accommodations, however, PTC makes the final decision about eligibility and appropriate accommodations based on the essential requirements of the academic program or service.

Please see the SDS website for Documentation Guidelines by Disability. Physicians are encouraged to complete the Standard Documentation form, which is found on the SDS website at <https://www.ptc.edu/college-resources/counseling-and-disability-services/student-disability-services>

## How do students receive accommodations?

Students need to complete the online Intake Form, submit documentation and schedule an Intake interview with SDS coordinator to discuss the documentation and determine reasonable accommodations.

After submitting documentation of their disability, it is the student's responsibility to schedule an Intake interview with SDS to discuss the documentation and the accommodation process.

Prior to or during the intake interview, SDS staff will review the student's documentation and the recommendation(s) for accommodations. If necessary, other appropriate personnel may be consulted for further review of the recommendations.

During the intake interview, the SDS coordinator will review the student's previous educational experiences and accommodation suggestions. The accommodation process is an interactive process to discuss how the disability may affect the student's educational experiences and what reasonable accommodations will provide access to the student. SDS will complete the accommodation letter and email it to each instructor and a copy will be sent to the student's PTC student email. It is the student's responsibility to introduce themselves and discuss the process for receiving accommodations with their instructors each semester.

In summary:

- Student self-identifies to SDS and completes the Intake Form on the SDS webpage.
- Student provides appropriate documentation.
- Student and SDS coordinator complete the Intake Interview to determine reasonable accommodations.
- Accommodation letters are prepared and emailed to instructor(s) and student.
- Each semester student must complete the Request Accommodation Letter form located on the SDS website page.
- Accommodation letters will be emailed directly to instructor(s) and student the first week of the semester. (Accommodation letters may not be sent if the Request is not completed)
- Student should discuss accommodation process with instructors each semester
- Student should notify SDS coordinator of any issues or changes needed in accommodations.
- Accommodations are not retroactive. Please make sure you complete the Request Accommodation letter at the beginning of each semester.

## Appeal Process

If a student disagrees with the Student Disability Services decision as to the appropriateness of an accommodation or the denial of a request for an accommodation, the student has the right to address their concerns with the Director of Student Success and Engagement. The Director will investigate the complaint and suggest solutions. If resolution is not achieved or the individuals involved are not satisfied with the resolution, the student may follow The Student Grievance Procedure for the SC Technical College System found in the PTC Student Handbook and online at: <https://www.ptc.edu/college-resources/student-policies-procedures>

## Confidentiality and Retention of Records

All documentation submitted to Student Disability Services will be considered confidential and will only be shared with others within the college on a need-to-know basis. In other words, faculty and staff members will not have access to information regarding a student's disability, only the accommodations that are appropriate and necessary to meet the student's needs. Confidentiality of a student's disability records is maintained in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which restricts the college's release of certain records without the written consent of the student. Student disability information is kept separate from other school records and is not considered a part of a student's educational record.

If you have any questions about the information in this document please contact:

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<b>Personal Freedom</b>	
<b>High School</b>	<b>College</b>
High school is mandatory and free.	College is <i>voluntary</i> and can be <i>expensive</i> .
You may have needed permission to participate in extracurricular activities.	You must decide whether to participate in extracurricular activities/work, and how to balance these with your coursework.
You can count on parents and teachers to remind you of your responsibilities and to guide you in setting priorities.	You are responsible for keeping up with the deadlines and due dates established by your instructors. You may be faced with a large number of decisions about setting priorities not previously faced.
Your time is usually structured by others.	You manage your own time.

<b>Classes/Schedules</b>	
<b>High School</b>	<b>College</b>
Through the day, you proceed from one class directly to another.	You often have time between classes and class times vary throughout the day and the evening.
You spend 6 hours each day=30 hours a week in class.	You spend 12 to 16 hours each week in class.
Most of your classes are arranged for you.	You arrange your own schedule in consultation with your academic advisor.
Classes generally have no more than 35 students.	Class sizes will range from 20 to 50 students or more.
You are provided with textbooks at little or no expense.	You need to budget funds for textbooks, each semester.
You are not responsible for knowing what it takes to graduate.	Graduation requirements are complex, and differ for different majors and sometimes different years. You are expected to know the requirements that apply to you.

<b>Instructors</b>	
<b>High School</b>	<b>College</b>
Teachers remind you of your incomplete work.	Instructors likely will not remind you of incomplete work.
Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance.	Instructors expect you to initiate contact and visit office hours if you need support or have questions.
Teachers are often available for conversation before, during or after class.	Instructors expect and want you to attend their scheduled office hours.
Teachers have been trained in teaching methods to assist in imparting knowledge to students.	Instructors have been trained as experts in their particular subject areas.
Teachers provide you with information you missed when you were absent.	Instructors expect you to get from classmates any notes from classes you missed.
Teachers present materials to help you understand the material in the textbook.	Instructors may not follow the textbook but still expect you to know the information.
Teachers often write information on the board to be copied in your notes.	Instructors may lecture throughout class, expecting you to identify the important points in your notes. Good notes are a must.
Teachers impart knowledge and facts, sometimes drawing direct connections and leading you through the thinking process.	Instructors expect you to think about and synthesize seemingly unrelated topics.
Teachers often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates.	Instructors expect you to read, save and consult the assignment schedule for the class.
Attendance is mandatory and closely tracked by your high school and teachers.	Student is responsible for attending class, being on time, and notifying the Instructor if you need to be absent from a class.

<b>Studying</b>	
<b>High School</b>	<b>College</b>
You may study outside of class as little as 0 to 2 hours a week, and this may be mostly last-minute test preparation.	You need to study at least 3 hours outside of class for each hour spent in class.
You often need to read or hear presentations only once to learn all you need to learn about them.	You need to review class notes and text material regularly.
You are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed, and often re-taught in class.	You are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing which may not be directly addressed in class.

<b>Tests</b>	
<b>High School</b>	<b>College</b>
Testing is frequent and covers small amount of material.	Testing is usually infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material. A particular course may have only 2 or 3 tests in a semester. Quizzes may occur frequently.
Makeup tests are often available.	Makeup tests are seldom an option.
Teachers frequently rearrange test dates to avoid conflict with school events.	Instructors usually schedule tests without regard to the demands of other courses or outside activities.
Teachers frequently conduct review sessions, pointing out the most important concepts.	Instructors rarely offer review sessions, and when they do, they expect you to be an active participant, one who comes prepared with questions.
Mastery is usually seen as the ability to reproduce what you were taught in the form in which it was presented, or to solve the kinds of problems you were shown how to solve.	Mastery is often seen as the ability to apply what you've learned to new situations or to solve new types of problems.

<b>Grades</b>	
<b>High School</b>	<b>College</b>
Grades are given for most assigned work.	Grades may not be provided for all assigned work.
Consistently good homework grades may help you raise your overall grade when test grades are low.	Grades on exams and major papers usually provide most of the course grade.
Extra credit projects are often available to help you raise your grade.	Extra credit projects may not be an option and if they are, may not have much impact on your final grade.
Initial test grades, especially when they are low, may not have an adverse effect on your final grade.	Watch out for your <i>first</i> tests. These are usually “wake-up calls” to let you know what is expected, but they also may account for substantial part of your course grade.
You may graduate as long as you have passed required courses with a grade of D or higher.	You may graduate only if your average in classes meet the departmental standard, typically a 2.0 or C.

Adapted from Tufts University SAS Student Handbook (tufts.edu)