

General Suggestions for Faculty

- **Stand by academic standards and freedoms.** Maintaining academic standards for all students assures equal and non-discriminatory access to education. Do not give “mercy” grades. These are demeaning and discriminatory. When a faculty member has done all that is required, then failing the under-qualified student is proper and lawful.
- **Communicate clear and concise expectations for performance to your students.** This is best done through your written syllabus. Care should be taken to distinguish between essential and non-essential components of the course.
- **Notify all students of your willingness to support students with disabilities.** This can be done verbally during lectures and/or in writing within a course syllabus. The Office of Civil Rights recommends both verbal and written notification.
- **Require ACCESS verification of all disability-related accommodation requests.** Requests are substantiated through verification of disability and resulting educational limitation(s). Written verification will come to faculty from the ACCESS office. Students requesting accommodations without verification from ACCESS should be referred back to this office. In rare circumstances, students may choose to work exclusively with the campus 504 coordinator to authorize accommodations.
- **Facilitate the reasonable accommodations authorized by ACCESS.** Accommodations are changes in the way requirements are accomplished and should affect only non-essential elements of a course. They are reasonable so long as course standards and method of delivery are not fundamentally altered. If you feel standards would be significantly affected by the recommended accommodation, consult with the ACCESS coordinator.
- **Facilitate testing accommodations indicated by ACCESS.** Depending on the particular needs of a student, it may be necessary to extend testing times, change testing formats, test in a quiet environment, and so on. Instructors may accommodate independently or use ACCESS test accommodation services.
- **Permit students to use auxiliary aides and technologies that ensure access.** Depending on the disability, students may need notetakers, sign language interpreters, readers, scribes, and personal assistants. Others may use digital recorders, computers, assistive listening devices, calculators, and other technologies for the same purpose. ACCESS will provide specific information regarding needed technology.
- **Make sure all documents, emails, websites, videos, films, or other required media are accessible.** This is required by state and federal law. ACCESS can help you determine accessibility of any media you use. For more information, call MC Alternative Media at **(805) 378-1461 #3**, or email mcaccessmedia@vcccd.edu.
- **Make adjustments in your instructional style as needed.** Some students need lecturers to face the audience while speaking. Others may need written or graphic information spoken aloud or described. Adjustments such as these, that do not fundamentally alter the nature of the course, should be made if the student requests them.
- **Maintain disability-related discussions and information in strictest confidentiality.** Avoid reference to a student’s disability in front of the class or in public. Do not discuss a student’s disability with other instructors. The student’s right to have information held in confidence is legally guaranteed and clearly outlined in FERPA – The Family Education and Right to Privacy Act.
- **Service animals** must be individually trained to work or perform tasks, must be leashed, treated as working animals (not pets), in good health, well-behaved, and registered with ACCESS.