

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS- Faculty and Staff

What exactly is an accommodation?

An academic accommodation is defined as any alteration in the usual manner of teaching, demonstrating, or evaluating a course objective, that enables a qualified student with a disability to have an equal opportunity to participate in the educational experience.

How do you determine accommodations?

The particular accommodations that a student utilizes will depend upon their particular characteristics and needs, as well as the demands of the course and learning environment. Accommodations are developed from the individual student's documentation that is provided to the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations. Two students with the same disability may qualify for and be eligible to receive different accommodations.

What accommodations are appropriate?

The Office of Accessibility and Accommodations staff grants accommodations to students with documented disabilities based on the recommendations of medical or mental health professionals and based on the needs of students. These accommodations should not compromise the essential elements or objectives of the course.

Am I being fair to other students by granting one student an accommodation?

Appropriate accommodations do not compromise the essential elements of the course, nor do they weaken the academic standards or integrity of the course. Accommodations simply provide an alternative way of accomplishing the course requirements by eliminating or reducing disability-related barriers. The goal of accommodations is to provide a level playing field, not an unfair advantage.

When do I have to comply with a student's request for accommodations?

The law provides the student with a disability the right to request accommodations from PTCC once he/she has provided the college with appropriate documentation. In some cases, PTCC may allow for temporary services while a student is in the process of obtaining documentation of his/her disability. The documentation is kept by The Office of Accessibility and Accommodations, and is held in a confidential manner. Privacy laws protect students from having to disclose such information from most people, including faculty and staff. The Office of Accessibility and Accommodations staff ask students to discuss their accommodations with faculty and staff directly and to provide you with their Accommodations Plan once it is approved. When you are notified of the accommodation(s), you should honor them immediately.



What happens if I do not provide the formally requested accommodation?

The student can take legal action against you and/or PTCC. Denial of accommodations could be considered a violation of a student's civil rights. Colleges and universities cannot discriminate against qualified people with disabilities in recruitment, admission, or treatment after admission. If you have concerns about a particular accommodation request you should discuss it with the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations.

How do I know if a student is “faking” a disability?

The Office of Accessibility and Accommodations has established policies and procedures for the documentation needed for each disability. It is the job of the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations to determine eligibility for accommodations. Faculty and staff members should not expect to see diagnostic information.

If I receive a student's Accommodation Plan in the middle of the semester, am I obligated to provide accommodations?

Yes, accommodations are in effect once a student has an established Accommodations Plan. In a college setting, it is the student's responsibility for requesting and initiating all disability-related services and accommodations. If a student does not have an Accommodations Plan, please refer him/her to the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations. Accommodations begin when the Accommodations Plan is established and are not retroactive and only apply upon receipt.

How can I encourage the student to talk to me about a disability?

Each student has the right to determine when, and if, to disclose the nature of a disability to faculty or staff. We know that communication is important and we encourage students to discuss their learning needs, as well as their strengths and weaknesses. Some students, especially those with non-visible disabilities, such as psychological or learning disabilities, may need time to feel comfortable to discuss their disability. Some students may never choose or need to discuss their disability.

Why is it important to choose a textbook for my class well in advance?

Students whose disability impacts their reading may receive an accommodation for their course reading materials (textbooks, handouts, syllabi, lab manuals) to be in an accessible format. Formats include Braille, large print, audio or e-text. Advanced planning is essential in the provision of alternate format print materials. Depending upon the particular format, it can take up to 3 weeks for e-text and 3 or more months for a Braille document.



I have a student with a disability who is behind in the assignments. This student has not done well on the exams. May I fail the student if she or he does not earn the required points to pass the class?

A student with a disability should be held to the same standards as any other student in the class. You may wish to contact The Office of Accessibility and Accommodations and discuss your concerns, and you would certainly want to talk to the student just as you would with any other student.

Can I provide accommodations to a student who does not present an Accommodation Plan?

If a student asks for an accommodation but does not present an Accommodation Plan from The Office of Accessibility and Accommodations verifying eligibility for accommodations, it is strongly recommended that you ask the student to contact the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations. If a student asks you for an accommodation, and that specific accommodation is not listed in an approved Accommodations Plan, you are not obligated to provide it.

Do I have to provide accommodations listed on the Accommodation Plan if they do not fit with my philosophy or style?

Yes. Federal law requires that students who are registered with the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations are entitled to the accommodations listed in the approved Accommodation Plan. Providing accommodations is a shared obligation of PTCC faculty and staff. The accommodations should not compromise the essential elements or objectives of the course.

If I receive a student's Accommodations Plan dated from a previous academic year, am I obligated to accept this?

Generally speaking, yes. It is rare that a student's disability changes over time which would lead to different accommodations. However, students are asked to update/request new Accommodations Plans from The Office of Accessibility and Accommodations every academic year. Please advise the student to contact The Office of Accessibility and Accommodations to update/request a new Accommodations Plans if needed.

How can test accommodations be arranged in the classroom?

There are advantages for students to take the exams with the rest of the class or within the department. If only extended time is required, students can either come before or stay after the rest of the students. If that is not possible, you can arrange to have the exam proctored by you or another staff member in your office or a separate room. Please be mindful of the confidentiality of students when making arrangements.



Does extra time for exams apply to take-home or online exams?

Yes. Extended time on take-home exams should be agreed upon by the student and instructor when the take-home exam is given, and the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations recommends that the extension be put in writing. For online exams, the amount of time given to take the exam can and should be adjusted by the instructor according to the extended time described on the student's Accommodations Plan.

Can I give pop quizzes if I have students who have approved accommodations?

Yes. However, please know that this will involve coordinating the exam with the testing center. We ask that you administer pop quizzes at the beginning or end of class periods to help maintain confidentiality of the student.

How do I plan for accommodations of students with disabilities on field trips, practicums and internships?

Students should be made aware of upcoming field trips, practicums, and internships with enough notice to arrange accommodations. The accommodations to be made will depend on the job requirements, destinations, and the disabilities involved. We advise faculty and staff to contact the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations as soon as field trips, practicums and internships are established.

What if I am unable to proctor the student's exams?

If you are unable to proctor the student's exams because of their need for accommodations, alternative testing arrangements can be made with the testing center. Students are responsible for setting up a testing time 48 business hours prior to each exam they need to take with the testing center. Once the student sets up a testing appointment with the testing center, you will be emailed a confirmation of the scheduled exam.

Once you receive the appointment confirmation, you are responsible to complete the online Faculty Proctoring Request Form no later than 24 hours prior to the scheduled time. Additionally, you are to deliver testing materials no later than 24 business hours prior to the test exam.

When the student has completed the exam, it will be promptly returned to you. Additionally, you will be notified immediately if the student does not arrive for the exam.

If a student has note taking accommodations, do I have to give them notes when they are absent?

Instructors and note takers are not obligated to give students notes for the times they are not in class unless prior arrangements have been made. If the student begins missing class regularly, the faculty or staff member should notify the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations.



How does an instructor accommodate the need for a scribe or reader?

If a student needs a scribe or reader for an exam, the test can be administered in the testing center. Whenever possible, we scan the exam into e-text and use Assistive Technology (Read/Write) to administer exams.

What is Universal Design and how can I use it?

According to the [Center for Teaching Innovation](#) at Cornell University, “Universal design for learning is a teaching approach that works to accommodate the needs and abilities of all learners and eliminates unnecessary hurdles in the learning process.”

How do I let students know about the Accessibility and Accommodation Services?

In your syllabus, include an accessibility statement explaining that students with disabilities needing accommodations in your class should connect with the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations. Including this information in your syllabus helps inform students, especially first-year students, about the office and the appropriate process for requesting accommodations.

Where can I find a sample statement to include in my syllabus?

Accessibility and Accommodations: Pine Technical & Community College values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. Our institution is committed to the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in its programs, services, and activities through its compliance with state and federal laws. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion, please notify the instructor as soon as possible. PTCC will provide reasonable accommodations to individuals with documented disabilities enrolled in courses at the college. For further information regarding the College's services, please contact the Student Success Coordinator located in the Student Services suite room 35. Phone number is 320-629-5174 and email is robin.johnson@pine.edu. For more information visit: <https://pine.edu/student-services/accessibility-accommodations/>

How do I ask a student about their disability?

Asking a student for more details regarding their disability is not permitted as the confidentiality of medical information must be maintained. It is an individual's choice whether to disclose the nature of their disability.

Tip: Focus your discussion on the student's access needs or approved accommodations versus the disability.

What are suggestions for working with students with disabilities?

While each student is unique, start from a “people-first” perspective. Below is a link to some general themes of how to engage with students.

Tip: Check out [Guide to Support Students with Disabilities](#).

How many students have learning disabilities?

Various studies have put the prevalence around 6-8% percent of the *school-age population*.



What type of characteristics would I possibly notice in my classroom?

Characteristics vary, but here are some examples of characteristics.

Examples of Characteristics: Please understand that no one of these problems is diagnostic; that is, many people show these problems from time to time. Use the problems listed here as hints rather than markers.

Does the individual have difficulty with the following:

Remembering newly learned information?

Staying organized?

Understanding what he or she reads?

Getting along with peers or coworkers?

Finding or keeping a job?

Understanding jokes that are subtle or sarcastic?

Making appropriate remarks?

Expressing thoughts verbally or in writing?

Following directions?

Using basic skills (such as reading, writing, spelling, and math)?

Using proper grammar in spoken or written communication?

Remembering and sticking to deadlines?

If you are concerned about a student, please discuss your observations with the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations. It is helpful to document the conditions under which the student has difficulties (What tasks were involved? In what sort of environment were problems observed? What instruction was provided to the student about how to accomplish the tasks?)

Note which instructional situations are problematic, together with an indication as to which methods or approaches are most successful with that student.