

# **Meridian Community College**

## **Disability Support Services Handbook for Students with Disabilities**

**Prepared by:**

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**Meridian Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion or age in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities. Compliance with Section 504 is coordinated by Ms. Soraya Welden, Dean of Student Services, Ivy Hall, 910 Highway 19 North, Meridian, MS 39307. 601-484-8628, Fax: 601-484-8635, E-mail: [swelden@meridiancc.edu](mailto:swelden@meridiancc.edu). Compliance with Title IX is coordinated by Mr. Derek Mosley, Social Science Instructor, Smith Hall, 910 Highway 19 North, Meridian, MS 39307. 601-553-3453, Fax: 601-484-8635, E-mail: [dmosley@meridiancc.edu](mailto:dmosley@meridiancc.edu).**

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## Welcome

**WELCOME** to Meridian Community College! You are about to embark on a journey that may very well change your life in ways you never dreamed possible. Your journey from this point will require courage, commitment, and the ability to see beyond the here and now. In many ways, you will be changing yourself, your view of the world, and the way other people see you. So often students say, “If only things were different, I could...,” and then the visualization stops. So, change yourself, modify your life plans, look into the future, and cast yourself into a different role. In the process of taking control of your own destiny, you often influence the way other people treat you. You will encourage respect and admiration. This also can include the way you view yourself. By changing yourself in small ways, you can change one aspect of your world for the better. Let the journey begin....

Students with disabilities can work with Disability Support Services staff to make their dreams a reality. It takes time, it takes commitment, and it takes the courage to say, “I need help.” Most students would rather pretend that they are capable of attending college, working, maintaining relationships, and keeping their worlds in perfect order than to appear that they are unable to manage all of these at once. The truth is that we all need assistance whether we have a disabling condition or not.

The College offers a number of services to help students with disabilities succeed in their academic work. To arrange for services, you should contact the Coordinator of Disability Support Services to discuss your experiences and expectations to help identify what types of accommodations you might need and what information needs to be gathered to support those accommodations. There are multiple sources and types of information that are useful, including educational records (such as an assessment team report), diagnostic reports, letters from health care providers, records of past accommodations from testing agencies or employers, and/or letters or records from local, state, or federal agencies (such as a Social Security Disability Insurance determination or Veterans Affairs records).

**The faculty and staff at Meridian Community College (MCC) look forward to working with you to help you reach your educational goals!**

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this handbook is to outline the policies and procedures for disability support services at Meridian Community College (MCC). The office of Disability Support Services (DSS) is committed to providing a supportive and challenging environment for all students with disabilities who attend the College. Additionally, the College and the DSS office will work to provide students with disabilities a learning and community environment that affords them full participation in and equal access to academic and other student services offered by the College, and reasonable accommodations for their disabilities. Accommodations and services for students with disabilities are coordinated by the DSS.

Meridian Community College provides reasonable and appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities that severely restrict those individuals from doing activities that are of central importance to their daily lives (as amended in ADA Amendments Act of 2008). Examples of common accommodations include classroom modifications, adaptive equipment, testing arrangements, and volunteer note-takers. Documentation of a student's disability must be current and comprehensive, must include a specific diagnosis, and must be from a qualified professional.

This handbook outlines MCC's policies and procedures for disability support services; however, there are no absolutes. Each student is evaluated and served on an individual basis. Furthermore, accommodations and services are provided in accordance with each student's documented **disability** and **specific functional limitations**. The student may not qualify for all of the accommodations contained in this handbook.

### **Goals for Providing Services to Students with Disabilities**

1. To work individually with qualified students with disabilities to provide reasonable accommodations that will allow the students to demonstrate their academic capabilities at MCC.
2. To assist qualified students with disabilities through the transition process from high school to MCC.
3. To work collaboratively with other entities at MCC, including faculty, to ensure equal access for all students.

The Disability Support Services Office serves as the central contact point for students with disabilities. The goal of the Disability Support Services Office is to provide an accessible environment to ensure that an individual is viewed on the basis of ability, not disability. Students are seen individually to determine accommodations needed for them to be successful. In addition to coordinating and providing services for students with documented disabilities, the Disability Support Services Office provides guidance and technical assistance to faculty and staff working with students.

**Disability Support Services (DSS) Staff**

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Phone: 601-581-3523

If you have a question or concern that is not discussed in this handbook, please do not hesitate to email the DSS Office at [kmcneel@meridiancc.edu](mailto:kmcneel@meridiancc.edu) for additional assistance.

It is your responsibility to make yourself familiar with the policies and procedures for receiving accommodations at Meridian Community College. Keep this handbook in your possession for future reference. If you misplace this handbook, please request an additional copy or refer to the Disability Support Services Handbook on Meridian Community College's Web ([www.meridiancc.edu](http://www.meridiancc.edu)) page by clicking on the Disability Symbol.

## **Disability Laws and Their Implications for Meridian Community College**

There are three laws that ensure the civil rights of people with disabilities on the college level:

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation act of 1973
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008

### **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

**Section 504** prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs, public and private, that receive federal financial assistance. Any person who

1. has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more life activities,
2. has a record of such impairment, or
3. is regarded as having such impairment,

can qualify for coverage under this law.

At the time, this was groundbreaking legislation for people with disabilities; however, over the years, it was realized that the law fell short of providing comprehensive disability reform. One of the main problems was that it covered only institutions receiving federal funding not the private sector. Therefore, people with disabilities were still discriminated against on a large scale. This led to the development and passage of the **Americans with Disabilities Act**.

### **The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990**

This legislation was based on **Section 504** and then improved upon. The ADA was the first comprehensive legislation to apply to both public and private sectors of society. It was groundbreaking legislation for people with disabilities!

The ADA covers five titles. Postsecondary education is regulated by Title II.

### **ADA Amendments Act of 2008**

Congress intended that **Section 504** and the **ADA of 1990** would provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities and provide broad coverage. However, the spirit of the law was not upheld as Congress intended. The court system was spending too much time determining if a person had a disability rather than if that person had been discriminated against. Congress determined that the definition of a disability was too narrowly interpreted under the current laws. As a result, many individuals with documented disabilities were denied coverage. Therefore, the **ADA Amendments Act of 2008** was passed.

While the amendment kept the basic definition of a disability, it clarified and broadened that definition increasing the number of people who would be covered under the law. The **ADAA** requires that courts interpreting the ADA and other Federal disability nondiscrimination laws focus on whether the covered entity has discriminated, rather than whether the individual seeking the law's protection has an impairment that fits within the technical definition of the term “disability.”

Several Court Cases were cited by Congress when writing the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. These cases include

- Sutton vs. United Air Lines – A Supreme Court Case
- Kentucky, Inc. vs. Williams – A Supreme Court Case

**Disability defined** – The term “disability” means, with respect to an individual,

- A. a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major activities of an individual,
- B. a record of such impairment, or
- C. being regarded as having such an impairment.

The Amendments Act contains two non-exhaustive lists of major life activities. The first list expands the examples set forth in the ADA regulation at 28 C.F.R. § 35.104, and the second list provides examples of “major bodily functions” that are now considered major life activities under the law. The list of major life activities in the ADA now includes, but is not limited to,

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> caring for oneself      | <input type="checkbox"/> bending              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> performing manual tasks | <input type="checkbox"/> speaking             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> seeing                  | <input type="checkbox"/> breathing            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hearing                 | <input type="checkbox"/> learning             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> eating                  | <input type="checkbox"/> reading              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sleeping                | <input type="checkbox"/> concentrating        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> walking                 | <input type="checkbox"/> thinking             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> standing                | <input type="checkbox"/> communicating        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> lifting                 | <input type="checkbox"/> working <sup>9</sup> |

The list of major bodily functions that are now considered major life activities includes, but is not limited to, functions of the immune system; normal cell growth; and digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions. *See* Amendments Act § 4(a) (codified as amended at 42 U.S.C. § 12102).<sup>10</sup>

The examples of major life activities in the Section 504 regulatory provisions, at 34 C.F.R. § 104.3(j)(2)(ii), predate the Amendments Act, and are not exhaustive. Because the definition of “disability” in the ADA applies to Section 504, all the examples of major life activities listed in the Amendments Act also constitute major life activities under Section 504.

## **Disability Support Services**

### **Policy and Procedures**

Students with a disability are encouraged to register with Disability Support Services in order to receive accommodations. Students do not have to self-identify, however in order to receive accommodations students must complete the following steps:

- Schedule an Intake Appointment with the Disability Support Services Office.
- Call 601-484-8777 to make an appointment or email [kmcneel@meridiancc.edu](mailto:kmcneel@meridiancc.edu).
- Complete the Intake Paperwork.
- Read the Disability Services Student Handbook.
- Obtain and provide the necessary documentation to the Disability Support Services Office.
- Review your intake form and documentation with the Disability Support Services Coordinator to determine eligibility for services and accommodations:
  - If you are approved for services, complete accommodations forms. It is the student's responsibility to request accommodation forms at the beginning of each semester.
  - If additional information or documentation is requested, work with your health care professional or counselor to provide the additional requested information.
  - If you are not approved for services, contact the Disability Support Services Office if you have any questions.

#### **It is the student's responsibility to:**

- Discuss their accommodations with their instructor
- To remind the instructor that you will be using your accommodations during quizzes and tests
- To let the Disability Support Services Office know if there are any problems with the implementation of their accommodations

#### **It is the instructor's responsibility to:**

- Provide accommodations to students who qualify for accommodations
- To talk to the student regarding their disability
- Ensure the student understands the assignments
- Notify the Disability Support Services Office if there are any problems



## **For Students Taking Online Classes at MCC from other Campuses**

- Meet with DSS staff to complete an accommodation form to be sent to the instructor of your online class.
- For students taking an online course from another college it is your responsibility to inform your instructor that you are registered with Disability Support Services and receive accommodations at MCC. When you complete your accommodation form for the online class from another college you will need to have the instructor's email address.
- The Director of eLearning at MCC will send your accommodation form to the other college's eLearning office once it is received from the MCC DSS staff.

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations meet with the DSS Coordinator each semester to determine accommodations appropriate for each class. The DSS Office will e-mail instructors the accommodation forms. A signed copy of accommodation forms will be placed in each student's folder located in DSS Office, and one copy will be given to the student.

### **1. Reasonable Accommodations**

Reasonable accommodations represent efforts to remove or minimize obstacles that may otherwise deny students with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate fully and fairly in the educational process. Providing reasonable accommodations is essentially a problem-solving process. Reasonable accommodations make the necessary adjustments that will enable students with disabilities to have access to the same programs and services available to other students and to have their academic performance evaluated without the limiting effects of their disability. The objective of such adjustments is to accommodate the functional limitations of a student's disability while maintaining the integrity of the course or program.

### **2. Accommodation Requests**

Accommodations are considered on a case-by-case, semester-by-semester basis. Specific accommodations will depend upon the nature and requirements of a particular student.

The Disability Support Services Office (DSS) will determine reasonable accommodations for a particular student's needs based on

- (a) the student's documentation,
- (b) recommendations of the student's physician or other appropriate professional evaluation, and
- (c) consultation with the student and with faculty as needed.

The Disability Support Services Office will prepare a formal accommodation form and send it to the appropriate instructor(s). It is the student's responsibility to discuss the details of the needed accommodation(s) with the instructor(s). The discussion is both a courtesy and an opportunity for the student and instructor(s) to consider specific adaptations and potential situations. A copy of the accommodation form will be e-mailed to instructors by the DSS Office.

## **Maintain communication**

- With the DSS Office – It is important to work closely with the DSS staff.
- With your instructors – Stay in contact throughout the semester with your instructors. Your instructors want you to do well in their class. They are available during office hours to assist you if needed.

## **Implementation of Academic Accommodations**

The course/program instructor is responsible for implementing academic accommodations to the fullest extent possible. Faculty or staff should contact the Disability Support Services Office if assistance in implementation is needed.

**The student is responsible for the timely reporting of any dissatisfaction he/she may have with the implementation of an accommodation to the Disability Support Services Office.**

## **A. Medical Emergency Response Procedure for Students with Disabilities**

- It is the student's responsibility to notify DSS and his/her individual instructor(s) of medical conditions that might result in an emergency situation. Medical conditions that would require notification include, but are not limited to, seizure disorders, heart disease, abnormal heart rhythms, diabetes, hypoglycemia, cardiomyopathy, asthma, other breathing disorders, fainting spells, blackouts, chronic fatigue syndrome, severe arthritis, and head injury. Students with any medical condition that may cause an emergency should inform DSS to ensure proper care.
- Students should complete the Individual Emergency Plan form. **(See Forms pg. 36).**
- If a medical emergency should occur while a student is on campus, 911 will be called and an ambulance requested. The student may be transported to an emergency room. The student has the right to refuse transport and care. Prior notification to MCC personnel will assist in adherence to the student's wishes. Medical emergencies will require relocating students to a safe environment, for example, moving a student out of a classroom, the cafeteria, etc.
- The DSS staff members are not medical personnel. Therefore, 911 should be called first for a student to receive appropriate medical attention. DSS should be notified for support of the student, which includes notifying family/friends of an emergency, providing health information were the student unable to do so, and serving as a liaison with faculty following an emergency.

## **B. Resident Life**

- MCC offers physically accessible housing facilities for students with disabilities. Students with special needs for housing should identify and request these needs on their

housing applications. An application for campus housing is processed by the date of receipt of the housing application. Submission of a housing application does not guarantee on-campus residence/housing. Room/housing assignments are assigned based on the order in which the applications were received. A student requiring the service of a personal care attendant may note this requirement and the attendant's name on his/her application. The students may request the attendant as a roommate. There is a residence room charge for an attendant.

### **C. MCC Cafeteria Services**

DSS works with the food services director to coordinate accommodations and special nutritional services for students with disabilities.

### **D. Intramurals/Fitness Center**

For students, faculty, and staff who wish to participate in leisure, fitness, or competitive programs, MCC provides a variety of recreational and fitness-related activities.

In pursuing the goal of equal access for all students, the college strives to remove structural and programmatic barriers. MCC is receptive to the needs of students with disabilities across academic and non-academic programs. Cooperation and coordination between DSS staff and faculty enhance the success of the total program.

## **Types of Available Accommodations**

**Accommodations** are determined by the student's documentation and interview with the Disability Support Services Coordinator. Accommodations are made on a class-by-class basis and the individual needs of the student. Accommodations are agreed upon by the student and the DSS coordinator. The coordinator e-mails the accommodation forms to each instructor. **The student is responsible for requesting accommodations prior to the beginning of each semester.** Services and reasonable accommodations may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Testing Accommodations** include extra time to test (up to double time), individual or small group testing, a reader for tests, and a scribe for tests.
- Note takers** for those classes in which the instructor does not post notes online. (For most classes, the instructor posts notes in Canvas for students to access at their convenience.) **IMPORTANT: For those classes in which notes are posted on Canvas, please print off notes three slides to a page and take the notes with you to class.** Having a hard copy of the notes with you during the lecture will help you keep up with what the instructor is discussing, and you can take additional notes. The better prepared for class you are the more likely you will have a successful outcome in the course.
- Accessible classroom, location, and furniture**

- ❑ **Interpreters for the deaf (as available)**
- ❑ **Career guidance**
- ❑ **Counseling** – referrals are made to WEEMS Mental Health Center or to Psychology Associates.
- ❑ **Class registration assistance**
- ❑ **Tutoring** is available but limited due to time and the number of students served through the DSS. Referrals are made to appropriate labs for tutoring on campus. The labs that provide individual tutoring on campus are the Student Success Center, the Math Lab, the English & Reading Lab, and the Computer Connections Lab.

### **Documentation and Eligibility**

In order to qualify for accommodations, the Disability Support Services Office requires **documentation which substantiates the presence of a disability, indicates the impact on one or more major life activities, and demonstrates functional limitations of the condition.** The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) allows for colleges to set reasonable standards for documentation, and these standards may vary from school to school. The documentation required establishes eligibility for services and is used for determining reasonable accommodations. Eligibility is determined based on the information given during your intake appointment, your historical information (such as IEP and 504 plans), and the current documentation provided. The Disability Support Services Coordinator will review this information to determine both eligibility and appropriate accommodations. For detailed information regarding guidelines for different types of conditions, please refer to our documentation guidelines in the appendices of this handbook. Students should provide evaluators with the guidelines in order to ensure that appropriate assessments are conducted and the documentation provided meets the eligibility requirements for Meridian Community College’s Disability Support Services.

**The individual must be otherwise qualified.** In education, this means the individual meets the academic and technical standards for admission to the College. If applying to a workforce education program, the student must meet the admission requirement for the program to which one is applying. To be eligible for disability support services, the student must meet the definition of “disability” as defined under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), or the ADA Amendments Act of 2008.

**Students with disabilities must self-identify to receive accommodations and special services.** Self-identification involves the student registering with the Disability Support Services Office and presenting appropriate documentation verifying the disability. Self-identification is voluntary. However, Meridian Community College can be of service to students only to the

extent that their individual needs are made known. Students and prospective students are encouraged to make early contact with Disability Support Services.

This handbook outlines MCC's policies and procedures for disability support services; however, there are no absolutes, students are evaluated and served on an individual basis.

Accommodations and services are provided in accordance with each student's documented **disability** and **specific functional limitations**. The student may not qualify for all of the accommodations contained in this handbook.

## **Termination of Services**

A student can lose accommodations for a class if he/she is not actively participating. For example, if a student sleeps through class, the teacher may request that the student lose his/her note taker accommodation. Another example would be if the student repeatedly misses class. Students are not entitled to use the accommodations as a substitute for class attendance. Each case will be evaluated on an individual basis, and the circumstances will be reviewed before services are terminated.

### **Accommodation Appeal Process**

The instructor or student should direct questions and concerns regarding accommodations to the Disability Support Services Office. It is important that any disagreements be resolved expeditiously so that the student's participation/course activity and progress are not compromised. If an agreement is not reached concerning the accommodation request after consultation among the student, the instructor, and personnel from the Disability Support Services Office, it is incumbent upon the dissenting party to file a formal appeal immediately. The appeal should be written and should state the basis and rationale of the appeal. Appeals regarding courses and curricula should be directed to the Dean of Student Services.

Appeals involving accommodations for participation in student services and activities should be filed with the Dean of Student Services. With access to credible experts, the Dean of Student Services or the Dean's designees will consider the appeal and render a final decision, which will be communicated to all parties. During the review and appeal process, the student is entitled to receive the accommodations determined by the Disability Support Services Office.

### **Student Grievance Procedures**

Meridian Community College provides procedures for students to resolve grievances with the college. Specified appeal procedures are established to assure the timely and appropriate consideration of each grievance. Student grievances usually start at the department or division level and the resolution is sought at that level. The College recognizes and accepts Mississippi Commission on College Accreditation (MCCA) oversight in resolving complaints from students taking distance education under the auspices of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement

(SARA). Should further arbitration prove necessary, the student should request a meeting with the appropriate Dean or Associate Vice President of the respective department or division. It is the desire of the College to settle grievances as expeditiously as possible. If the Dean or Associate Vice President of the respective department or division cannot handle the grievance and a mutually acceptable solution be reached, the grievance may be referred to the Meridian Community College Student Appeals Council by the Vice President for Operations. It is the responsibility of the College to provide students with written notification regarding the result of the grievance hearing.

The Mississippi Commission on College Accreditation has a published student complaint policy found at [http://www.mississippi.edu/mcca/student\\_complaint\\_process.asp](http://www.mississippi.edu/mcca/student_complaint_process.asp). To file a complaint, a student should complete the complaint form available on the website. MCCA is located at 3825 Ridgewood Road, Jackson, MS 39211 and can be reached by telephone 601.432.6647.

### **Student Appeals Procedure**

Students who are subject to institutional discipline as related to academic or campus conduct issues have the right to appeal decisions rendered by the appropriate administrator\* to the Meridian Community College Student Appeals Council. The Council Chairperson and members will be appointed annually by the President.

Once a decision on any case of student discipline has been rendered by the appropriate administrator supervising the institutional component related to the case, the student has two working days to notify that administrator in writing of his/her desire to appeal the decision. Students are encouraged to base their appeals on facts which they think may not have been considered in the original decision. The appropriate administrator will then notify the Chairperson of the Student Appeals Council of the subject's desire to appeal.

The Chairperson will convene the Council within five working days of notification of the appeal and notify the student of the time and place of the hearing. A minimum of three days' notice is required for the committee members to review the files before the committee meets, with most meetings to be scheduled on Fridays. A quorum of five faculty and/or staff members is required for an official hearing before the Committee. Two alternate faculty or staff members in addition to the eight regular committee members should be appointed to accommodate unforeseen circumstances where Committee members are excused or rescued with a quorum being otherwise unobtainable.

The student's failure to appear at the hearing within ten minutes of the designated time will constitute his/her acceptance of the Administration's original decision on the case.

At the hearing, the Council will consider the Administration's findings on the case as well as the student's rebuttal. Each side has the right to call witnesses in support of his/her case, and each side has the responsibility to notify those witnesses of the time and place of the Council meeting. Witnesses will participate in the hearing only during the time that they are called to testify. Hearings will be recorded.

Having heard all testimony, the Council will retire to decide the case. The Council has the authority to (1) uphold the Administration's initial decision on the case; (2) reverse the decision; **or** (3) modify the Administration's decision. The Chairperson will have the responsibility to notify the VP of Operations and the MCC President of the Council's findings. The VP of Operations will have the responsibility of notifying the student(s) of the Council's decision in writing (to be either hand-delivered or sent via certified mail). The Council's decision will be the final level of institutional appeal.

The intent of this policy is to adjudicate such matters in a timely manner so that the student will be fully aware of his/her standing with the College.

*\* Appropriate administrator will likely mean the Dean of Academic Affairs or the Dean's designee in the case of general education classes; the Associate Vice President for Workforce Education or his/her designee in the case of career and technical education programs; and the Dean of Student Services in the case of campus conduct issues unrelated to classroom activities.*

## Campus Accessibility and Safety

To ensure physical accessibility, MCC strives to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Accessibility Guidelines (ADAG) for buildings and facilities. Students should report ADA accessibility problems to the Director of DSS. **For safety purposes, it is recommended that students with disabilities keep a cellular phone with them at all times.**

### Elevators

**Students who are dependent on elevators may wish to request that their classes be held on the first floor of a building.** This request should be made to DSS at pre-registration to ensure ample time for alternate room arrangements. Students should not allow themselves to be carried up or down stairs by faculty or other students. If a student cannot get to class because of a non-working elevator, he/she may request that the class be moved until such time the elevator is in working order. Students should immediately report a faulty elevator to MCC faculty or staff.

**In the event that an elevator is out of service, students dependent on elevators should never try to walk up the stairs. Any absences due to elevator problems will be excused.**

Students who miss a class due to the above circumstance may request alternate means of obtaining class content and materials. This could include a tape recording of class lectures, copies of a professor's notes and class notes, or individual make-up sessions with the professor.

### Construction

If a student is having difficulty traveling a route or accessing a building because of construction, he/she should call the DSS for assistance. Students should also report accessibility or travel hazards to the DSS coordinator.

### Fire Safety

1. If a fire alarm goes off and students are on the first floor of a building, they should leave through the closest accessible exit.
2. Students on upper floors should not attempt to use the elevator but should move to the nearest enclosed stairwell. If the stairwell is not enclosed, students should remain in the hall next to the stairs.
3. In case of smoke, students should move to the closest restroom.
4. Students should call or notify a faculty member to call Campus Police and tell the dispatcher that a fire alarm sounded and that they cannot exit the upper floor because of a disability. Students should state their name and exact location. The dispatcher will inform the fire department of the students' location. Students should stay on the line with the dispatcher and wait for further instructions.



If there is a real fire, the dispatcher or the fire department will determine if the elevators are safe to use and will inform the students. Students should remember that firefighters are especially trained in evacuation techniques and students will be safer if they are familiar with and follow MCC's fire policy guidelines.

□ **Evacuation Procedures for Persons with Disabilities**

A primary concern of the Disability Support Services Office and Campus Police is the safety of individuals with disabilities on campus in the event of an emergency. DSS and Campus Police want to ensure the optimal method of safe evacuation of students with disabilities, as well as the appropriate response in the event of medical emergency. In order to facilitate safe and prompt evacuation and proper emergency response, students registering with DSS are asked to complete an Individual Emergency Plan (**See pg. 36**).

## **Policy on Service Animals**

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 define a service animal as any **dog** that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability.

The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.

Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of the ADA. However, there is a possible exception for miniature horses. An entity shall provide access or shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of a miniature horse by an individual with a disability if the miniature horse has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with a disability. There are additional assessment factors for miniature horses. To determine whether to allow a miniature horse into a specific facility, the entity must consider the following: the type, size, and weight of the miniature horse and whether the facility can accommodate these features; whether the individual has sufficient control of the miniature horse; whether the miniature horse is housebroken; and whether the miniature horse's presence in a specific facility compromises legitimate safety requirements that are necessary for safe operation.

### **Commonly Asked Questions Regarding Services Animals**

**1. My animal does not perform one of the tasks listed above, but it's a big dog and is a deterrent to criminal activity, which is important to my well-being. Does that count?**

The crime deterrent effect of an animal's presence does not constitute work or tasks for purposes of the ADA definition of service animal.

**2. My animal does not perform any of the tasks listed above, but it provides emotional support for me. I have a letter from my doctor saying that the animal provides comfort to me and should be with me at all times. Does that meet the definition?**

No, the ADA regulations are very specific. The provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship does not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of the definition.

## **Policy on eLearning Students with Disabilities**

### **What is eLearning?**

Classes in which students can take that are entirely online are called eLearning courses. Students do not attend a face-to-face class with the instructor. Instead students choose a time and place in which they log onto their class to complete assignments. Online courses and course content is delivered through the learning management system, Canvas. It is recommended that students login to Canvas at least three times per week to stay up-to-date with the required assignments and readings.

- Students must have a computer or regular access to a computer and a reliable internet connection in order to keep up with weekly assignments.
- Students must know how to operate a computer and do the following:
  - Email your instructor
  - Complete assignments, discussion boards, quizzes, etc. in Canvas
  - Use Chat rooms to complete group projects with classmates
  - Audio conferencing
  - Conducting research
  - And more, depending on the class and the instructor
- Online classes are recommended for students who are proactive and self-motivated. A student will be dropped from the class if they do not log onto Canvas and complete their work on a weekly basis.
- Students taking an online course are required to take a minimum of one but no more than four proctored exams per course, depending on the credit hour of the course. Students can sign up and take their proctored exams for no charge at any of the 52 approved MSVCC testing centers in the state of Mississippi. If a student chooses not to take a proctored exam at one of the 52 MSVCC locations, the alternative testing center could charge a fee for testing, which is incurred to the student. The possibility of a proctored exam fee would include the use of the virtual proctoring partner company. All proctoring fees incurred by testing centers outside the approved MSVCC locations and virtual proctoring are the responsibility of the student.
- Students must contact the DSS staff at MCC to schedule an appointment to take a proctored exam. Students will not be allowed to use the special populations testing rooms without a DSS staff member present. If a DSS staff member is not present, the student has the option to test in the lab with the other students or contact the DSS staff to schedule/reschedule the appointment.

## **Policy on Testing Accommodations for Students with Documented Disabilities**

Purpose: To ensure provisions of federally mandated testing accommodations for qualified students with disabilities

Sources: The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 *United States Code* 701-796  
The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA),  
42 *United States Code* 12101 *et seq.*

The process of determining reasonable accommodation and appropriate testing accommodations for qualified students with disabilities are a collaborative one between the Disability Support Services (DSS) Office, the instructor, and qualified student. It is the responsibility of the DSS Office to determine student eligibility for accommodations, to recommend the reasonable and appropriate accommodations for each class, and to facilitate the approved accommodations in consultation with the student. It is the responsibility of the instructor to determine the course standards and to design appropriate methods to measure student knowledge. It is the responsibility of the student to prepare fully for examinations, to inform the instructor that certain individual accommodations will be necessary, and to request the accommodations in a timely manner.

### **POLICY**

Students must complete an intake form in the Disability Support Services Office and provide required documentation to the DSS Office clearly supporting the need for testing accommodations. The assigned DSS personnel will evaluate the documentation, determine eligibility for testing accommodations and meet with students on an individual basis to discuss reasonable and appropriate options. Testing accommodations may include:

1. Extended time to test (up to double time) – the purpose of accommodations is equal access, not advantage. In making recommendations for extended testing time, the Special Populations Office will consider the students' need for a reasonable time extension. For this reason, untimed testing is not considered a reasonable accommodation.
2. Use of a reader, adapted equipment, interpreter, or alternative print format
3. Individual or small group testing is available to students with a documented disability

**See Student Exam Agreement – Form 4, page 37**

**See Test Authorization Form – (To Be Completed by the Instructor) – Form 5, page 38**

## **Policy on Tape Recording Lectures as an Accommodation**

### **Can an instructor forbid a student with a disability to use a tape recorder in class?**

No, not if it has been approved as an accommodation for the student's disability in providing meaningful access to the educational experience. Tape recorders are one of the accommodations specifically mentioned in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

#### **According to the regulations:**

- Students with disabilities who are unable to take or read notes have the right to record class lectures only for their personal study.
- Lectures taped for personal study may not be shared with other people without the consent of the lecturer.
- Tape-recorded lectures may not be used in any way against the faculty member, other lecturers, or students whose classroom comments are taped as part of the class activity.
- Information contained in the tape-recorded lecture is protected under federal copyright laws and may not be published or quoted without the express consent of the lecturer and without giving proper identity and credit to the lecturer.

#### **Instructor's Right to Privacy in the Classroom:**

If an instructor objects to the use of a tape recorder, it is typically because they maintain that their right to privacy of information discussed in the classroom is being violated. The instructor's right to privacy does not override the student's right to accommodation. It is the responsibility of the DSS Office to see that the instructor's concern for privacy is respected and addressed while still assuring the availability of accommodation for the student. In many instances, this has been accomplished through the adoption of a contract between the instructor and student that details the specific limited use of the tapes and arranges for their disposal when the function has been fulfilled.

#### **Classes that Involve Self-Disclosure from Students**

Occasionally, instructors object to the use of a tape recorder in classes that involve a great deal of self-disclosure from students as part of the class, fearing that the tape recorder will inhibit students from freely sharing. The use of a tape recorder is to replace the student's note taking ability. If these open discussions are not appropriate subject matter for any student to be taking notes, it would be appropriate to ask the student with disability to turn off the tape recorder during these periods.

Students may be asked to turn off their tape recorder in a nursing course or other course in one of the colleges health education programs if information being covered is confidential or sensitive material regarding an actual patient or client.

**See Recorder Accommodation Agreement – Form 6, page 39**

## Confidentiality and Release of Information

- Disability-related information received to support requests for accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services will be treated as confidential and shared on a need-to-know basis only. All disability-related information is housed in the Disability Support Services Office. Only staff members working with Disability Services have access to these files.
- Disability information may be released only when the student gives permission. See the **Release of Records Information (page 35)**.
- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), also known as the Buckley Amendment, and the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) do not allow faculty or people other than the ones listed above access to disability-related information.
- Students may choose to inform faculty of their disability on their accommodation form. However, students have a right not to disclose their specific disability.
- Disability Support Services will retain all disability documentation for three years after the student leaves the college.

## Student Code of Conduct

Disability Support Services is a professional environment that provides services and accommodations for students with disabilities at Meridian Community College (MCC). In order to best serve students, it is expected that everyone will be courteous to one another and to the Disability Support Services staff. Profanity, aggressive threats (verbally or physically), yelling, slamming doors or items, and/or failing to comply with Disability Support Services guidelines are considered unacceptable.

Disruptive and disorderly conduct and/or failure to comply with the guidelines set by instructors and the Disability Support Services Office may result in Campus Police and/or the Office of Student Services being contacted. The same general expectations of behavior apply to all students, including those with disabilities. **Regardless of a student's disability, each student must adhere to all classroom and campus rules.**

**All students, regardless of disability, must conform to MCC's code of conduct. Students who behave in a manner that places others in danger may be dismissed from class and/or the College according to ADA's definition of "direct threat." Students who are disruptive in class may be dropped from a class if their behavior is preventing other students from learning. Prior to dropping a student from a class, an instructor may give the student a warning in order to allow the student to alter his/her behavior.**

## Services That Are Not Required by Colleges

### Personal Care Assistant (PCA)

Meridian Community College makes every reasonable effort to accommodate individuals with disabilities as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. In keeping with this commitment, Personal Care Attendants (PCAs) may be necessary to address the personal needs of a student with a disability so that he/she can participate in the College's activities, services, and programs. In order for the student who requires PCA services to have the same independent experience as all other college students, it is in the student's best interest to hire a PCA. An otherwise qualified student who requires a PCA must make arrangements to provide for his/her own personal attendant service. **The College is not required under the ADA to assume coordination or financial responsibilities for personal care attendant services.**

It is the student's responsibility to

- Secure a PCA prior to attending any college-related activity such as student orientation, placement testing, registration, and class attendance. (The College will not be responsible for providing a PCA on an interim basis.)
- Ensure that each PCA registers with Disability Support Services and signs the PCA agreement each academic year.
- Ensure that if personnel changes occur during the year, the student and the new PCA sign the agreement form.
- Direct the activities of the PCA while on campus.
- Have a back-up or alternative plan of action should the regular PCA not be available to work with the student on a particular day or in a particular class.
- Follow the College's policies.
- Pay for all PCA services, including but not limited to, housing and meal plans if living on campus. (Students who live on campus must have the same sex PCAs.)

The PCA is expected to

- Follow all applicable College policies, rules, regulations, and procedures. (For example, phones must be turned off during class.)
- Assist the student before and after class.
- Allow the student to take responsibility for his/her own progress or behavior.
- Refrain from asking questions of faculty or staff on behalf of the student. The student is responsible for asking.

□ **Transportation**

Transportation is not a mandated College accommodation under 504/ADA unless it is provided to all students. Transportation to, from, and around campus is a personal responsibility. Students are responsible for arranging for personal mobility needs. Students with mobility problems are encouraged to visit the campus before classes begin to assess their ability to move across campus.

In some instances, students may need to explore the option of acquiring a motorized chair or scooter, or arranging for a friend or personal care attendant to assist them. Students with mobility problems are also encouraged to schedule their back-to-back classes in buildings located in close proximity to each other or to schedule free periods between classes to allow time to travel to the next class. DSS is not responsible for transporting students to and from class.

In the event of an emergency situation, assistance may be provided by the Campus Police.

□ **Tutoring**

Tutoring is not a mandated College accommodation under 504/ADA. Tutoring services are provided by the Success Center, the Math Lab, the English & Reading Lab, and the Computer Connections Lab.

□ **Homework**

Students are responsible for completing their homework. The ADA does not require colleges to help students with disabilities complete their homework.



## Appendix A

### Documentation for Students with Health and Physical Disabilities

Students seeking support services from Meridian Community College on the basis of a health or physical disability will be required to submit documentation to verify eligibility. Documentation of disability and related information shall be kept in a separate file in the Disability Support Services Office. The cost and responsibility for providing this documentation **shall be borne by the student**.

**Health and Physical Disabilities** include, but are not limited to the following: mobility impairments, Multiple Sclerosis, Cerebral Palsy, spinal cord injuries, cancer, AIDS, Muscular Dystrophy, and Spina Bifida. Health and physical disabilities are considered to be in the medical domain and require the diagnosis by a qualified medical professional. Information describing the certification, licensure, and/or the professional training of individuals conducting the evaluation must be provided.

The following guidelines are provided in the interest of assuring that the evaluation and report are appropriate for documenting eligibility and identifying reasonable accommodations. **The documentation should include**

1. A clear statement of the medical diagnosis of the disability or systemic illness and information regarding how the disability limits a major life activity;
2. A description of the type and severity of current symptoms;
3. A summary assessment of procedures and evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis, including evaluation results and standardized scores if applicable;
4. Information regarding existing side effects of medication on the student's ability to meet the demands of the postsecondary environment (physical, perceptual, behavioral, or cognitive);
5. A description of treatments, medications, assistive devices/services currently prescribed or in use;
6. A description of the expected progression or stability of the disability over time. Supporting documentation and suggestions regarding academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services may be included. However, the final determination rests with the College's Disability Support Services Office.

## Appendix B

### Disability Verification for Students with Learning Disabilities

Students seeking support services from Meridian Community College on the basis of a learning disability will be required to submit documentation to verify eligibility. Documentation of disability and related information shall be kept in a separate file in the Disability Support Services Office. The cost and responsibility for providing this documentation **shall be borne by the student.**

#### Testing must be comprehensive.

##### I. *The diagnostic interview*

Because learning disabilities are most commonly manifested during childhood, historical information of learning difficulties in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education must be included. An evaluation report must also include a comprehensive diagnostic interview by a qualified evaluator who addresses relevant background information to support the diagnosis. Such information includes (a) developmental history; (b) academic history, including results of prior standardized testing, reports of classroom performance and behavior, and notable trends in academic performance; (c) family history; (d) psychosocial history; (e) medical history, including the absence of a medical basis for the present symptoms; (f) history of prior psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy; (g) discussion of any dual diagnosis of alternative or co-existing mood, behavior, neurological and/or personality disorder, and (h) a description of the presenting learning problem(s).

##### II. *The Neuropsychological or Psycho-Educational Evaluation*

The neuropsychological or psycho-educational evaluation for the diagnosis of a specific learning disability must be submitted on letterhead of the qualified professional, and it must provide clear and specific evidence of a learning disability or attention deficit.

- (a) *Aptitude*: The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised (WAIS-R) with subtest scores as the preferred instrument.
- (b) *Achievement*. Current levels of functioning in areas such as reading, written language, and mathematics are required. Acceptable instruments include the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery-Revised: Test of Achievement; The Wechsler Individual Achievement Tests (WIAT); or specific achievement tests, such as the Test of Written Language-2 (TOWL-2), Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised, or the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test. **The Slosson Intelligence Test, the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test (K-BIT) and the Wide Range Achievement Test-Revised are NOT comprehensive measures of intelligence and achievement and, therefore, are not suitable for diagnostic purposes.**
- (c) *Cognitive processing*. Specific areas of cognitive processing (e.g., short and long-term memory; sequential memory; auditory and visual perception/processing; processing speed, receptive and expressive language) must be assessed. Uses of

subtests from the WAIS-R or Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Ability are acceptable.

(d) *Social-emotional assessment, if indicated.*

NOTE: This is not intended to be an exhaustive list or to restrict assessment in other pertinent and helpful areas, such as vocational interests and aptitudes. The assessment battery is intended not only to verify the presence of a disability and the need for accommodation, but also to provide valuable information for course selection and career advisement.

**1. The report must include a specific diagnosis.**

Individual “learning styles” and/or “learning differences” in and of themselves do not constitute a learning disability. The nature and severity of the **functional limitation(s)** must be supported by test data, academic history, and anecdotal and clinical observations that may include the student’s level of motivation, study skills, and other non-cognitive factors. These findings must support the fact that an individual’s functional limitations are due to stated disabilities.

**2. Actual test scores must be provided.**

Standard scores must be provided for all normed measures. Percentiles are also acceptable; grade equivalents are not acceptable unless standard scores and/or percentiles are also included. The assessment must show evidence of discrepant intra-individual measures. The particular profile of the student’s strengths and weaknesses must provide a rationale for the accommodations that are recommended.

**3. Tests used to document eligibility must be technically sound.**

The tests used must be reliable, valid, and standardized for use with an adult population. The test findings should document both the nature and severity of the learning disabilities.

**4. A description of requested accommodations including the rationale must be provided.**

The diagnostic report must include specific recommendations for accommodations and relevant recommendations regarding the curriculum and testing considerations. A detailed explanation must be provided as to why each accommodation is recommended and should be correlated to specific test results or clinical observations. Any accommodation or auxiliary aid provided in the past should be discussed, including information about specific conditions under which the accommodations were used (e.g., standardized testing, final exams, national board examinations) and whether or not they benefited the student. For example, if the diagnosed condition is a learning disability, what is the processing disorder, and what is the relationship between the disorder and the requested accommodation? Any school plan (e.g., individualized education program or 504 plan) is not sufficient in and of itself, but it can be included as part of a more comprehensive assessment battery as described earlier in this handbook.

If no prior accommodations have been provided, the qualified professional and/or student should include a detailed explanation as to why no accommodations were used in the past and why accommodations are needed at this time.

**5. A qualified professional must conduct the evaluation.**

The person conducting and rendering diagnoses of specific learning disabilities must be qualified to do so. Experience working with an adult population is preferred.

The name, title, date(s) of testing, and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about license or certification (e.g., licensed psychologist) as well as the areas of specialization, employment, and state in which the individual practices should be clearly stated. Use of diagnostic terminology indicating a specific learning disability by someone whose training is not consistent with the criteria herein does not meet eligibility requirements. All reports must be typed and otherwise legible.

In some instances, MCC may need further clarification regarding the student's specific need for accommodations by an appropriately trained expert(s) of its choice, at no expense to the student. This practice is generally reserved for a small percentage of cases. Students should be assured that confidentiality will be maintained.

## Appendix C

### Documentation Verification Requirements for Students with Attention-Related Disabilities

Students seeking support services from Meridian Community College for attention-related disabilities will be required to submit documentation to verify eligibility. Documentation of disability and related information shall be kept in a separate file in the Disability Support Services Office. The cost and responsibility for providing this documentation **shall be borne by the student**.

Although the more generic term *Attention Deficit Disorder* (ADD) is frequently used, for the purpose of this policy, the nomenclature of *Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder* (ADHD) provided in the American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV), or successive editions, will be utilized.

Documentation should indicate current impact of the disability. The following guidelines are provided in the interest of assuring that the evaluation and report are appropriate for documenting eligibility and identifying reasonable accommodations. The report must clearly state the names, titles, professional credentials, address, and phone numbers of the evaluators, indicate date(s) of testing, and be on official letterhead—type, dated and signed.

#### The documentation should

1. **Be prepared by a professional** who has comprehensive training in differential diagnosis and direct experience working with adolescents and adults with ADHD, which may include clinical psychologists, neurophysiologists, psychiatrists, and other relevantly trained medical doctors.
2. **Be current.** The provision of all reasonable accommodations and services is based upon the assessment of the current impact of the disability on academic performance. The diagnostic evaluation should show the current level of functioning and impact of the disability.
3. **Be comprehensive.** Minimally, areas to be addressed should include the following:
  - a. *Evidence of early and current impairment.* Diagnostic feature as presented in the DSM-IV is that ADHD is first exhibited in childhood and manifests itself in more than one setting; therefore, a comprehensive assessment typically includes a clinical summary of objective historical information garnered from sources such as transcripts, report cards, teacher comments, tutoring evaluations, psycho-educational testing, medical history, employment history, family history, and third party interviews when available;
  - b. *Alternative diagnoses or explanations should be ruled out.* Possible alternative diagnoses including medical, psychiatric disorders, and educational or cultural factors affecting the individual that may result in behaviors mimicking ADHD should be explored;
  - c. *Testing information must be relevant.* Checklists and/or surveys can supplement the diagnostic profile, but are not adequate for the diagnosis of ADHD.

4. **Provide a comprehensive interpretive summary synthesizing the evaluator's judgment for the diagnosis.** The report should include all quantitative information in standard scores and/or percentiles; all relevant developmental, familial, medical, medication, psychosocial, behavioral, and academic information; and a clear identification of the substantial limitation of a major life function presented by the ADHD.

With supporting documentation, suggestions regarding academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services may be included; however, the final determination rests with the Disability Support Services Office.

## **Appendix D**

### **Documentation Requirements for Students with**

#### **Auditory (Hearing) Disabilities**

Students seeking support services from Meridian Community College on the basis of a health or physical disability will be required to submit documentation to verify eligibility. Documentation of disability and related information shall be kept in a separate file in the Disability Support Services Office. The cost and responsibility for providing this documentation **shall be borne by the student.**

Hearing loss can range from mild to profound. Each student's hearing loss, background, courses of study, and language preferences will be considered when determining appropriate classroom accommodations. Students' self-perceptions and communication strengths are often at variance with external measures of hearing loss.

Any hearing loss evaluation would be considered to be in the medical domain and require the expertise of a credentialed audiologist (CCC–Certificate of Clinical Competence). Information describing the certification, licensure, and/or the professional training of the individual conducting the evaluation must be provided.

Documentation should indicate the current impact of the disability. The age of acceptable documentation is dependent upon the stability of the hearing loss. The following guidelines are provided in the interest of assuring that the evaluation and report are appropriate for documenting eligibility and identifying reasonable accommodations.

#### **The documentation should include**

1. a copy of the audiology report;
2. a brief description of the severity of the hearing loss;
3. a description of assistive devices/services currently prescribed or in use, including the possible effectiveness of these devices or services in an educational setting; and
4. a description of the expected progression or stability of the hearing loss over time.

With supporting documentation, suggestions regarding academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services may be included; however, the final determination rests with the Disability Support Services Office at Meridian Community College.

## Appendix E

### **Documentation Verification for Students with Visual Impairments or Who Are Blind**

Students seeking support services from Meridian Community College on the basis of a visual impairment will be required to submit documentation to verify eligibility. Documentation of disability and related information shall be kept in a separate file in the Disability Support Services Office. The cost and responsibility for providing this documentation **shall be borne by the student.**

**The definition of legal blindness is** “vision that can only be corrected to the acuity of 20/200 or higher.” Another criterion is “peripheral vision measuring 20 degrees or less.” However, students not diagnosed as legally blind may be eligible and need accommodations. Other vision issues to consider may include, but are not limited to, tracking, extreme photosensitivity, nystagmus, eyelid muscle issues, and low vision.

The following guidelines are provided in the interest of assuring that the evaluation and report are appropriate for documenting eligibility and identifying reasonable accommodations.

Any vision loss evaluation would be considered to be in the medical domain and require the expertise of a qualified licensed eye care professional.

#### **The documentation should include**

1. the date of the most recent visit, diagnosis of the eye disorder, and its pathology specific to this individual;
2. a brief description of the severity of the vision loss, and current impact or limitations;
3. any medically relevant testing results;
4. a description of assistive devices or services in an educational setting; and
5. a description of the expected progression or stability of the vision loss over time.

With supporting documentation, suggestions regarding academic adjustments and auxiliary aids may be included; however, the final determination rests with the Disability Support Services Office.



## Appendix F

### **Documentation Verification for Students with Psychological and Psychiatric Disabilities**

Students seeking support services from Meridian Community College on the basis of a health or physical disability will be required to submit documentation to verify eligibility. Documentation of disability and related information shall be kept in a separate file in the Disability Support Services Office. The cost and responsibility for providing this documentation **shall be borne by the student.**

**A *Psychological / Psychiatric disability*** is defined as “an impairment of cognitive, educational and/or social functioning caused by a disorder.” For the purpose of this policy, the definition provided in the American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and statistical Manual (DSM-IV), or successive editions, will be utilized.

Documentation should indicate the current impact of the disability. The report must be prepared by a qualified mental health professional. The following guidelines are provided in the interest of assuring that the evaluation and report are appropriate for documenting eligibility and identifying reasonable accommodations.

#### **The report should**

1. specify the nature, severity, current impact, and anticipated duration of the disability;
2. state the diagnosis in the nomenclature used by the DSM-IV, or successive editions;
3. address the student’s current ability to function in the College environment (e.g. ability to focus, organize one’s time, attend class, work in groups or alone, etc.); and
4. list medication and any current side effects that may impact the student in an educational setting.

With supporting documentation, suggestions regarding academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services may be included; however, the final determination rests with the Disability Support Services Office.

### Permission to Release Confidential Information

The purpose of this form is to obtain permission for the Disability Support Services Office to release information to faculty and staff at MCC and related agencies such as Mississippi Department of Vocational Rehabilitation that are involved in your education. It is your legal right to say, “No”; however, in order for MCC to provide the best possible learning environment and accommodations for your needs, the Disability Support Services Office needs your permission to speak with a third party when necessary.

I hereby grant permission for the Disability Support Services Office to share relevant information with my instructors and support staff.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### **Services provided at Meridian Community College will not necessarily be provided at another college or state and nationally certified exams.**

Documentation received by the Disability Support Services Office will not be forwarded to another institution or agency. When you provide documentation, a copy of the documentation will be made and given to you unless otherwise specified from the agency providing the documentation.

Documentation requirements are different from one college to another. Each college establishes policies and procedures. It is your responsibility to determine what documentation is needed to be approved for accommodations at another college or any state or national exam you may be required to take as a part of licensure.

I understand the information above and understand the accommodations I receive at MCC are not necessarily going to be granted to me at another college or exam.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**Disability Support Services**  
**Individual Emergency Plan**

Complete the following information, write in blue or black ink, and print neatly.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Disability: Briefly describe your disability. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Emergency information: Describe the most appropriate way to assist you in an emergency situation. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Warning: list those actions individuals trying to assist you should not attempt.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Emergency Situations: List appropriate actions for assistance in the event you have a personal such as, but not limited to, seizures, blackouts, anxiety attacks, and/or other situations in which you may require emergency assistance.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Who would you like for MCC to call in case of an emergency?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Other contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

What hospital do you use? \_\_\_\_\_ Who is your primary doctor? \_\_\_\_\_

List medications: \_\_\_\_\_

### Student Exam Agreement

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**To schedule an exam with DSS, I understand that I must:**

- E-mail the testing proctor at least two days prior to the test, preferably sooner if possible, to set up a time to take the test. **If you do not schedule a time to take the test with the proctor prior to coming to take the test, you may not be able to take it at that time.**
- Schedule the exam at the same time and date as the class exam, if possible. **Most exams must be taken the same day the other students take the exam. If you fail to take the test in this time frame, the test will be returned to the instructor, and the student will have to get permission from the instructor to take the test late.**
- Complete an exam once it is started. (It is the student’s responsibility to make sure he/she has enough time to complete the test before his/her next class.) **The DSS office cannot excuse you from a class because you are testing.**
- Complete the exam before the class meets again.
- Leave all personal belongings, purses, book bags, cell phones, or food outside the testing room (lockers are available in the lobby of the eLearning center) unless specified on the *Instructors Testing Instructions Form*. **If the DSS suspects academic dishonesty during an exam, it will be investigated immediately. All testers are monitored through observation and the use of cameras to ensure that cheating does not occur.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
DSS Staff Signature

**A copy of this form will be kept in the student’s file in the DSS office. The student will be given a copy of this form and be encouraged to keep it on file.**

### Test Authorization Form – To Be Completed by the Instructor

This form must be completed and attached to the test or emailed to the testing proctor or the DSS Coordinator through campus mail.

Testing accommodations are provided in the Holliday E-Learning Lab. There are times when the number of students being tested exceeds the number of testing rooms that are available (there are ten individual testing rooms) in this situation an alternative testing site will be determined.

All tests should be dropped off at least 24 hours prior to the test date in the Office of Academic Affairs or the instructor can bring the test to the eLearning Lab. Tests can also be emailed to both the testing proctor and the DSS Coordinator. All tests will be returned to the Office of Academic Affairs unless the instructor requests that the test be left in the eLearning Lab for the instructor to pick up. If the test is not left for the DSS staff to pick up the student's testing time may be rescheduled.

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Name and Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Exam: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of the Exam: \_\_\_\_\_

Regular Class Time Allowed for the test: (check one)  50 min.  75 min.  other

*The Disability Support Service (DSS) will determine the total testing time based on the student's accommodations.*

Instructions:  closed book  open book  student may use notes

student may use calculator  scantron – some students have difficulty writing on a scantron (if time permits the DSS office will mark the scantron)

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

All students will be permitted to write on paper tests.

For tests that are posted online email this form along with the password.

### Recorder Accommodation Agreement

- I understand that as a student enrolled at Meridian Community College who has a disability that affects my ability to take or read notes, I have the right to record my class lectures for use in my personal studies only. \_\_\_\_\_
  
- I realize that lectures recorded for this reason may not be shared with other people without the written consent of the lecturer. \_\_\_\_\_
  
- I also understand that recorded lectures may not be used in any way against the faculty member, other lecturer, or students whose classroom comments are recorded as part of the class activity. \_\_\_\_\_
  
- I agree to abide by these guidelines with regard to any lectures I record while enrolled as a student at the institution. \_\_\_\_\_
  
- I understand that the use of a smartpen in class is considered to be a recorder. \_\_\_\_\_

**Initial each statement and sign below:**

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of DSS Representative: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## ON CAMPUS SUPPORT SERVICES

Meridian Community College offers a variety of support services to assist students with college through Student Services. The purpose of student services is to encourage the growth and development of each student's potential by providing educational programs which enhance his/her ability to learn, to become self-directed, to function more efficiently in society and to become a proficient decision maker. Student Services in collaboration with instruction can assist students in achieving their educational objective.

Programs offered in Student Services include:

- Academic Advising,
- Veteran Services,
- Career Development Services,
- Financial Aid,
- Learning Resources
- Single Parent / Displaced Homemaker Services
- Tutorial services which include
  - Student Success Center
  - English and Reading Lab
  - Math Emporium Lab
  - Computer Connection Lab

### **Academic Advising**

The purpose of academic advisement is to help students develop their potential through self-direction and effective decision making relative to their program of study. Advisors are assigned to all students based upon planned programs of study. Faculty advisors are available to students during their regular office hours, which are posted on their doors. Advisors are also available in Ivy Hall from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday and in the Riley Health building from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Advising in both locations is available on Fridays from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. During peak registration times students are encouraged to make an appointment to meet with their advisor.

### **Veterans' Affairs and Benefits**

MCC welcomes veterans and military personnel. The Military and Veterans Services Office, located in the Admissions Office in Ivy Hall, assists veterans, military service members and their families in the application, registration, and financial aid process.

Students who plan to attend MCC under any type of Veterans Administration Educational Assistance Program should file a claim with MCC's Military and Veterans Services Office. For more information please refer to the MCC Catalog under Student Services and Activities.



## **Career Development Services**

The Career Development Center is a resource for students as well as the general public at no charge for information regarding job postings in Meridian and the surrounding area. Services are also available to assist with resume writing. For more information visit the Career Development Center in Webb Hall, room 102 or call 601-481-1370.

## **Financial Aid**

The Financial Aid Office is located on the first floor of Ivy Hall. The College participates in a variety of financial aid programs in the form of scholarships, grants, loans, and part-time employment to eligible students. Administration of all aid is subject to available institutional funds at the time of application. As federal regulations are a continuous process, the following information is subject to change. For detailed information, contact the Financial Aid Office.

To be considered for any type of financial aid, students must first submit an admissions application to the office of financial aid. To be considered for any type of scholarship, students must submit a scholarship application to the Scholarship Coordinator. Scholarship applications should reach the Scholarship Coordinator's office by April 1. Other applications will be considered individually if funds are available for the fall semester.

Students must submit the following to the Financial Aid Office to be considered for grants, loans, or the work-study program:

- An Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR), and
- All supporting documentation, such as tax returns.

An Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR), may be obtained by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. This form is available online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). In order to be considered for part-time employment, students must submit a Federal Work Study application to the Financial Aid Office. To apply for a student loan, students must request a student loan packet from the Financial Aid Office. Students should access Eaglenet to view any outstanding documents needed to complete the student's financial aid file.

## **Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy for Recipients of Title IV Federal Financial Aid**

In order to remain eligible to receive Title IV financial assistance at Meridian Community College, students must progress satisfactorily towards completion of an academic or vocational-technical program.

## **Learning Resources**

The Learning Resources Center, housed in the L.O. Todd Library, is comprised of five areas: the Library, the Production Center, Web Services, Duplication and Promotions Department. Since MCC accepts responsibility for the educational development and cultural enrichment of the community, some services, especially access to the book collections, may also be extended to citizens of Lauderdale County and the City of Meridian.

**The L. O. Todd Library** now contains the collections for MCC. It houses 44,089 titles. Additionally, the collections included 163,437 electronic books. The library subscribes to 232 periodicals, including scholarly journals, popular magazines, local and national newspapers. Several thousand other journals and magazines are available in full-text format via electronic databases and can be accessed from the Library's home page on the Internet. The audio-visual (AV) collection of 1,009 items is held in formats ranging from sound recordings to DVDs. The library is a member of the National Network of Libraries of Medicine.

Many library services are available from the library's home page on the MCC website including Question Point (24/7), which is a live reference service available at all times. Contact the Library for hours and more information at 601-484-8760.

### **Single Parent / Displaced Homemaker Services**

The Single Parent / Displaced Homemaker Support Services Coordinator assists students with solving problems that prevent the student from succeeding in college. Some of the services that are provided are listed below:

- Connecting students with on and off campus resources.
- Book Loans
- Food Assistance
- Support Groups
- Tutoring for English Language Learners
- Referrals to community agencies for emergencies and other matters.

The office is located in Smith Hall room 104-A.

### **Student Success Center**

Have you ever found yourself in need of help with your schoolwork? Of course, you have . . . everyone has at one time or another. The problem is that help is not always available. The Student Success Center solves that problem.

When you find yourself in need of professional assistance in math or English courses, turn to the Student Success Center for help. Stop by the Center and make an appointment, let us know in which area you need help, and take advantage of our professional tutorial staff. There are two ways you can utilize the services of the Student Success Center.

**Instructor referral**—when this happens, you will receive an appointment form which you will take to the Center. This form tells your tutors what specific areas you need to work on.

**Student appointments**—When you realize you might need a little help; you can stop in at the Center and set up an appointment. Please bring your textbook and any graded papers with you so that we can go over problem areas. You will be given a Tutoring Form to keep, and a copy also be sent to your instructor so he or she will know that you have sought extra help.

**FALL AND SPRING HOURS:**

8 a.m.- 6 p.m. Monday - Thursday

8 a.m.- 2 p.m. Friday

**English and Reading Lab**

The lab offers tutoring services to students currently enrolled in MCC English courses. All tutors are MCC English faculty who will go over graded and ungraded papers with students to help target problem areas and assist in remediation. Computerized tutorials and use of computers for completing English assignments are also available. The English Lab is located in the G. V. (Sonny) Montgomery Student Center, room 203. Services are free!

**Math Emporium Lab**

The purpose of the Math Computers Connections Lab is to assist students enrolled in MCC math courses to receive individualized help from math instructional staff and student assistants while spending required time in the lab each week in order to fulfill course credit requirements in beginning, intermediate, and college algebra courses. The lab is located in the G. V. (Sonny) Montgomery Student Center, on the second floor, or you can contact the lab at 601-481-1377.

**Computer Connections Lab**

The Computer Connections Center is dedicated solely to the enhancement of computer literacy in MCC's students. MCC believes it is imperative for its students to understand the connections between personal and professional lives and today's technology. The benefits of computer literacy impact both faculty and students. Classroom productivity, instructional options, and distance learning enrollment increase when students are computer literate. The center is located in the G. V. (Sonny) Montgomery Student Center, on the second floor. 601-581-3580.

## OFF CAMPUS SUPPORT SERVICES

The following is a list of support services that are available in our community and surrounding areas. It is not meant to be a complete listing of community agencies. The agencies listed below are those agencies in which the most referrals are made by the Disability Support Services Coordinator. For information on other community agencies please come by the DSS Office.

### Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS)

1003 College Drive, Meridian, MS 39307 (Across from MCC)

MDRS is the largest state agency committed solely to helping people with disabilities achieve independence through employment. Services may include vocational evaluation, counseling and guidance, educational assistance, job training, job placement, and assistive technology. At MDRS, they are dedicated to meeting the employment goals of our consumers.

- Eligibility – anyone of working age may apply for services if they are disabled and want to work.
- MDRS is for persons with unseen disabilities as well as those with physical disabilities.
- MDRS works with students who qualify for services, assistance with the cost of college, books, assistive technology, and more. It is vital that students who qualify for services meet with their MDRS counselor on a regular basis.

**MDRS is the main source of help for students and employees with the expense of college or technical needs such as hearing aids and other devices.**

#### Counselors for the:

Blind – Demerits Cooley	601-483-5391
Deaf – Tasha Martin	601-693-5645
Physical – A-L – Mary Hawthorn	601-483-5392
Physical – M-Z – Kelly Rushing	601-483-5393
Transitional – Shovon Pruitt	601-693-6964

## **Psychology Associates**

**5004 Highway 39 North, Meridian, MS 39301**

Psychology Associates is a Psychologist office located in Meridian, MS. A psychologist focuses on the evaluation, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of mental, emotional and behavioral health issues. A clinical psychologist uses psychotherapy and other counseling skills to improve emotional and mental health.

Please call Psychology Associates at (601) 693-8307 to schedule an appointment in Meridian, Mississippi or to get more information.

## **Weems Community Mental Health Center**

**1415 College Drive, Meridian MS 39307**

Your emotional well-being—that's what we're interested in here at Weems Mental Health. We understand the difficulties present today, such as stress, depression, other mental health disorders, substance abuse, family problems or children's issues. We provide a range of outpatient mental health services for children, adolescents and adults, including mental health therapy, medication evaluation and management, community support services, and more. We also have outpatient and residential substance-abuse-treatment programs. To learn more, choose "Services" from the menu above.

**Weems Mobile Crisis Response Team**  
**is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**  
**Call: 1-800-803-0245**

## **Social Security Administration**

**4717 26th Avenue, Meridian, MS 39305**

The purpose of this office is to administer Social Security Programs and the Supplemental Security Income Program. Services provided include retirement, survivor, disability, health insurance, Supplemental Security Income Benefits. For more information call 693-5010 or 1-800-772-1213.

## **Multi-County Community Service Agency Inc.**

This is the local community action agency. They offer resources and assistance for a wide variety of basic needs and bills that people are facing. One of the resources offered by Multi-County Community Services Agency is a utility bill assistance program. They provide help for paying electricity and/or gas bills for any utility company. There are some income guidelines that will partly depend on the number of people who live in the home of the applicant.

The MCCSA community agency will pay a utility bill that a local resident cannot afford to pay. The money they provide is not necessarily a one-time cash grant that is just handed out, but instead each application will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, so people can receive assistance more than once.

In addition to that program, MCCSA also offers a weatherization program that is designed to reduce future energy costs for eligible clients. It does this by making their homes more energy efficient. There is no cost to applicants, and all the improvements are free to the homeowner. The weatherization program focuses on assisting primarily the disabled, the elderly, and low to moderate income families with young children.

Some of the other resources offered include the following. While the non-profit will try to issue direct financial aid for these expenses, in some cases a loan will be used. Clients can receive education assistance grants, emergency food and clothing, emergency rent and [mortgage assistance](#), job training and employment assistance, foreclosure prevention, and [debt assistance](#).

To receive further information from **Multi County** about these services, or other options they may have, call (601) 483-4838 or 1-800-898-0659. Or [learn more Lauderdale community action programs](#).

## **Wesley House Community Center**

Another place to turn to for aid is **The Wesley House**. This agency administers a program that is funded by Mississippi Power Company. Please note that this program is for the disabled and the elderly only. Help is provided in the form of a one-time cash grant that will help pay for a past due power bill that the resident is unable to pay themselves.

There are some conditions in order to get help. To apply for this program the applicant should go to the Wesley House, which is located at 1520 Eighth Avenue, and they need to bring with them proof of income, their Social Security number and proof of expenses for the household. You can also call them at (601) 485-4736 to learn more.

### **Funds for utility bills and emergency assistance in Lauderdale County**

## **Meridian Salvation Army**

The Salvation Army can help the low income and working poor. The non-profit agency is a comprehensive social service organization with assistance programs for the homeless, seniors and economically disadvantaged. Programs include veteran services and counseling, meals, work therapy and education, holiday assistance, summer camp, and thrift store. (601) 483-6156. Find additional locations of Salvation Army centers in Mississippi.

### **Free or low cost food**

**Lauderdale Baptist Association Crisis Center** offers food, often in partnership with local churches. 5521 Clinton Street, Marion, MS 39342. Dial (601) 482-4230

**Maranatha Fellowship Church** is located at 720 A. John Stennis in Meridian. Call (601) 480-2370. This location has a food pantry for people in need.

**Zion Hill CME Church** – A free food pantry and household supplies are offered for the community and needy. The church even has an on call service anytime and any day when there is a need. (601) 479-3173

### **Lauderdale County clinics**

**Central Mississippi Family Health Clinic** is a federal government qualified health center. Some free or low cost medical care may be offered. 905-C South Frontage Road, Meridian, Mississippi 39301. Dial (601) 486-4210. A sister type center is the East Mississippi Medical Clinic. This location can be reached at (601) 485-7777.

**Lauderdale County Health Department** is a Certified Rural Health Clinic. The low income and uninsured may qualify for free or low cost medical care, checkups, prescriptions, or dental services. (601) 693-2451

Other community clinics to call for help include **North Hill Family Medical Clinic** at (601) 484-6180.

**The Greater Meridian Health Clinic** is a clinic that provides primary medical care and professional services while adhering to the main mission and while also operating within the scope of their service. The clinic wants to make sure that your medical needs are met at an affordable price. Call (601) 693-0148 for intake. **2701 Davis Street, Meridian, Mississippi 39301.**

## RESOURCES

Resources in the development of the MCC Disability Handbook were numerous and from various sources (publications, conferences, workshops, etc.). Some of the main resources that were used as references are listed below:

1. Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)
  - Attendance at an intensive four-day conference on disabilities
  - AHEAD Program Standards for Offices for Students with Disabilities
  - AHEAD Code of Ethics
2. Disability Compliance for Higher Education Newsletter, published by Legal Research Publications (LRP).
3. State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, Guide to OCR Compliance
4. Attended two conferences in which Salome Heyward (Civil Rights Attorney) was the primary speaker and included a question and answer time as part of her presentation.
5. Reviews of several existing Policies and Procedures Manuals, such as Strategies for Student Success, University of New Orleans, Office of Disability Services, a Division of Student Life and Student Manual, The Office for Disability Accommodations, A Division of the Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, several other manuals in and out of the state were reviewed.
6. Numerous workshops and training sessions coordinated by local state authorities such as Jim Keith, attorney specializing in disability law, Adams and Reese Law Firm, Jackson,
7. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (OCR), Washington, D.C. OCR enforces Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability.
8. Disability Compliance for Higher Education: 2007 Year Book, a publication of a recap of the most important and latest court rulings, opinions, and issues for postsecondary institutions, by OCR, DOJ and strategies for compliance.
9. [www.ada.gov/cguide.htm](http://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm)
10. <https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/adaaa.cfm> - The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008