



Pearl River Community College

**DISABILITY
SERVICES**

Office of Disability Services

Disability Services Guidebook



Pearl River Community College

DISABILITY SERVICES

Pearl River Community College provides reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities through the Office of Disability Services. This information is a guide to your rights, responsibilities, and procedures for obtaining and using the services provided for students with disabilities. The Disability Office verifies eligibility for accommodations and works with eligible students to develop and coordinate the appropriate disability accommodations.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

Pearl River Community College offers equal education and employment opportunities. The College does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, national origin, veteran status, pregnancy, or disability. For inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies or to request accommodations, special assistance, or alternate format publications, contact the Office of Disability Services at ADA@prcc.edu.

Mission

Pearl River Community College is a public institution committed to providing quality educational and service opportunities for all who seek them.

Confidentiality

Student records are stored digitally. Student records are backed up and encrypted nightly. The encrypted backups are then replicated off site to a cloud vault to provide an additional layer of protection. Information is not released to a third party, including parents, without the written consent of a student.

Program Accessibility

All Students who meet the academic standards requisite to admissions and are otherwise qualified are admitted into Pearl River Community College and activities and are provided services upon request.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a comprehensive national mandate that ensures basic civil rights for individuals with disabilities. The ADA provides assurance of access to education programs and employment opportunities for adults with special learning needs. The ADA defines an individual with a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. The major life activities include seeing, hearing, speaking, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, learning, caring for oneself, and working.

Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states, “No otherwise qualified handicapped individual shall, solely by the reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving financial assistance.”

Section 504 Postsecondary Education

Specific provisions of Section 504 related to postsecondary education prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities in recruitment, admission, and treatment after admission. According to the regulations, colleges and universities are required to make “reasonable accommodations” to permit students with disabilities to fulfill academic requirements to ensure that disabled students are not effectively excluded from programs because of the absence of auxiliary aids.

Note: The definition of physical or mental impairment includes specific learning disabilities.

Provisions of Section 504

Subpart E of the regulations describes ways of making postsecondary education accessible to disabled students. These include the following:

1. Modifications “as are necessary” to ensure that academic requirements are not discriminatory. Modifications may include changes in the length of time required for completion of degree requirements and adaptation of the manner in which specific courses are conducted. (The regulations state that academic requirements that can be demonstrated as essential to a program of study or related to licensing are not considered discriminatory.)
2. The requirement that exams given to evaluate a student’s progress actually evaluate the student’s achievement rather than reflect the student’s impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills.
3. Auxiliary aids, including taped texts, interpreters for students with hearing impairments, readers for students with visual impairments, classroom equipment adapted for use by students with manual impairments, and other similar services.

Eligibility Requirements for Services

Eligible students include those who are enrolled in degree and non-degree seeking programs, are considered to meet all college program requirements despite their disability and meet the definition of disability as defined by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA. An individual with a disability is defined by the ADA as a person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of life’s major activities, a person who has a record of a disability, or is regarded as having a disability.

Your Rights and Responsibilities

Student Rights

1. You have the right to confidentiality.
2. You have the right to equal access to programs, classes, and facilities.
3. You have the right to have reasonable accommodations provided.
4. You have the same rights granted to every student enrolled at Pearl River Community College.

Student Responsibilities

1. You must disclose your disability to receive services.
2. You must provide current, within the past three (3) years, documentation of your disability from a qualified professional.
3. You must request specific accommodations.
4. You must complete the required paperwork.
5. You must comply with all policies, codes, and regulations at Pearl River Community College. (See Cat Country Guide)

Guidelines for Students with Disabilities

Steps to Obtain Accommodations

1. Your first step is to identify yourself as a student with a disability and request specific accommodations from the Office of Disability Services. You can do this by submitting an [Application for Disability Services](#). Accommodations are directly related to the functional limitations caused by the disability. Accommodations vary according to the disability. The accommodation is to provide equal access for the student.
2. Your next step is to obtain documentation of your disability and provide this information to the Office of Disability Services. Because reasonable accommodations are based on the current impact of a disorder or impairment, it is necessary that all documentation and testing should be no more than three years old. The Office of Disability Services will consider your request based on the documentation submitted.
3. Once you have submitted documented documentation of your disability, make an appointment, in person, zoom, or by phone, with the appropriate ADA Coordinator to discuss your particular needs.

These steps should be taken at least three weeks prior to the first day of class. If you are currently enrolled and wish to receive accommodations, you should follow the steps above. Remember, it is your responsibility to inform the college of your needs and to request accommodations from the appropriate personnel. Failure to notify the college means that you will not have accommodations for your class.

Once your documentation has been received and the appropriate paperwork has been submitted, your requests will be reviewed by the appropriate ADA

Coordinator; please allow 3-5 business days. A letter identifying your approved accommodations will be sent to your instructors and to you. During the semester, if you realize that the accommodation is not working or that you need additional support, please bring that to the attention of the appropriate ADA Coordinator as soon as possible. Feel free to discuss with your instructors any questions or concerns about your accommodations. It is recommended that you take a copy of your accommodations to your instructors for verification.

General Guidelines for Receiving Auxiliary Aids and Services

Once the accommodation, in the form of auxiliary aids and services, is formally approved, the ADA Coordinator will send a letter to the student's instructor(s) listing the approved accommodations for that particular student via the college email system.

The student is encouraged to make initial contact with the instructor at the first class and set up a time to discuss the accommodation. Accommodations are valid beginning on the date of the letter. The ADA Coordinator will make arrangements for alternate format textbooks, software, sign language interpreters, electronic recording devices, adaptive listening devices, etc., as necessary. Instructors will coordinate all in-classroom accommodations, such as readers, scribes, notetakers, and testing accommodations.

Types of Auxiliary Aids and Services Available

The following list of auxiliary aids and services is not meant to be an exhaustive list of possible options. Instead, the list represents common auxiliary aids and services more frequently used by students with disabilities at PRCC. The list can and will vary. All decisions regarding auxiliary aids and services are made on a case-by-case basis.

Testing Accommodations

Students requesting testing accommodations should meet with the instructor well in advance of the day of the test to make arrangements for these accommodations. Students receiving testing accommodations who plan to test at a PRCC Testing Center must contact the Testing Center at least 24 hours in advance of their scheduled appointment to ensure they receive their accommodations. [PRCC Testing Center](#)s can be accessed using this link. By

contacting a PRCC Testing Center, the student will verify that the Testing Center can accommodate their needs. Appointment rescheduling or unexpected wait times may occur if the student does not adhere to the 24-hour contact policy.

Extended time for testing

The amount of extra time offered for testing is the nationally accepted standard: time and a half. The ADA Coordinator will provide the instructor with the appropriate testing limits through the accommodation request letter. The instructor and the student will arrange the place and/or time for the testing. The ADA Coordinator will assist, as necessary.

Testing in a quiet environment outside of the normal classroom

Alternate testing outside of the normal classroom is determined by the student's documentation. The ADA Coordinator, the instructor, and the student will arrange testing in an appropriate distraction-free location. Testing may occur in the Testing Center, the ADA Coordinator's Office area, or other appropriate areas on campus.

Reader

If indicated by the student's documentation, the instructor (and, if necessary, the ADA Coordinator) will arrange for a qualified person to read exams to the student. The reader will read the information directly from the exam. The reader will not be allowed to paraphrase the questions, define terms, explain the question, or offer any other type of assistance unless otherwise directed by the instructor.

Scribe

If indicated by the student's documentation, the instructor (and, if necessary, the ADA Coordinator) will arrange for a qualified person to write the student's verbal answers. The scribe will write verbatim the information presented by the student. The scribe will not be allowed to read questions or offer any type of assistance unless otherwise directed by the instructor.

Note Takers

PRCC uses volunteer student notetakers. The instructor will ask a student in the class to provide class notes either using notetaking paper (available through the ADA Coordinator's office); or the instructor will provide a copy of notes for the student. If notes are available on Canvas, that will satisfy this accommodation.

Alternate Formats

Materials are made available to qualified students in alternate formats upon request. Students requesting alternative formats for exams, syllabi, class handouts, tests, etc., should contact the ADA Coordinator at least 30 days prior to the beginning of the semester to allow ample time to create the alternative formats.

Electronic Recording Devices

If indicated by the student's documentation, an electronic recording device can be used to record classroom lectures. The ADA Coordinator will notify the instructor that the student will be using an electronic recording device in class to record lectures. It is the student's responsibility to provide the electronic recording device.

Reduced Course Load

If indicated by the student's documentation that the student is unable to maintain a full course load based on their disability, the student may qualify for full time status with a reduced course load.

Interpreter Services

Sign language interpreters for hearing-impaired students can be provided for any instructional and/or extracurricular event on campus. Generally, a minimum of a two week notice is required to ensure the availability of an interpreter. All requests for services and notices of absences must be sent by the student to the ADA Coordinator, who will, in turn, notify the interpreters.

Role of Interpreter

The interpreter functions as a facilitator of communication between hearing impaired and hearing individuals. Interpreter conduct is governed by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Code of Ethics. Understanding the role of the interpreter will help avoid problems and conflicts during an assignment.

Scheduling

Request for interpreting services must be submitted to the Office of Disability Services at least five full working days before the assignment or event; the more notice, the better. Returning students who request sign language interpreter services are expected to pre-register at the earliest possible date. Late requests are considered only if interpreters are available.

1. The College will provide sign language interpreting for spoken language only. Reading and writing standard English is an essential part of the curriculum for all PRCC Classes.
2. The College will provide one sign language interpreter in each of the student's face-to-face classes which meet for 2 hours, per the industry-accepted national standard.
3. The College will provide a team of two sign language interpreters in each of the student's face-to-face classes which meet for more than 2 hours, per the industry-accepted national standard.
4. The College will provide a single sign language interpreter for no more than 5 hours per week to allow the student to receive academic tutoring and/or meet with instructors outside of class. These sessions, limited to one hour in length, will be scheduled with the instructor/tutoring lab and verified by the appropriate ADA Coordinator in advance.
5. The College will provide sign language interpreters for school-sponsored activities that require verbal interaction.
 - a. The student's request for a sign language interpreter for extracurricular activities must be approved by the ADA Coordinator in advance.
 - b. The student will be required to provide all pertinent information about the event in writing, including, but not limited to, dates, times, documentation of participation in the event, etc.

Coursework Material

The College will provide access to written class material, including digital textbooks, notes, etc., to the student only.

Cancellations

If it is necessary for the student who has scheduled a sign language interpreter to be absent from a class and/or event, the student must give notice to the Office of Disability Services at least 24 hours in advance. Students may be responsible for charges incurred due to a failure to notify in a timely manner. Repeated last-minute cancellations or unplanned absences may result in the discontinuation of services.

Service and Emotional Support Animals

Service and emotional support animals are allowed at PRCC. For more information on service and emotional support animals, see the procedure on service and emotional support animals.

Tours

Upon request, the ADA Coordinator will assist with campus tours for students who need to evaluate or determine his/her route in navigating between classes.

Course Substitutions

With reasonable accommodations, students with disabilities must fulfill all requirements to participate in PRCC programs. Therefore, students with disabilities are not excused from course prerequisites, GPA requirements, or degree requirements. In some limited circumstances, however, substitution of course requirements may be appropriate. Such an accommodation is made only when the student's documentation clearly indicates that the student's disability makes completion of the requirement impossible, AND the accommodation does not fundamentally alter the nature of the program. A student requesting course substitution on the basis of a qualifying disability must present documentation of the disability that supports such a request to the Senior Vice President for Instruction/Provost.

Assistive Software

JAWS software is housed in the Library/Testing Center on all campuses for the use of qualified students.

Additional Support Services

Counseling/Advisement

Additional career, technical, and academic counseling is provided through the Center for Academic Engagement.

Financial Support

Financial assistance for those who qualify is available through the Office of Financial Aid. There may be other financial assistance available for those who qualify.

Academic Support

The College offers a variety of academic support which include Math Lab, Office of Student Engagement, Student Support Services/TRiO Program. The Office of eLearning offers numerous services for students enrolled in online classes.

Grievance Procedure

If a student believes college personnel has discriminated against them, they have the right to seek a review of such concerns. Students may choose to submit an informal complaint or a formal grievance. If a student makes an informal complaint, they may later pursue a formal grievance if not satisfied with the resolution of the informal process.

Informal Procedure

It is recommended, but not required, that the student speak first about the concerns to his/her department chair, ADA Coordinator, or the appropriate Vice President. That person will review the grievance immediately and act quickly to facilitate a satisfactory resolution for all concerned parties.

Formal Procedure

A student who wishes to file a formal grievance must provide a written statement explaining the basis of the complaint to the appropriate ADA Coordinator within ten working days from the date of the occurrence. Three members of the Disability Services Advisory Committee will investigate the grievance and convene a special meeting with the complainant and other parties, as necessary. A written determination as to the validity of the complaint and a description of the

resolution will be issued by the ADA Coordinator to the student filing the complaint within ten working days of receiving the grievance. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, they may appeal to the appropriate Vice President. Within ten working days, the Vice President will arrange a meeting with the appropriate college personnel or committee to hear the student's grievance. The student will present their position and supporting facts. The Vice President's decision is final.

If the grievance is against the action of the ADA Coordinator, the grievance would be filed with the ADA Coordinator's direct supervisor. Within ten working days after the hearing, that supervisor will make a decision on the merits of the student complaint and will provide a written response to the student. The decision of the ADA Coordinator's direct supervisor is final.

A student who makes use of the grievance procedure shall not be retaliated against for doing so.

ADA Coordinator's Contact Information:

Tonia Moody-Seal

Director of Admissions and Records & Disability Services for Poplarville Campus and eLearning

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