



Academic Accommodations Procedure Disability Resource Center

Once a student has decided to attend an academic program at Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC), such student should immediately begin the registration process for obtaining academic accommodations. Students are strongly encouraged to initiate the process well before classes begin, as the review and development of accommodations may take 2-3 weeks. An appropriate accommodation is an academic adjustment necessary to ensure complete access to and full participation in the educational process for students with disabilities. An institution must make reasonable accommodations in order to provide the student with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in the institution's courses, programs, and activities. This does not include such services as personal care, special academic advisement, workshops, support groups or tutoring. In order to arrange for academic accommodations on the basis of disability, students must follow the following procedure:

1. Self-Disclosure: It is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the Office of Disability Services and to request accommodations and services in a timely manner.
2. Documentation: The student must present comprehensive documentation of a disability from a physician/evaluator, psychologist, and/or learning specialist as appropriate for that disability. Documentation must provide a diagnosis and explanation for how the condition may manifest itself in an academic setting. Empirical data, when appropriate, should be provided. Recommendations for academic accommodations should be included in the documentation. If there is a need for additional medical documentation or a need for follow-up paperwork, DS will discuss the need with the student and assist with making a plan for accomplishing those tasks. Specific guidelines for each disability condition are available on our website at: <http://www.raritanval.edu/studentserv/disa/documentsforms.aspx>. It is the student's obligation to provide documentation of a disability in order to establish eligibility for support services and any reasonable and appropriate accommodations.
3. Complete an Intake Appointment: The student must schedule and complete an intake appointment with a Disability Services Administrator. During intake, the documentation will be discussed, needs will be assessed, and an accommodation plan will be developed. In reviewing the specific accommodation requested by the student or recommended by the physician/evaluator, Disability Services may find that while a recommendation is clinically supported, it is not the most appropriate accommodation given the requirements of a particular student's academic program. Disability Services may also propose clinically supported accommodations that would be appropriate and useful for the student, but which neither the student nor the evaluator have requested. Accommodations cannot alter the fundamental nature of the course, programs or activities being offered or impose an undue burden on the College.

4. Notify Faculty: Disability Services prepares an Accommodation Letter for each faculty member teaching each course in which the student is seeking accommodations. This letter informs the faculty member that the student has a disability and recommends that the student be provided with certain specified academic accommodations. Faculty members are authorized to provide students with accommodations only on the basis of an Accommodation Letter addressed specifically to that faculty member from Disability Services. Students are encouraged to arrange a private conversation during the faculty member's office hours rather than approaching the faculty member before or after class. If a faculty member believes that the approved accommodations are inconsistent with the academic standards of the course, or would interfere with the faculty member's methods of instruction and evaluation of student performance, he or she is entitled to raise those concerns with the student and Disability Services in order to come to a satisfactory resolution. Satisfactory resolution is usually met by means of interactive dialog between faculty member, student and Disability Services. Students are expected to present accommodation letters to faculty members within the first few weeks of the semester. It is the student's responsibility to present the accommodation request form to his/her instructors and negotiate the best way for accommodations to be provided. *Students must set up an appointment to pick up Accommodation Letters from the DS at the beginning of each semester.*

5. Follow Through: As courses change and the student's understanding of his/her learning process increases, accommodations may need to be adjusted. Therefore, students should keep in touch with DS to share successes and discuss any need for alternate accommodations.