

**Services for Students with Disabilities**  
**Policy and Procedure Manual**

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## **Services for Students with Disabilities: An Overview**

The office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) acts as a resource for students who need assistance in addressing disability issues and concerns. SSD coordinates Mount Saint Mary College's academic and non-academic campus accommodations (including temporary disabilities), assists students in communicating needs to faculty and staff, and works collaboratively with other departments to resolve any concerns related to disability needs that may arise. Students with documented disabilities who require accommodations must identify themselves to SSD and present appropriate documentation for review and should anticipate that services at the college level may not include accommodations that they received in high school.

Our office also houses the campus Counseling Center. If you need information regarding these services, please visit the [Counseling Center](#) pages.

### **Location**

45 Elmwood Place in the College Courts

### **Hours of Operation**

Mondays - Thursdays: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Fridays: 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Please stop by our office or call us at 845-569-3115 to make an appointment.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT

<http://www.msmc.edu/disabilityservices>

### **Contact Information**

**Tel:** 845-569-3115

**Fax:** 845-569-3135

**E-Mail:** [disabilityservices@msmc.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@msmc.edu)

**Address:** 45 Elmwood Place,  
Newburgh, NY 12550

In order to qualify for disability accommodations at Mount Saint Mary College, students must meet the definition of an individual with a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Under ADA an individual with a disability is a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such impairment.

To establish disability status and request reasonable accommodations, students must provide SSD with current and comprehensive disability documentation utilizing the procedures and forms described under the section titled "Requesting Accommodations." These forms can be found on the SSD webpage located at [www.msmc.edu/disabilityservices](http://www.msmc.edu/disabilityservices) or the SSD office. Students can also request a copy of this packet by calling or emailing the SSD office.

## **Applying for Disability Accommodations: A three step process**

**1. All students applying for accommodations must complete the [Information and Accommodations Request Form](#).**

**2. Submit Disability Verification Forms**

These forms are to be completed by a treating professional (e.g., psychologists, physicians, etc.) who is qualified to make recommendations for the student regarding their disability and needs on the college campus. **Please note** that some students may need to have more than one form completed depending on their disability(s) and the type of accommodations they are requesting.

- [Disability Verification for Students with Psychological or Attention Deficit Disorders](#)
- [Disability Verification for Students with Physical or Sensory Disabilities](#)
- [Housing Accommodation Verification Form](#)
- [Requirements for the Documentation of a Learning Disability](#): Instructions for qualified professionals to submit appropriate documentation for students with Learning Disabilities.

**3. Send all completed forms to Services for Students with Disabilities**

Mount Saint Mary College  
Services for Students with Disabilities  
330 Powell Avenue  
Newburgh, NY 12250

Phone: 845-569-3115; Fax: 845-569-3135

Upon receipt of all necessary forms, documentation, and testing data, SSD will review the information and determine the student's eligibility for reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations depend upon the nature and degree of severity of the documented disability. In some instances SSD may need to contact the doctor or the other professionals who have provided the documentation in order to clarify the nature of the disability and to help determine the student's eligibility for accommodations. SSD may also request to have further contact with the student and his/her family in determining the student's eligibility for accommodations.

Every effort will be made to provide accommodations in a timely manner, but circumstances such as incomplete documentation and/or last-minute requests for accommodations may delay this process. While the law requires that priority consideration be given to the specific methods (accommodations) requested by a student, it does not imply that a particular accommodation must be granted if it is deemed not reasonable or other suitable techniques are available.

Once a determination has been made about eligibility for accommodations, SSD will send a confirmation email to inform the student of what accommodations they have been approved at the Mount Saint Mary College.

Should there be any disagreement about documentation, the review process, accommodations, or any other matters related to disability issues, students may request an appeal hearing for a disability concern (see below for more information). Further information about SSD and disability accommodations can be obtained by contacting SSD staff by phone (845-569-3115), e-mail ([disabilityservices@msmc.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@msmc.edu)), or online ([www.msmc.edu](http://www.msmc.edu)).

### **Housing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

The following guidelines have been established to accommodate students who have special needs that may impact their housing.

The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) works collaboratively with the Office of Residence Life in order to provide reasonable housing accommodations to qualified students with disabilities.

Accommodations depend upon the nature and degree of severity of the documented disability. While the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requires that priority consideration be given to the specific methods requested by the student, it does not imply that a particular accommodation must be granted if it is deemed not reasonable and other suitable techniques are available.

All requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Documentation of a special need or disability does not guarantee that your application will be approved. Assignments are made only if space is available. Assignment to a specific residence area cannot be guaranteed. Learning disabilities, attention deficit disorders, and most psychological disorders generally do not warrant special housing. All requests will be reviewed by the Offices of SSD, Health Services, Residence Life, and any Mount Saint Mary College office that might be helpful in the decision making process. It should be noted that accommodation requests are for an individual, not a group.

Students who are applying for housing accommodations should visit the SSD website and follow the steps listed under "Requesting Accommodations." In order to participate in the room selection process, all forms must be submitted to SSD by the deadline stated in the current Housing Lottery Information Packet. Forms submitted after the deadline will be reviewed during the summer session, and room assignments will be determined by the Offices of SSD, Health Services and Residence Life.

Please note that students will need to reapply for housing accommodations each academic year and submit updated supporting documentation as necessary.

All forms can be found at  
[http://www.msmc.edu/Student\\_Services/Students\\_with\\_Disabilities](http://www.msmc.edu/Student_Services/Students_with_Disabilities).

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities at 845-569-3115 or [disabilityservices@msmc.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@msmc.edu).

### **Students with Temporary Injuries or Conditions**

The office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) may be available to assist students who have a temporary injury or condition which results in a functional impairment. These may include broken bones, injuries requiring surgery and other acute illnesses. Appropriate accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis. If you have a temporary injury or condition, please contact the office to see how we can assist.

Students who are applying for housing accommodations should visit the SSD website and follow the steps listed under "Requesting Accommodations."

### **Advocacy & Troubleshooting**

While the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) works diligently to meet the needs of our students, there is always chance that a problem may arise. SSD will assist students with any issues they might encounter regarding the implementing of their accommodation plans. However, we cannot remedy a problem if we do not know about it.

Students experiencing any problems such as an instructor refusing to provide an accommodation or college personnel discussing their accommodations in an inappropriate manner are encouraged to contact the SSD office so we can help them resolve their concerns as soon as possible.

### **Informing Professors of Accommodations**

Once students are approved for accommodations, letters verifying that they are entitled to such services will be prepared for them at our office to distribute to their course instructors. Students are given the responsibility of requesting classroom and testing accommodations from their instructors.

### **Scheduling Exams**

Taking exams at the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) is a service provided for students who have approved testing accommodations such as alternate test site, use of computer, exams read, or the assistance of a scribe.

Students are required to schedule exams at least four business days in advance in order to use the SSD testing facility. Failure to provide adequate notice may result in the accommodations not being available. In cases of pop quizzes, or instructors not providing the class with sufficient notice before an exam, students will be accommodated based on the availability of the SSD testing facility and proctors.

In order to schedule exams and quizzes at SSD, students must complete the online [Exam Scheduling Form](#).

Once this form is completed and submitted to our office, we will contact your instructor to request the exam and any instructions they may have.

Please note that students are required to take exams at the same time as the rest of the class unless special arrangements have been made with instructors. In situations where students have back-to-back classes or evening classes, arrangements may be made to begin exams earlier than the scheduled class time and during SSD's regular operating hours.

## **Equipment Loan & Elevator Key Policy and Procedure**

### *Equipment Loan*

Depending on the nature and functional limitations of a student's documented disability, he/she may be eligible to borrow assistive technologies. Every effort will be made to provide the specific technology/equipment requested by the student depending on the nature of the documented disability. However, while the Americans with Disabilities Act requires that priority consideration be given to the specific methods requested by the student, it does not imply that a particular accommodation must be granted if it is deemed not reasonable and other suitable methods are available.

Equipment loans are short term, in most cases for one semester. Equipment may be provided for classroom use, fieldwork, meetings with faculty members, or for any activity directly related to a student's academic program. Students are responsible for maintaining the equipment and returning it to SSD at the end of the loan period. Failure to return the equipment by the end of the loan may result in financial and academic-related consequences such as late fees, the withholding of transcripts, inability to register for classes, etc. Equipment should be returned in good working order other than normal wear and tear. Students are responsible for replacing the equipment or reimbursing the SSD for the repairs or cost of the equipment if it is lost, stolen, or damaged due to negligent or improper use. Students should not remove any identification or inventory labels/tags that have been placed on the equipment.

Students approved for this accommodation must meet with a disability counselor in order to receive appropriate training on how to use the approved assistive technology. Upon completion of training, students will sign an [Equipment Loan Agreement Form](#) which includes information regarding the equipment borrowed, duration of the loan and return date.

If any problems arise with the equipment, students should contact SSD as soon as possible. There is a risk that files may be damaged or lost if the equipment malfunctions or acquires a virus. SSD is not responsible for lost or damaged files.

### *Elevator Key Loan*

Mount Saint Mary College has several elevators on campus that require key access. Students who require the use of an elevator due to a documented disability may apply for an elevator key in the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities. An [Equipment Loan Agreement](#) should be completed and kept on file for students who are approved for an elevator key. All keys should be returned at the end of the current semester or the end of the loan period. Students are responsible for replacing the key if it is lost, stolen, or damaged due to negligent or improper use. Students should not remove any identification or inventory labels/tags that have been placed on the equipment.

### **Early Registration Policy and Procedure**

Depending on the nature and functional limitations of a student's documented disability, he/she may be eligible to receive early registration. Early registration allows a student to register for classes on the first day of registration each semester. This provides the opportunity to arrange a schedule (to the greatest extent possible) that is suitable based on his/her disability-related needs.

Early registration does not override any academic or departmental requirements such as the need to meet with an academic advisor, removal of any holds, etc. In addition, early registration does not guarantee the provision of classes at specific times.

**IMPORTANT:** While students will have continuous access to register for classes beyond the registration start date, choosing to register late may result in classes no longer being available.

### **Note Taking Assistance**

Note Taking assistance is provided as an accommodation for students whose documented disabilities interfere with their ability to take notes. Note Taking assistance is intended for a student's personal study use only and is not to be shared with other individuals. This service is provided as a necessary academic accommodation and is not considered a substitute for a student's full participation in each class.

The SSD will hire a qualified student enrolled in the class who must meet the following criteria: be in good academic standing (cumulative GPA of 3.3 or higher); attend class on a regular basis; provide legible and comprehensive notes. Once a qualified note taker has

been identified, an e-mail notification will be sent to the student and the instructor identifying the note taker.

Note Takers will utilize a carbonless notebook to take notes and based on the students preference a copy of these notes will be given to the student directly or dropped off at the SSD office where the student can pick up the notes.

It is the student's responsibility to inform SSD if they no longer need a note taker in any of his/her classes or if the note taker is not providing comprehensive notes.

### **Books in Alternate Format**

Students with disabilities who require alternate access to print materials may receive their textbooks in an alternate media. Eligibility for this accommodation is determined on an individualized basis, and students must be able to demonstrate a substantial print or physical disability, which requires alternate media materials.

Due to advancements in assistive technology, students are encouraged to explore the benefits of purchasing a [Learning Ally](#) individual membership or by purchasing etextbooks through [Amazon](#) and using their free Kindle Reading App. For those students not interested, or for books that cannot be found through the above options, SSD will request books directly from the publisher. Students can use free screen reading software to read these books. Students who have been approved for large print or brail formats should inform SSD. In some cases when books are not available from the publisher, SSD will hire a reader to provide an audio recording of the material.

In order to assure textbook availability, all relevant textbook information must be forwarded to SSD as soon as it is available. Students are responsible for purchasing the text\* and providing our office with the following information at least 6-8 weeks before the start of the semester. Students should email [disabilityservices@msmc.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@msmc.edu) with the following information:

- Book title
- Edition
- Author
- ISBN
- Publishing company
- Copyright year

\*In order to provide students with books in an electronic format (direct from the publisher) our office will require proof of purchase in the form of a receipt.

## **Classroom Attendance**

In most cases, class attendance is critical to a student's mastery of the knowledge and skills that are taught in a specific course and students are expected to follow the attendance policy established by the instructor in each class. If a qualified student with a disability believes he or she may not be able to abide by the attendance policy for disability related reasons, the student should contact SSD prior to the beginning of the semester, or as soon as possible after the need for an exception arises.

Every effort will be made to reasonably accommodate students disability related academic needs. However, if it is determined that classroom attendance is an essential or fundamental academic requirement of a course, neither the college nor an individual faculty member is required to modify it, regardless of the nature of a student's disability.

Modifications of course attendance policies will be determined on an individual, case-by-case basis depending upon the extent to which the supporting medical or psychological documentation from a licensed professional, qualified to diagnose and treat the disability, supports the need for modification to an attendance policy.

Since each class and situation is different, the extent of the modification should be determined by a discussion between the instructor and the student very early in the semester. The student and instructor should meet and complete the Attendance Agreement Form within seven days of the student's request for a meeting. The student is to return the form to SSD within seven days of the meeting. The agreement reached, or the fact that no agreement was reached, is to be documented on the form. If the form indicates that no agreement has been reached, SSD will schedule a meeting with the instructor and the student to try to resolve the matter.

Regardless of the modification of the attendance policy, the student is required to meet all of the academic course requirements and to complete all assignments and examinations within the respective time deadlines. It is the student's responsibility to obtain the material and notes from missed classes. The student will be graded according to the criteria stated in the class syllabus. If a student finds that he or she is not doing well in the class due to extended absences, the student is urged to consider options such as dropping the class, asking for a withdrawal, or taking a leave of absence. It is important for the student not to abuse the modification of the attendance policy. Modification of the attendance policy does not mean that unlimited absences will be permitted. The number of absences permitted will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Absences for non-disability related reasons will not be excused by the modification.

It is important for the student to realize that even if excused, absences could impact the student's academic performance because the student will not have the benefit of full classroom interaction and the opportunity to ask questions while the material is being presented in class.

## **Disclosure of Information**

Disability related information provided to SSD is considered an educational record, which falls under the protection of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA permits SSD to share information about the impact of a disability and accommodation eligibility with other Mount Saint Mary College officials who have a legitimate educational interest. A school official includes, but is not limited to faculty and instructional staff, the Dean of Students, Residence Life staff, office of the Registrar staff, academic coaches, Safety/Security staff, Counseling Center staff, and Health Center staff. Legitimate educational interest means that the college official needs to review an educational record or receive educational record information in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities. Sharing this information does not require student consent under FERPA.

Disclosure of educational record information to a Mount Saint Mary College official having a legitimate educational interest does not, however, constitute authorization for that person to transmit, share, or disclose any or all of that information to a third party who does not have a legitimate educational interest.

### *Consent to Release Records*

Written consent is required for the release of records to non-college officials. SSD staff will provide disability documentation to a specified individual after a student has provided written authorization or consent. The [Authorization to Release Information](#) form can be found online at [www.msmc.edu](http://www.msmc.edu). Students can also request a copy of this form by calling or emailing the SSD office.

### *Self-Disclosure*

Students have the right to disclose specific disability information as they choose. A student is not required to disclose disability status when there is no need for an accommodation in a class or other campus setting. A delay in appropriate disclosure can result in a student not receiving an accommodation for a particular activity or in a particular setting or environment because insufficient time is available to arrange or provide the accommodation.

## **Appeal Hearing for a Disability Concern**

Where a resolution cannot be reached informally, a student who believes the College is not in compliance with the applicable law(s) regarding disability issues may request an Appeal Hearing for a Disability Concern by submitting a written request to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The written request must be submitted within ten business days after the grievant directly contacted the appropriate person to attempt an informal resolution. It should include the rationale for the grievance as well as any significant information

relevant to the appeal. Alternative methods of communication, such as a personal or telephone interview, email, or digital recording, are also acceptable to accommodate an individual's disability. The types of claims that will be reviewed within these grievance procedures include: 1) disputes as to the nature or adequacy of the reasonable accommodations to be provided; and 2) disputes as to whether reasonable accommodations have been provided consistent with the agreement of the involved parties.

An Appeal Hearing for a Disability Concern will be scheduled where the student may present his/her grievance(s) before the hearing panel. Appeals hearings are conducted by a three (3) person panel made up of faculty and staff from the College designated by the Office of Academic Affairs.

The student has the right to be assisted by a MSMC campus advisor who is not directly involved in the Appeal Hearing. The campus advisor must be a full-time MSMC employee, who is acting in his/her role as a MSMC employee. The campus advisor may be present to advise only and may not participate. Advisors who interfere with the proceedings can be excused by the hearing panel. During the course of the resolution of a grievance, the hearing panel may call upon additional persons or request additional evidence it believes may be helpful in finding a suitable resolution. After the meeting, the appeal panel will deliberate and make its written recommendation to the President or his/her designee, whose decision is final. The student will be notified of the President's decision within 30 days of the hearing, absent extraordinary circumstances. If the grievance involves a dispute regarding the conduct or the requirements of a course, or of an academic program, a copy of the written decision issued by the President will be provided to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, the chair of the division responsible for the affected course or academic program, and, when applicable, to the instructor responsible for the course.

The Office of Services for Persons with Disabilities will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that disabled persons are provided other accommodations, if needed, to participate in this grievance process. Such arrangements may include, but are not limited to, providing interpreters for the deaf, providing taped cassettes of material for the blind, or assuring a barrier-free location for the proceedings. A student who makes use of the grievance procedure shall not be retaliated against for doing so. The availability and use of this grievance procedure does not prevent a person from filing a complaint of discrimination on the basis of disability with the US Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

## **Voluntary Medical or Mental Health Course Withdrawal and Leave Policy**

### *Course Withdrawals for Medical or Mental Health Reasons*

When a student has significant medical or mental health concerns, or has had extenuating circumstances (e.g., a tragedy in the family), he or she may request a course withdrawal(s) by submitting: 1) a completed [Voluntary Medical Leave/Course Withdrawal Request form](#) and 2) appropriate documentation from a qualified health professional to the coordinator of services for persons with disabilities (CSPD). The request must be received prior to the end of the current semester.

The CSPD will consider the student's request, and make a determination as to whether the request for the leave is appropriate. If the request is deemed appropriate, the CSPD will recommend a course withdrawal for medical reasons to the Office of the Registrar. Students may first be encouraged to consult with their instructors or advisors to determine if there are alternative methods to alleviate their academic workload before obtaining a course withdrawal.

If a student is not granted a withdrawal(s) he/she may submit a written appeal, within two weeks of receiving the decision, to the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students will review the appeal in consultation with the vice president of academic affairs and their decision regarding the request will be final. If a request is denied, the College catalog policies will apply, based upon the original date the [Voluntary Medical Leave/Course Withdrawal Request form](#) was originally submitted.

If the student's recommended course withdrawal is approved due to medical or mental health reasons, he/she may withdraw from a course, even after the official drop period has ended, and without academic penalty. The student will be given a waiver for tuition charges for the course he/she withdrew from, which may be used to offset the cost of tuition when he/she next registers for courses at the College. Should the student not register for future courses, no refund of tuition charges will be given.

### *Leaves from the College for Medical or Mental Health Reasons*

When a student has significant medical or mental health concerns or has had extenuating circumstances (e.g., a tragedy in the family), he or she may request a Medical Leave from the College, by submitting: 1) a completed [Voluntary Medical Leave/Course Withdrawal Request form](#), and 2) the appropriate documentation from a qualified health professional to the coordinator of services for persons with disabilities (CSPD).

The request must be received prior to the end of the current semester. The CSPD will consider the student's request, and make a determination as to whether the request is

appropriate. If the request is deemed appropriate, the CSPD will recommend to the Office of the Registrar that the medical leave be granted to the student. Students may first be encouraged to consult with their instructors or advisors to determine if there are alternative methods to alleviate their academic workload before obtaining a Medical Leave.

If a student is not granted a Medical Leave, he/she may submit a written appeal, within two weeks of receiving the decision, to the dean of students. The dean of students will review the appeal in consultation with the vice president of academic affairs and their decision regarding the request will be final. If a request is denied the College catalog policies will apply, based upon the original date the [Voluntary Medical Leave/Course Withdrawal Request form](#) was originally submitted.

A student recommended for and granted a Medical Leave will be withdrawn from all current courses he or she is registered for, even after the official withdrawal period has ended and without academic penalty. Additionally, a student on Medical Leave will receive a one-year Maintenance of Matriculation that allows the student to return without having to re-apply or pay another application fee. The student will be responsible for meeting 100% of his/her fees and room charges, as outlined in the College catalog. The student's board will be prorated. If the student receives financial aid funding, a portion of their federal student aid may have to be returned. A calculation will be run based on current federal student aid guidelines.

If the student intends to return to the College to complete his/her degree, the student will be given a waiver for tuition charges to offset the cost of tuition upon his/her return. Should the student not return to the college to complete his/her degree, no refund of tuition charges will be given. If away for more than one year, the student would be subject to the catalog requirements in place at the time of return.

When a student wants to return to the College, it is recommended that he/she schedule a meeting with the CSPD to review any relevant matters about this transition. If a student returning from a medical leave requires a reasonable accommodation in order to meet the essential eligibility requirements for MSMC students, MSMC will attempt to accommodate him/her as outlined in the MSMC Student Handbook

If there are reasonable concerns about the student being a danger to others, the CSPD may require him/her to submit additional documentation from a qualified health professional that states that it is safe for the student to return. If the student is not approved to return to the College, he/she may submit a written appeal, within two weeks of receiving the decision, to the Dean of Students, whose decision is final.