

Disability and Support Services:
Frequently Asked Questions and Answers for Faculty
Responsibilities to Students with Disabilities Who Are Enrolled in Their Classes

1. Should I expect to receive notification from DSS notifying me I will have a student with a disability in my class, listing each of the accommodations he/she is eligible to receive?

No. You will not receive notification of students' accommodations as this is protected information under disability laws. DSS is required to notify you of accommodations for particular students on an as need-to-know basis only. DSS students may volunteer such information, but they are not encouraged to do so unless the instructor has a need to know.

DSS does notify instructors when they have a student who is blind, visually impaired, hard-of-hearing, or deaf because of the nature of their accommodations. We also provide you with critical information regarding any role you may need to play in facilitating their accommodations. For visually impaired students, this notice is particularly important so faculty understand their obligations regarding the provision of all materials in an alternative format (digital, braille, etc.).

2. What is the process for referring a student in my class to DSS?

Students can initiate contact with DSS by making an appointment with a DSS counselor. This can be accomplished by students coming to the Pleasant Hill Counseling front desk in the Student Services Center or the Admissions office in San Ramon Campus to make an appointment or they can call Counseling Department in Pleasant Hill at 925-969-2140 or the Counseling Appointment line in San Ramon at 925-551-6209 to make an appointment. The student should indicate that he/she wants to see a DSS counselor.

3. What are my responsibilities regarding the DSS Exam Proctor Form?

The DSS Exam Proctor Form is a critical tool in the college's effort to provide fair and reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities while protecting the integrity of our academic program. As such, DSS will not administer any test that is not accompanied with a completely filled out DSS Exam Proctor Form. Instead, the test will not be administered to the student and the test will be returned to the instructor.

4. What are the responsibilities of students with disabilities related to exam accommodations?

Students with disabilities are expected to pick up a DSS Exam Proctor form at least two business days before the date of the test to allow time for the professor to submit the exam, in its proper format, to DSS. Additionally, DSS needs lead time in order to convert some tests into an accessible format, such as Braille. When students come to DSS for an Exam Proctor form less than two days before the test, the instructor has the right to decline the student's request only if it will pose an unfair burden on the professor. In other words, the instructor is unable to

complete the Exam Proctor Form and submit the exam in the limited notice provided by the student. Please note that there must be a good reason provided for denying the student accommodations for tests and examinations, as it may place the college at risk of a formal complaint or lawsuit. Students who take their tests and exams with DSS are expected to take their tests under the same conditions as their non-disabled classmates, with the exception of their stipulated accommodations. To that end, students are expected to start their tests on time and to submit their tests at the designated stopping time.

Students with disabilities taking their exams in DSS are, of course, held to DVC's Academic Integrity Policy. If a student is believed to have violated this policy while taking an exam with DSS, the exam is immediately collected from the student and the instructor is notified.

5. What is the preferred method for delivering an exam and completed Proctor Form to DSS?

DSS has been entrusted to protect the integrity of your tests and examinations. In order to accomplish this task, we must have instructors' cooperation in following our preferred delivery and pick up method. *It is especially important that students do not deliver their own exams to DSS or bring them back to instructors once the exam has been completed.* When instructors engage in this practice, it creates an opportunity for students to violate the college's Academic Integrity Policy. The DSS Proctor form indicates specific delivery information.

6. Is it okay for me to provide additional accommodations for students that have not been officially approved by DSS (e.g., notes in an otherwise closed book exam; more time; breaks, etc.).

No. This practice actually places the college at risk of formal complaints and even lawsuits. Disability law requires colleges to provide accommodations in a consistent manner. In other words, our criteria for a student having notes in an otherwise closed book examination, or double time, should be consistent. Such accommodations should be based upon the functional limitations of the disability, as well as consistent with accommodations we have provided in the past for students with similar or the same disabilities. Additionally, it is incumbent on the college to keep records of accommodations administered to individual students with disabilities. We cannot fulfill this obligation if instructors are providing accommodations not approved by DSS. If a student asks you directly for an accommodation, such as more time, notes, etc., the best practice is for you to refer the student to a DSS counselor.

7. What is the procedure when a student states they are DSS and needs a note taker.

The student will present you with a verification and announcement to read to the students in the class. It is very important DSS receives faculty assistance with providing this federally mandated accommodation to students with disabilities in your classes.

8. If I have a visually impaired student in my classroom, what are my responsibilities, if any, regarding accommodations?

Federal laws (Americans with Disabilities Act; Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act) require colleges to provide printed material in an alternative format for students who are visually impaired or blind. The alternative reading material must be available to the student with a disability at the same time their non-disabled classmates have access to the same material. In other words, it is not okay for a visually impaired student to receive reading material even a day later than their peers. This requires faculty to provide reading materials to DSS within a timely manner, including Power Point presentations. All materials for San Ramon and Pleasant Hill campus will be processed by Rose Desmond, Alternate Media Specialist. She can be reached at rdesmond@dvc.edu or X22174.

9. What are my responsibilities to the student enrolled in my class who is deaf or hard of hearing?

DSS will notify you when it is aware of a student who is deaf or hard of hearing enrolled in your class. DSS provides two interpreters for each class and strongly encourage the student who is deaf to request note takers. Students who are hard of hearing typically sit in the front of the classroom near the instructor. Any videos shown in class must be closed captioned. For information on captioning personal videos for either San Ramon or Pleasant Hill Campus contact Chris Wasmund in Media Services she can be reached at cwasmund@dvc.edu or x22553. It is important to emphasize that students who are deaf should be expected to participate in group work. Proper etiquette when conversing with individuals who are deaf is to talk directly to them, and not to the interpreter, when engaged in conversation. Please contact DSS if you have any questions regarding a deaf or hard of hearing student.

10. Should I provide any statements in my syllabus regarding students' use of accommodations, etc.?

Yes. Students with disabilities experience a more inclusive and supportive learning environment when instructors acknowledge their presence or invite them to come forward. It is in this spirit we suggest you include the following statement, or a similar one, in your syllabus as a way of empowering students to contact you early in the semester:

Any student with a documented disability is welcome to contact Disability Support Services early in the semester so we may arrange reasonable accommodations for you. You may do so by calling (925-969-2182) or dropping by DSS in the Student Services Center, Room 248 on Pleasant Hill location. For San Ramon please contact Ann Uawithya in the Learning Commons.

11. DSS also recommends faculty include the following statement on their syllabi as we have seen a growing number of students expecting their instructors to work with nonemployees of DVC (e.g., tutors, therapists, etc.):

If you work with non-DVC tutors, advisers and/or medical professionals as you pursue your educational goals, please be aware that DVC instructors are prohibited by federal regulations from interacting with non-DVC employees in the course of working with students enrolled in this course. I look forward to helping you with the course material during office hours.

Contact Information:

Pleasant Hill Campus: Emily Stone, Dean of Student Support Services estone@dvc.edu x22113
Nancy Deason, DSS Department Chair ndeason@dvc.edu x22172
Nicole Gomes, Program Assistant ngomes@dvc.edu x22182
Location: Student Services Center, 2nd Floor rm. 248

San Ramon Campus: Kathleen Costa, Sr. Dean kcosta@dvc.edu x56203
Carolyn Warren, DSS Counselor cwarren@dvc.edu
Ann Uawithya, SSIC auawithya@dvc.edu x56215
Location: Learning Commons, SRC

Diablo Valley College is required to provide reasonable accommodations and academic adjustments under State and Federal disability laws (Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act). Failure to do so can place the College in jeopardy of formal complaints to the Office for Civil Rights, as well as law suits

