



COMMUNITY AND
TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Accessibility Services
Student Handbook
2026-2027

Purpose

The Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) provides accessibility to students with different abilities in the college environment. OAS assists students with accommodations, advocacy, empowerment, goal planning, and study skills. After reviewing the OAS Student Handbook, students seeking accommodations complete the online Registration Form. Registering with the OAS at Blue Ridge Community and Technical College is a self-reporting process. The purpose of the Accessibility Services Student Handbook is to inform faculty, staff, and students of OAS services, policies, and procedures.

OAS Mission

The Office of Accessibility Services ensures equal access to the college experience by facilitating supportive resources and educational programming to remove barriers from education.

Mandates

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), amended in 2008, prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Title II of the ADA protects students attending state universities, state and local community colleges such as Blue Ridge Community and Technical College, and the university school system. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits all institutions receiving federal financial assistance from discriminating against an individual due to their different ability. To ensure compliance with these equal opportunity laws, Blue Ridge Community and Technical College must provide reasonable accommodations to support students in college classes and student activities.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act: “No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States...shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

Title II of the ADA: “A public entity shall make reasonable modifications in policies or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the public entity can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.”

Students' Rights and Responsibilities

In higher education, it is the student's responsibility to request accommodations. Accommodations may not be required for all diagnosed conditions. Students are responsible for completing the appropriate forms provided on the Blue Ridge CTC website in order to register with the Office of Accessibility Services.

Accommodations at the college level differ from options provided by primary and secondary schools, as the protection provided by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) expires when a student graduates high school. This means a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) does not automatically transfer from high school to college.

Students with different abilities at Blue Ridge CTC have the RIGHT to:

- Request reasonable accommodations ensuring equal access to, and opportunity to participate in, courses, programs, services, employment, activities, and facilities available through the college.
- Appropriate confidentiality of all information regarding diagnosis(es) and to choose who may access their information, except disclosures required or permitted by law.
- Request information available in accessible formats.
- File a grievance according to the Grievance Procedure outlined in this handbook.

Students with different abilities at Blue Ridge CTC have the RESPONSIBILITY to:

- Meet the essential eligibility requirements for educational programs and activities, or be able to perform the essential functions of a job.
- Identify themselves as an individual with different abilities when an accommodation is needed.
- Seek information, counsel, and assistance.
- Follow policies and procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodations and services as defined by the Accessibility Services Student Handbook.
- Arrange testing accommodations with each faculty member a minimum of one week prior to each test/exam. If the faculty member is unavailable, contact OAS coordinator to assist scheduling the exam.
- Schedule meetings with the OAS Student Access Coordinator as needed AND maintain communication throughout the semester.
- Work collaboratively with each faculty member to implement accommodations within a course.

Changes to accommodations after the start of a semester are possible; however, accommodations are not retroactive. To modify accommodations, students must schedule a meeting with the OAS Student Access Coordinator.

Academic Standards

Students enrolled in the OAS are expected to meet institutional academic standards. Accommodations are personalized supports that remove specific barriers with the goal of ensuring a qualified individual with a disability has access to, and an equal opportunity to participate in, Blue Ridge's educational programs and activities.

Accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis and are the result of the interactive accommodation process. Accommodations range in type and implementation depending on the nature and impact of the student's disability and the educational program, activity, or facility involved. While there is a great deal of flexibility with the types of accommodations approved, accommodations cannot fundamentally alter a program or activity (*e.g.*, change an essential eligibility requirement).

Registering for Accommodations

The Intake Process – Completed by the Student

1. Complete the online Registration Form and provide supporting documentation to enroll with the OAS. Supporting documentation of a disability and the impact on one or more major life activities may include assessments, letters from qualified professionals, IEPs/504 plans, accommodation letters from other colleges or testing organizations, and documentation from the uniformed services. To request accommodations in completing the online Registration Form, contact the OAS Student Access Coordinator:

Aspen Monsma
Student Access Coordinator
Email: access@blueridgectc.edu
Call: 304.260.4380 ext. 2117
Text: 304.745.2335

2. Schedule a virtual or in-person intake meeting with OAS. Upon receipt of the Registration Form, if no intake meeting has been set, the OAS Student Access Coordinator will contact the student to schedule a meeting.

The Review Process – Completed by the OAS

Once the intake process is complete, the OAS Student Access Coordinator reviews the supporting documentation and the requested accommodations. Should additional documentation or clarification be needed, the OAS Student Access Coordinator contacts the student. While documentation may be sufficient to establish a disability, documentation alone does not inform whether OAS approves accommodations or the specifics of those accommodations. The determination of reasonable accommodations involves the consideration of the student's disability and the context of the educational program.

Accommodations do not take effect until the intake and review process have been completed. Accommodations are not retroactive and cannot be applied prior to completion of the registration process with the OAS.

Issuing Accommodations – Completed by the OAS

Once the intake process and the review process are completed, accommodations are issued, and an accommodation letter is provided to the student.

Accommodation letters are sent to faculty members the first day of each semester and the day after add/drop ends. If the semester has begun when accommodations are issued, accommodation letters are sent immediately following process completion. Faculty and students are encouraged to discuss the implementation of appropriate accommodations for their class. These conversations should be held in private.

Faculty members are NEVER given details regarding a student's diagnosis. Letters to faculty members outline accommodations granted by the OAS. The OAS abides by strict confidentiality rules set forth by ADA and FERPA. A student may share with the faculty member as they wish; however, a faculty member should not initiate the inquiry.

Temporary Accommodations – Completed by the Student and the OAS

If a student has a temporary diagnosis (i.e.: broken arm, loss of eyesight due to cataract surgery, etc.) documentation provided by the student's primary care provider warrants a temporary accommodation. To receive a temporary accommodation, complete the online Registration Form. Following receipt of the Registration Form, the OAS Student Access Coordinator contacts the student to discuss the student's specific temporary accommodations.

Issues with Accommodations

Students are encouraged to communicate with faculty members immediately whenever a problem arises. If the situation cannot be resolved, the student should contact the OAS Student Access Coordinator. The Grievance Policy should be discussed and considered whenever the student is not satisfied with the outcome.

Common Accommodations

Advanced Course Material Access

Students with this accommodation are granted reasonable access to entire course content at the start of term, with the exception of tests and quizzes. Students are able to complete assignments at an accelerated pace, when possible.

This accommodation is only given for specific medical documentation.

Extended Assignment Time

The purpose of the assignment extension accommodation is to provide reasonable flexibility for a student who has a disabling health condition that may have episodic and acute symptoms that interfere with the ability to meet the due date of a class assignment. The accommodation is approved when necessary to provide equitable access and to ensure that a student with a disability is not disproportionately penalized for exacerbations of their disability's unpredictable symptoms.

This accommodation is only given for specific medical documentation. This accommodation is approved on an individual assignment basis and is not a blanket approval of extensions for all work in a semester.

Assignment Extension Request Process

1. An instructor and student should discuss and agree upon extension terms at the start of term, whenever possible. Agreed upon extension due dates **should be addressed in writing.**

2. This accommodation is not approved as a substitution for proper time and workload management. This accommodation is approved on an individual assignment basis and is not a blanket approval of extensions for all work in a semester.
3. If an extension is needed for a specific assignment beyond a posted due date, students initiate the accommodation request by contacting the instructor, in writing.
4. Students are expected to request an extension **BEFORE** the assignment is due. However, should medical conditions make this impossible, the request should be made as soon as the student is reasonably able (i.e. hospitalization, etc.) Once an extension request is received, the instructor may contact OAS if there are questions regarding the reasonable extension of an assignment.
5. Instructors will communicate, in writing, specific guidelines for any assignment extensions. Instructors are expected to respond promptly to requests for assignment extensions, taking into consideration the time between receipt of the request and response to the student. A denial of an assignment extension should never occur without first consulting OAS.
6. Assignments are expected to be completed as soon as possible after the initial deadline, taking the nature of symptoms into account. Typical extensions are 24-48 hours of the initial due date; however, may be reasonable 5-7 days depending on health circumstances.
7. Instructors may not ask for specific disability or health related information regarding a student. OAS will correspond with a student to verify any questions pertaining to this accommodation. Doctor notes and documentation must be sent to the OAS, not an instructor.

Extended Test Time

Students with extended test time are given time and a half (e.g., 60 minutes = 90 minutes). It is the student's responsibility to schedule a test time that does not interfere with any other courses.

Extra Breaks

Students receiving this accommodation are allowed to move around or leave the classroom as needed as long as they are not disrupting the class.

Digital Readers

Students with this accommodation need to use a screen reader or text-to-speech software to read course materials. All course materials should be in an accessible digital format. Contact OAS if any course materials need to be remediated.

Interpreters

The OAS provides sign language interpreters to students who are deaf and hard of hearing. Interpreters are provided for both academic and non-academic courses and/or activities. It is the student's responsibility to provide the OAS with notice at least 48 hours in advance of when an interpreter is needed. The OAS Student Access Coordinator contacts the interpreting service provider to secure interpreters for the semester.

Video Relay Interpreting (VRI) services are available at times when an interpreter is not available. A

laptop is in both Security Offices at HQ and TC for use. Please contact the OAS Student Access Coordinator for questions regarding VRI.

Interpreters Within the Classroom: The interpreter is not to be involved in a dual role inside the classroom. The student should not request an interpreter to engage in the following roles: counselor, tutor, friend, confidant, class assistant, note taker, transportation provider, or other roles that are unrelated to interpreting services. The student is responsible for all course content, exams, assignments, and other course requirements. The interpreter is not responsible for the grade the student receives. If the student has questions about course material, grades, or related course aspects, they must speak to the faculty member.

Problem Resolution: Discuss any issues regarding interpretation services with the interpreter and the OAS Student Access Coordinator. Should the interpreter be absent from class or another scheduled event, the student must report the absence to the Office of Accessibility Services immediately.

OAS understands emergencies occur, but it is important for the student to notify the OAS Student Access Coordinator at access@blueridgectc.edu or 304.260.4380 ext. 2117 or text 304.745.2335 when they will be absent.

Notetaking

Students with this accommodation receive copies of the faculty member's handouts and slideshows. It is the faculty member's responsibility to provide this at the beginning or end of each class. This student may use assistive technology for notetaking, such as software on a laptop, cell phone application, or other forms of technology for recording lecture audio or to take photos of the board or other information presented in front of the class (for personal use only).

Public Speaking Exemption

Instructors should provide the student with alternative methods to meet the assignment objectives when public speaking is required. Do not call on the student unless the student asks to contribute to the discussion.

Recording Lectures

Students may use a personal device (cell phone, laptop, etc.), to record lectures. Students should see OAS if a device is not available. Upon the request of the faculty member, the student must delete the recordings when they are no longer needed for academic assignments. The class lecture is property of the faculty member and should not be used for anything other than the purpose of the specific class.

Test Reader/Writer

Students with this accommodation have access to a proctor or text to speech software. The faculty member and student should schedule a time for the faculty member to read/write for the student during their test. Students may also contact the OAS Student Access Coordinator for assistance with the exam.

Testing in Private

Students schedule a time with the faculty member to test in private. The student and faculty member need to agree on a place for the testing to occur. This accommodation does not need to be provided for online tests, as the test can be completed in the privacy of the student's home.

Test Proctoring

Students in need of testing accommodations should schedule with the faculty member. Respondus, a secure online proctoring services is available through Blackboard, if the faculty member is not able to provide the accommodations. The OAS Student Access Coordinator should be contacted if the previous two methods (*i.e.*, testing in private or use of Respondus) are unavailable.

Student Responsibilities

- Find out when all tests are scheduled by reviewing the syllabus.
- Schedule a time with your faculty member to take your test with accommodations or schedule with the OAS Student Access Coordinator in advance of your test date.
- Show up on the appropriate test date and time.

Faculty Responsibilities

- Meet with student and discuss availability to proctor tests with accommodations.
- Provide test in alternate format if noted on accommodation letter.
- If you cannot proctor the exam, provide the OAS a copy of the test at least 24 hours in advance of the scheduled test date.

Waiver of Absences

Students have a responsibility to contact the faculty member when this accommodation needs to be implemented (within 48 hours is best practice). The student and faculty member should discuss how missing assignments or learning activities will be managed according to course excused absence policies. Incompletes are limited and addressed on a case-by-case basis. **This accommodation is only given for specific medical documentation. The specific number of absences permitted is determined on a course-by-course basis to preserve the integrity of learning outcomes and successful course completion.**

Excused Absence Policy

Excused absences may be honored retroactively with appropriate documentation. Retroactive excused absences will be no more than 10 days after the date of the absence. No absences will be honored after the end of the term. Exceptions to this policy are limited and made on a case-by-case basis.

Excused absences are provided to students who provide appropriate documentation signed by a licensed professional. Submit documentation in a PDF, JPEG, or PNG file below.

Excused absences include:

- Documented medical reason
- Death of a loved one
- Jury Duty or Interview with a Lawyer/Law Enforcement Officer
- Other; Please include typed letters with documentation explaining reasoning.
- High School Sanctioned Event, verified by school personnel.

ACCEPTABLE DOCUMENTATION

Excused absence dates, or range of dates, must be listed on documentation. Documentation must be signed by a licensed/qualified professional. Obituaries do not require a signature.

UNACCEPTABLE DOCUMENTATION

Handwritten notes requesting an excused absence will not be accepted. Documentation that cannot be verified by a licensed/qualified professional may be denied. Transportation issues or internet connectivity issues do not qualify for an excused absence.

Students who do not qualify for an excused absence are encouraged to communicate with the instructor regarding arrangements.

If you have questions or need further assistance, contact the OAS:

Contact Information:

access@blueridgectc.edu

304.260.4380 ext. 2117 (call)

304.745.2335 (text)

Counseling and Auxiliary Aids Support

The OAS Student Access Coordinator is available for psychoeducational counseling in areas of specific expertise. Topics could include but are not limited to advocacy, empowerment, healthy coping techniques, and resiliency. Community mental health resources can be found on the Blue Ridge CTC website.

*Note the OAS Student Access Coordinator cannot provide mental health counseling but can provide emotional support during challenging times. This support should not take the place of mental health counseling.

Accommodations/Auxiliary Aids: The OAS Student Access Coordinator may assist students in accessing exam accommodations, converting materials into accessible formats, and learning how to use assistive technology.

Blue Ridge CTC Policy for Service Animals

Service animals are canines who are individually trained to perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a medical diagnosis. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. Emotional support animals are not considered service animals and are not covered by the ADA.

Example tasks provided by the service animal 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.
- Pulling a wheelchair.
- Assisting an individual during a seizure.
- Alerting individuals to the presence of allergens.
- Retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone.
- Helping persons with psychiatric and neurological diagnoses by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.

The following are requirements of student-owners and their service animals:

1. Service animals are permitted to accompany student-owners to most areas on campus. Certain labs and/or areas requiring protective clothing may exclude service animals. Denial to an area will be made on a case-by-case basis through determining whether the animal's presence poses a health or safety risk that cannot be mitigated. Factors considered include, but are not limited to, the nature of the machinery and/or the nature of the research.
2. Service animals may be excluded from a facility if that animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.
3. Service animals may be excluded from a facility if that animal's behavior is disruptive to other participants within the facility.
4. Service animals must be clean, in good health, and have a current rabies vaccination.
5. All student-owners and/or users of service animals are responsible to clean up after and properly dispose of their animal's feces while on campus.

Infraction of any of these behaviors or policies may result in the expulsion of the service animal from campus property.

Grievance Procedure

Students who are qualified individuals with disabilities as defined by law may request reasonable accommodations, which afford them equal opportunity to access, use, and participate in the programs, activities, facilities, and employment available at the College. Accommodations are provided unless they would present an undue burden, or make a fundamental alteration to the nature of the academic program or activity at issue. In some cases, the College may provide an equally effective alternative to the requested accommodation.

If a requested accommodation is not provided, the College will attempt to propose alternatives if appropriate. The College will work with the person requesting the accommodation to determine if there are acceptable alternatives. If a dispute concerning an accommodation is not resolved by the College's interactive process, the individual may file a grievance using the process outlined below.

Any student who believes they have been subjected to discrimination based on ability or have been denied access or accommodations shall have the right to invoke the Grievance Procedure. This procedure is designed to address the following issues:

- Disagreements or denials regarding requested services, accommodations, or modifications.
- Alleged inaccessibility of an institution program or activity.
- Alleged harassment or discrimination based on ability.
- Any other alleged violations of the ADA and/or Section 504.

The focus of this Grievance Policy does not and will not supersede any other institutional procedure or policy which may exist for addressing issues such as grade appeal or any other issue of concern in which the college has already established policies and procedures. Students are encouraged to consult the OAS Student Access Coordinator regarding the most appropriate procedure to address a particular concern.

Students are encouraged to, but not required to, pursue informal grievance resolution by engaging directly with the individual who allegedly committed the adverse action (*e.g.*, reminding the instructor of an approved accommodation) prior to pursuing the formal grievance process.

Formal grievances alleging unlawful disability-based discrimination and/or retaliation in the delivery of educational programs and activities must be filed within 180 days of the date of the alleged adverse action, or last discriminatory incident in a matter involving harassment or hostile environment unless the time for filing is extended by the OAS Student Access Coordinator.

Formal grievances must be addressed in writing directly to the OAS Student Access Coordinator. The written grievance should contain as much information as possible but at a minimum should contain:

1. The name and contact information of the person filing the grievance
2. A description of the problem or action alleged to be discriminatory or retaliatory
3. Where applicable, the names and titles of any persons who were involved in the act of discrimination or who witnessed the discrimination
4. The proposed remedy sought if appropriate

Once the formal grievance is filed, within 10 business days, the OAS Student Access Coordinator, or Assistant Dean of Student Outreach shall meet with the student and faculty member to gather relevant information.

Within 10 business days following the receipt of the written resolution, the student has the right to seek review through the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Allied Health Sciences, Leslie See, at lsee@blueridgectc.edu.

If a student should exhaust all Blue Ridge CTC's Grievance Procedures, they may contact: Mid-Atlantic ADA Center 800.949.4232

Contact the OAS Student Access Coordinator, Aspen Monsma, to discuss specific situations or need for clarification about accommodations.

Blue Ridge Community and Technical College

Office of Accessibility Services

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Aspen Monsma

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