












Bristol Community College

Office of Disability Services – Student Guide







“All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them.”

Walt Disney

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***Key:** Please note that each section has its own symbol and is color coded. Page tabs in lower right hand corner identify and correspond to each section.

<u>Symbol / Color</u>	<u>Section</u>
 Green	Welcome
 Dark Teal	Office of Disability Services Confidentiality / Eligibility
 Indigo	Differences Between High School and College
 Orange	Reasonable Accommodations
 Pink	Self-Advocacy
 Sky Blue	Rights and Responsibilities of BCC's Students and BCC's ODS

Congratulations! You are now a student at Bristol Community College, WELCOME!

Here are some simple steps that you need to take:

1. Register with the Office of Disability Services located in L109 (508)678-2811 Ext. 2955. Videophone (508)275-5061
2. Make an appointment to see a Learning Specialist.
3. Be on time for your appointment.
4. Bring any documentation that you may have regarding your disability.
5. Make a list of questions or concerns for your Learning Specialist.
6. Remember that YOU need to come to us! We will support you and guide you throughout your educational journey.
7. Smile, we can help. Support is here!



Office of Disability Services / ODS

● Who are we?

- We are **SUPPORT**.
- A Learning Specialist in the office will assist students and evaluate disability-related documentation to determine the student's accommodation eligibility.

● Where are we?

- We are located in the **L building, Room 109** and the office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- We also have offices for students at the **Attleboro** and **New Bedford** locations.
- All three locations can be contacted by calling **1-508-678-2811**.
Fall River Ext. 2955, Attleboro Ext. 2966, New Bedford Ext. 4011

● What do we do?

- The Office of Disability Services (ODS) at Bristol Community College provides a full range of advocacy services to a diverse population of students with disabilities.
- ODS assists students by providing support services for students with disabilities, which will enable them to participate in the college's academic community, and in overall college life.
- The office also works with students to determine individual classroom accommodations, recommends strategies based on students' strengths, and will also screens students referred by faculty and staff for a disability.
- ODS works with other college departments in providing services and program accessibility for all students.
- The office also assists students with access to assistive technology and the tools necessary for a student's success in college. WE CAN HELP!



● Confidentiality

- **ALL** documentation is **confidential**.
- The Office of Disability Services requests information for the sole purpose of determining appropriate accommodations so that students may have equal access and equal opportunities.
- No disability-related information will ever appear on a student's transcript or any part of their academic record.

● Eligibility

- Students must provide current medical and/or diagnostic documentation of their disability (within last three years).
- Students with learning disabilities should include documentation of their Individual Educational Plan (IEP) or 504 plan, as well as psychological and/or educational testing documentation.
- We strongly recommend that students contact ODS at least **4 weeks prior to the start of the semester**.
- In the event that you do not have documentation, or if you think you may have a disability and would like help, please do not hesitate to ask our office for assistance. Although we do not conduct testing, we can give you resources to assist you in locating offices that do conduct testing.



Differences Between High School and College

HIGH SCHOOL (IDEA)

COLLEGE (ADA)

<p><u>Education</u> is a right and must be provided to ALL individuals.</p>	<p><u>Education</u> is not a RIGHT. You MUST request help by going to ODS.</p>
<p>Identification of disability is the responsibility of the school district.</p>	<p>Identification of disability must be made by YOU. Disclosing is your responsibility.</p>
<p><u>Special Education Laws</u> - the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides the consent and funding to schools for services, transportation, physical, occupational, speech therapy, and tutoring.</p>	<p><u>Civil Rights Law</u> - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act now apply. Colleges are required to offer accommodations and support services. No transportation is provided. Tutoring is available for all students through the college's Tutoring and Academic Support Center (TASC).</p>
<p><u>Documentation</u> - Individual Educational Plan (IEP) is developed through testing and is paid for by the school district.</p>	<p><u>Documentation</u> - You must provide "proof" of your disability through educational testing, medical or mental health records that are no more than three years old. You must pay for any testing or evaluations after high school.</p>
<p>Fundamental alterations of programs are required.</p>	<p>NO fundamental alterations are permitted.</p>

Reasonable Accommodations

● What are reasonable accommodations?

- Reasonable accommodations are academic adjustments designed to provide students with disabilities equal access and equal opportunity to participate in programs, courses, services and activities.
- Accommodations allow for students to be evaluated based on their true abilities.

● How do I get accommodations?

- All students must make an appointment with ODS and are encouraged to do so four weeks prior to the semester.
 - All students must provide current medical and/or diagnostic documentation of their disability (no more than three years old).
 - All students with learning disabilities must provide documentation of educational testing or psychoeducational testing
- *Note: While the High school IEP is helpful in determining accommodations; it is not sufficient documentation for obtaining reasonable accommodations at the college level.

● Types of Accommodations

- **Specialized testing accommodations** such as extended time, Reduced distraction test setting, and reading / scribing.
- **Note-takers / Note-sharers** – Students are encouraged to make a request 1-2 weeks prior to start of the semester.
- **Learning Ally** – Audio books, or other Accessible media are available to ODS students.
- **American Sign Language Interpreters** – Students should Contact ODS 4 – 6 weeks prior to the semester, as interpreters are assigned on a semester basis.

*Note: Accommodation type is contingent on the extent of the disability as established in the student's documentation.

● **Assistive Technology – What is it?**

- Assistive technology (AT) is a device that makes an academic task more manageable for students.
- AT devices improve a student's functional capability to complete required coursework.

● **Assistive Technology Lab / AT Lab**

- Offers students access to assistive technology.
- Students receive recommendations for appropriate equipment as well as training and support.
- Available technology – Kurzweil (text or speech), JAWS screen reader, Dragon Naturally Speaking (speech to text), and Closed Circuit TV Text Magnifiers.

● **Additional Services**

- Academic advising
- Assistance in obtaining auxiliary aids
- Referrals for independent testing
- Liaison, advocacy, and training services for faculty and staff

● **American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters**

- **American Sign Language Interpreters (ASL)** available for students who are Deaf and fluent in ASL. ODS will help to arrange for interpreter services.
- Interpreters are assigned on a semester basis.
- Students are encouraged to contact ODS 4-6 weeks prior to start of semester.

● **Learning Ally**

- Students who require audio books, or other media, Learning Ally can register with ODS.
- Registration can take approximately 4 – 6 weeks.

● Self-Advocacy

● What does self-advocacy mean?

- Speaking or acting for YOURSELF.
- Deciding what is best for you and taking charge of obtaining it.
- Standing up for your rights as a person.

● How can I practice self-advocacy?

- By understanding your disability and how it affects YOU.
- By understanding your rights and responsibilities under the SECTION 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- By obtaining this information and using it to achieve your goals.

● Why is it important to be a self-advocate?

- It helps you to develop good communication skills and assertiveness skills.
- It helps you develop confidence about your abilities and strengths.
- It helps you to be more independent and teaches you to make decisions that affect your life.

● When is self-advocacy used in college?

- When you are in need of additional accommodations.
- When you are experiencing a disability-related issue in a class and need some extra assistance.
- When there is a barrier preventing you from accessing an event on campus and you need the barrier removed.



Rights and Responsibilities of Students

Every student with a documented disability has the RIGHT	Every student with a documented disability has the RESPONSIBILITY
To equal access to programs, courses, services, and activities on campus.	To meet the college's qualifications and institutional standards.
To have reasonable accommodations.	To follow ODS procedures to request services and to identify him/herself as an individual with a disability.
To confidentiality regarding their disability.	Provide current and appropriate documentation of disability.
To fully participate in the college's academic community.	To adhere to academic standards, maintain appropriate behavior, and to act as an independent adult.

Rights and Responsibilities of ODS

Bristol Community College's ODS has the RIGHT	Bristol Community College's ODS has the RESPONSIBILITY
To maintain BCC's academic standards	To ensure that BCC courses, programs services, activities, and facilities, are offered and available in the most integrated and appropriate setting
To request and review current documentation by a learning specialist who confirms the student's disability and the need for accommodations	To evaluate students for eligibility of services in a timely manner upon the student's self-disclosure and formal request for services
To select equally effective accommodations in consultation with the student	To provide information about BCC's policies and procedures to students and to have those materials available in accessible formats upon request
To deny a request for accommodations if the documentation is not warranted, or if the student fails to provide appropriate documentation, or if it is not provided in a timely manner	To maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and disclose only when permitted by law or when the student provides written consent
To refuse to provide accommodations that are unreasonable or inappropriate	To assist students with their requests for reasonable accommodations when the

including any that pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others, pose undue financial or administrative burden on the college, or constitute a substantial alteration of an element of a program of study	students discloses their disability and meet BCC's eligibility criteria
To facilitate a culture of shared responsibility by expecting employees of the college to comply with legal mandates under the federal laws	To ensure confidentiality of all information pertaining to a student's disability
To expect students and faculty to work in partnership with ODS to appropriately facilitate accommodations	To assist students with disabilities with the skills to self-advocate and to understand their strengths and functional limitations.

● **Additional Information**

Excerpt from BCC's Policy Statement on Affirmative

Action, Non-Discrimination, and Diversity

Non-Discrimination and Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities

The community colleges recognize the multitude of barriers that confront persons with disabilities in access to both employment and education. Consistent with state and federal statutes that affirm and protect the equal opportunity rights of persons with disabilities, the community colleges adopt a policy of non-discrimination and equal opportunity for otherwise qualified persons with disabilities.

The colleges will examine all existing admissions, student support, and other student life policies, practices, and facilities to assure that they do not disparately treat or impact otherwise qualified disabled persons. Where such disparity is found, it will be corrected as quickly and completely as is reasonable under existing circumstances. Accordingly, all college facilities may not be available and accessible at a particular time.

The colleges will adopt a policy of nondiscrimination with respect to admissions, access to programs and facilities, and services for all otherwise qualified disabled persons.

In accordance with State and Federal law, the colleges will provide necessary reasonable accommodations to otherwise qualified students with disabilities to assure equal access to programs, facilities and services.

Any employee or student who believes he/she has been a victim of discrimination due to a disability may file a complaint pursuant to the Grievance Procedure contained herein. Further information may be obtained by contacting the Affirmative Action Officer or Disability Services.

● **Acknowledgements**

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 - Bristol Community College's Office of Disability Services
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