

# **Office of Disability Services**

## **A Guide for Students with Disabilities**

Academic Success & Tutoring Center  
271 Scott Swamp Road  
Farmington, CT 06032

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# Introduction

Tunxis Community College is committed to the full participation of all students in its programs. Students with disabilities who feel they may require specific academic accommodations or auxiliary support services are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services in the Academic Success & Tutoring Center. This handbook will explain how students with disabilities request academic accommodations and access support services. It serves as a guide to help students understand the guidelines as well as the steps for obtaining reasonable academic accommodations and access to learning in a postsecondary setting.

## Notice of Nondiscrimination

Tunxis Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religious creed, age, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, marital status, ancestry, present or past history of mental disorder, learning disability or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or genetic information in its programs and activities. In addition, the College does not discriminate in employment on the basis of veteran status or criminal record. The following individuals have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Susan Winn Associate Dean, Academic & Student Affairs, 504/ADA Coordinator, [swinn@tunxis.edu](mailto:swinn@tunxis.edu), 860.773.1430 and Nicholas D'Agostino Director of Equal Employment Opportunity, Human Resources/Affirmative Action Officer [d'agostinon@ct.edu](mailto:d'agostinon@ct.edu) 860.723.0727, Tunxis Community College 271 Scott Swamp Rd, Farmington, CT 06032.

## Philosophy and Mission Statement

The Office of Disability Services supports the educational experience of students with permanent and temporary disabilities. Our goal is to enhance self-advocacy and self-awareness in a comprehensively accessible environment.

The Office of Disability Services complies with the legislative guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973), and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (2011).

The Office of Disability Services embraces a philosophy of self-actualization and recognizes that a student's search for personal fulfillment is driven by access to college academic programs and activities. The Office of Disability Services can assist students as they strive to maximize their potential.

## What are the differences between high school and college accessibility and disability services?

<b>K-12 (IDEA) Individual Disability Education Act</b>	<b>COLLEGE (ADA) Americans with Disability Act</b>
<b>Education is a right and is provided in appropriate environments to all individuals.</b>	<b>Higher Education is a choice and all students follow certain admission criteria.</b>
<b>School districts are responsible to identify students' disabilities.</b>	<b>Students self-identify in higher education. At Tunxis, students contact Student Accessibility Services.</b>
<b>School districts provide free testing evaluation, and transportation to programs.</b>	<b>Students arrange their own transportation and submit appropriate documentation. An evaluation is the student's responsibility.</b>
<b>School districts develop Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).</b>	<b>IEPs are not developed at college; college support is not called special education.</b>
<b>School districts are responsible for providing all IEP supports and services.</b>	<b>Students are responsible for activating approved services every semester and following the steps for access to approved accommodations.</b>
<b>Fundamental alterations of programs and curricula are required.</b>	<b>No fundamental alterations of course criteria or standards are required.</b>
<b>Personal services for medical/physical disabilities are provided.</b>	<b>Personal services are the responsibility of the student.</b>

# Defining Reasonable Accommodations

A reasonable accommodation is a modification or accommodation to a course, program, service, job activity, or facility that ensures an equal opportunity for qualified students with disabilities to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, a service, program, or activity. Aids, benefits, or services need not produce equal results, but must afford an equal opportunity to achieve equal results. When necessary, the Office of Disability Services staff will consult with faculty regarding whether an accommodation would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program or activity or whether an academic requirement is essential to the instruction being pursued or to any directly related licensing requirement. In doing so, ODS will examine the following:

- Barriers between individuals with disabilities and the campus environment in accessing courses, programs, services, jobs, activities or facilities without accommodations;
- Requested modifications, accommodations, and auxiliary aids;
- Whether the proposed accommodations would fundamentally alter the nature of the course, program, service, job, activity, or facility;
- Whether an academic requirement is essential to the instruction or to any directly related licensing requirement;
- Whether effective alternatives exist that would allow the individual with a disability to participate without lowering essential requirements or fundamentally altering the nature of the program.

When the College determines that a modification related to facilities or communication would result in a fundamental alteration or undue burden, ODS shall acquire the written opinion of the proper authority, i.e. department chair of impacted discipline, providing the reasoning supporting the decision.

# Documentation Guidelines

We engage in an interactive process with each student and review requests for accommodations on a case-by-case basis. In determining reasonable accommodations, we consider each student's condition(s), history, experience, request, and the characteristics of the course or program the student is enrolled in. While students are a vital source of information, in order to determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations, we also request information from other sources in order to establish a disability and the impact it has on learning in a postsecondary environment. Please note the following with regards to documentation:

- Students should submit any prior assessments and/or evaluative reports conducted by evaluators, physicians, medical professionals, etc., which may assist in determining appropriate academic accommodations.
- Documentation should be current and provide a clear and detailed comprehensive assessment of the disability and/or diagnosis provided by a qualified professional.
- This documentation should substantiate the need for these services based on the individual's **current** level of academic functioning in an educational setting.
- Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), Summary of Performance (SOPs), or Section 504 Plans from high schools may provide supportive information of a disability; however, they are not sufficient on their own and therefore students are asked to also submit the most recent Psychological/Educational Evaluation Report completed in high school.
- Prior receipt of accommodations (e.g., in high school or in another postsecondary institution) helps to inform the process of determining appropriate accommodations; however, they do not guarantee receipt of the same accommodations.
- As requested, a Medical Verification Form is available to assist students who are currently working with a professional in the health field.

## Documentation may include:

1. Evaluation of possible alternative diagnoses or explanations by appropriate professionals such as clinical psychologists, educational therapists, special education teachers, licensed psychiatrists, neurologists, or physicians. Certified/appropriate professionals cannot be family members.
2. Background history and/or evidence of existing impairment.
3. Current impact of (or limitations imposed by) the present disability.
4. Treatments, medications, or services in place.
5. Expected duration, stability, or progression.

6. Neuropsychological or psychological-educational assessments that discuss academic area(s) of impact and/or limitation(s).
7. Recommended academic accommodations with rationale as related to the student's disability.
8. Integrated summary of medical documentation, related testing, and supportive information.
9. Name, title, address, and phone number of certifying professional, as well as, the date of diagnosis and/or evaluation included on typed letter head.

All information and documentation received is confidential and is used by ODS for the sole purpose of determining a student's eligibility for services and determining reasonable accommodations. Information is only shared within the institution if there is a compelling educational need to know.

## **What are Academic Accommodations?**

Academic accommodations are designed to provide students with disabilities equal access and opportunity to participate in programs, courses, and college activities.

An overview of some academic accommodations includes:

- Note taking assistance
- Extended time for exams
- Audio recording of lecture format classes and review sessions
- Sign language interpreters
- Textbooks in alternate formats
- Assistive Listening Devices
- Material enlarged
- Wheelchair accessibility
- Request for accessible table/chair
- Adaptive technology and software
- Scribe/Reader for exams

Please note: an academic accommodation does not change the academic standard/s or criteria of a college course, nor does it provide a fundamental alteration of a program of study.

# How to Request Semester Academic Accommodations

It is the responsibility of each student to **voluntarily** initiate and complete the process for obtaining disability-related accommodations. The process for a student seeking academic accommodations at the college requires that the student contact ODS (not faculty or others) to identify themselves as a student with a disability seeking academic accommodations. The student must submit to ODS appropriate documentation establishing their disability. The Learning Disabilities Specialist (LDS) will review such documentation and then will meet with the student to discuss their specific needs and requests for academic accommodations and/or auxiliary aids, and whether the documentation provided supports the requested accommodations. Accommodations are considered on an individualized, case-by-case basis. Depending on the nature and functional limitations of a student's documented disability, they may be eligible for reasonable and appropriate accommodations. Once accommodations are agreed upon, the LDS will prepare and forward to the appropriate faculty an Accommodation Letter detailing the accommodations the faculty member must provide the student in the course. While requests for services can be made at any time, since accommodations are not retroactive, beginning the process as soon as possible is advisable.

## **New Students (Request for Services)**

Notification of a disability, with supporting documentation should be submitted electronically through our secure and confidential Accommodate System at:

### **[New Student Request for Services](#)**

Submitting a request through Accommodate begins a confidential file for the student in SAS. Once information is received, the LDS will connect with the student to schedule an intake meeting to discuss next steps and reasonable accommodations. Questions or issues submitting a request should be directed to SAS staff at:

[tx-ds@tunxis.edu](mailto:tx-ds@tunxis.edu).

## **Returning Students (Submitting a Semester Request)**

Students are required to confirm and renew their Accommodation Letter each semester by submitting a Semester Request through the Accommodate System. Accommodations will not be continued into the next semester without submitting a Semester Request. Since accommodations are not in place until the instructor receives the Accommodation Letter, submitting a Semester Request should be done as early in the semester as possible. The link to renew and submit a Semester Request is:

### **[Returning Student Semester Request](#)**

**If something changes with your schedule or your accommodation requests, a new semester request will need to be submitted. Please notify a SAS staff member at [tx-ds@tunxis.edu](mailto:tx-ds@tunxis.edu) with questions.**

## **What is an Accommodation Letter?**

When a student has been approved for an academic accommodation such as; allowances for extended testing time, a written “Accommodation Letter” is developed with the LDS.

Each semester the **Accommodation Letter must be shared with faculty to receive the approved accommodations; students are responsible for requesting their letters each semester by submitting a Semester Request.**

## **Extended Testing Time**

Extended time is usually considered to be 100% of the given test time plus an additional 50% more time, i.e., if an exam is scheduled for 1 hour; the student with extended testing time has approval to test for 1 ½ hours.

Reduced distraction testing in the Academic Success & Tutoring (ASTC) is an essential part of this accommodation. It provides a quieter space with fewer distractions than the classroom. Students approved for this accommodation may test in the ASTC for all exams by requesting a testing space in advance.

### **Please Review These Steps for Testing in the Center**

1. Students who have met with the LDS and have approval for extended testing time are asked to submit the Semester Request through the Accommodate site at: <https://tunxis-accommodate.symplcity.com/>
2. An Accommodation Letter must be provided to the instructor so that they are aware of the testing accommodations.
3. Students must then reserve a testing seat in the ASTC by submitting a Test Request through the Accommodate site at least 3 business days in advance. Appointments are required to ensure proctor availability and testing space.
4. Submit a test request by accessing Accommodate at: <https://tunxis-accommodate.symplcity.com/> and selecting ‘Testing Room’ and ‘New Booking Request’.
5. Complete the testing information fields in Accommodate.

6. Students should plan to take their exam on the same day/time as their class unless there is a scheduling conflict. Please discuss any conflicts with your instructor in advance to determine a mutually agreeable day/time to test.
7. Upon submitting a Test Request, an auto-generated email will be sent to both the student and instructor indicating the testing reservation.
8. Arrive on time for the test. Failure to arrive on time compromises the SAS testing schedule for that day.
9. If a student is more than **30 minutes** late, you may need to reschedule another time to take the exam because of proctor availability.
10. Call the ASTC (860-773-1530) or email ([tx-ds@tunxis.edu](mailto:tx-ds@tunxis.edu)) in advance if you need to cancel or reschedule the testing time. Also, it is the student's responsibility to contact his/her **instructor**.

## Scribe/Reader for Exams

Follow the same request process as documented above for Extended Time on Tests, however, please submit the testing request form at least **one week prior** to the exam date to ensure staff and space availability.

## Alternate Format Textbooks Requests

Textbooks are available in alternative formats for those students who qualify with a print or processing disability that affects reading accuracy. Alternative formats may include e-texts and audio books, both of which make the content more accessible through features such as text to speech with highlighting. If requesting alternate format textbooks, please submit an Alternate Format Request through the Accommodate System, providing both the ISBN # and proof of purchase of the physical book.

# Accessible Furniture

Accessible Furniture is defined as a chair and/or table placed in the classroom for use by the approved student. For example, a student who uses a wheelchair may request a table that provides an accessible writing surface. A person who has severe back pain may request a free-standing chair if the classroom only provides attached seats. Accessible Furniture is simple, un-cushioned furniture provided as a means to improve classroom access.

## Request Process

1. Students must complete the Semester Request form located on the Accommodate site at: <https://tunxis-accommodate.symplcity.com/> indicating the classes they are requesting accessible furniture in **at least one month prior to the start of the semester**.
  2. ODS will email the Tunxis Facilities Department with a request for accessible furniture.
  3. Facilities will contact ODS once the request has been fulfilled.
  4. It is up to the student to communicate with ODS if any issues arise.
- Accessible furniture is not prescriptive; it is provided only to improve classroom access.
  - Students are responsible for bringing any needed cushion or orthopedic support; the college is not responsible for items left in the classroom.
  - Students must contact ODS immediately if their schedule or classroom location changes or if they find accessible furniture is missing or has been moved to another classroom.

# Interpreting Services and Assistive Listening Devices

If sign language services or assistive listening devices are deemed appropriate, ODS will hire qualified providers through approved vendors. Students may also request the accommodation of a note taker in their classes to provide written notes. **Please refer to the Interpreting Services Guidelines (located on Tunxis.edu under Forms in Office of Disability Services) for specifics on how to request these services.**

Students must complete the *Semester Request* form located on the Accommodate site at: <https://tunxis-accommodate.symplcity.com/> indicating the classes they are requesting services in as well as a completed *Interpreting Request/Assistive Listening Device Request* form that provides information about current schedule and needs.

- Students in need of interpreting services should make their request at least 4-6 weeks prior to the first day of classes.

- If requests are not made early, students risk services being unavailable at the start of the semester.
- Students requesting services for specific events must follow the same procedures as they would when requesting services for classes.

## Note Taking Assistance

If a student is approved for note taking assistance, a staff member, in collaboration with the student (and instructor if applicable), will determine the appropriate method of assistance for each class. Students should schedule a consultation with a staff member as soon as possible if they believe they will be requiring note taking assistance. If comprehensive notes are available from the instructor, on Blackboard, or through the use of technology (audio recording), additional note taking assistance may not be indicated.

Contact staff as soon as possible if you require additional training or you have concerns with the technology you are using for note taking assistance.

## Assistive Technologies

Office of Disability Services retains hardware and software to aide students with both specific and nonspecific learning disabilities. Please visit <https://wke.it/w/s/bWJkSY> to review assistive technology options available to approved students through SAS.

## Frequently Asked Questions

<p><b>How do I request an Accommodation Letter?</b></p>	<p>Students must submit a Semester Request located on the Accommodate site at: <a href="https://tunxis-accommodate.symlicity.com/">https://tunxis-accommodate.symlicity.com/</a> as soon as possible. Upon receipt, ODS staff will email the letter to your assigned instructor(s) with a copy to you.</p>
<p><b>When do I request Semester Academic Accommodations?</b></p>	<p>As soon as possible. Requests are not retroactive. Some requests such as interpreters, audio books, and copies of notes require advance notice to allow for time to coordinate.</p>
<p><b>Do I need to request an Accommodation Letter each semester?</b></p>	<p><b>Yes.</b> If you plan to request an academic accommodation, such as extended testing time, you will need to request your letters for your classes each semester. You may not sign up to take tests with extended time if you have not requested an academic accommodation.</p>
<p><b>How do I request academic accommodations for an online course?</b></p>	<p>To request extended testing time for an online course, please submit a Semester Request through our Accommodate site at: <a href="https://tunxis-accommodate.symlicity.com/">https://tunxis-accommodate.symlicity.com/</a>. The extended testing accommodation allows additional time to complete the online exam but does <b>not</b> allow access to the test once it is closed (unless arranged otherwise). Once the online test is opened, the student is expected to complete the exam. This academic accommodation does <b>not</b> allow access to the test beyond the designated testing date/s posted by the instructor.</p>
<p><b>Do I have to use extended time for testing and reduced distraction testing on every test?</b></p>	<p>No. You do not have to use this academic accommodation. You can always choose to test in the classroom without extended time for testing.</p>
<p><b>Can I test in the classroom with extended time for testing instead of going to the Academic Success &amp; Tutoring Center?</b></p>	<p>It would be up to the discretion of your Professor if they are able to accommodate your extended test time accommodation in the classroom. Alternative arrangements should be discussed directly with your Professor.</p>

<b>What should I do if an exam or quiz takes place at the beginning or end of the class?</b>	Quizzes are generally taken in class without extended time arrangements; contact SAS staff to discuss further as needed.
<b>What should I do if a professor suggests that I take a test without extended time?</b>	You have the right to use extended time on your tests for all exams. You can agree with your professor's suggestion if you feel comfortable doing so. However, you can also tell your professor, "I have been approved for this academic accommodation and prefer to use it." If you encounter any difficulties, please contact ODS.

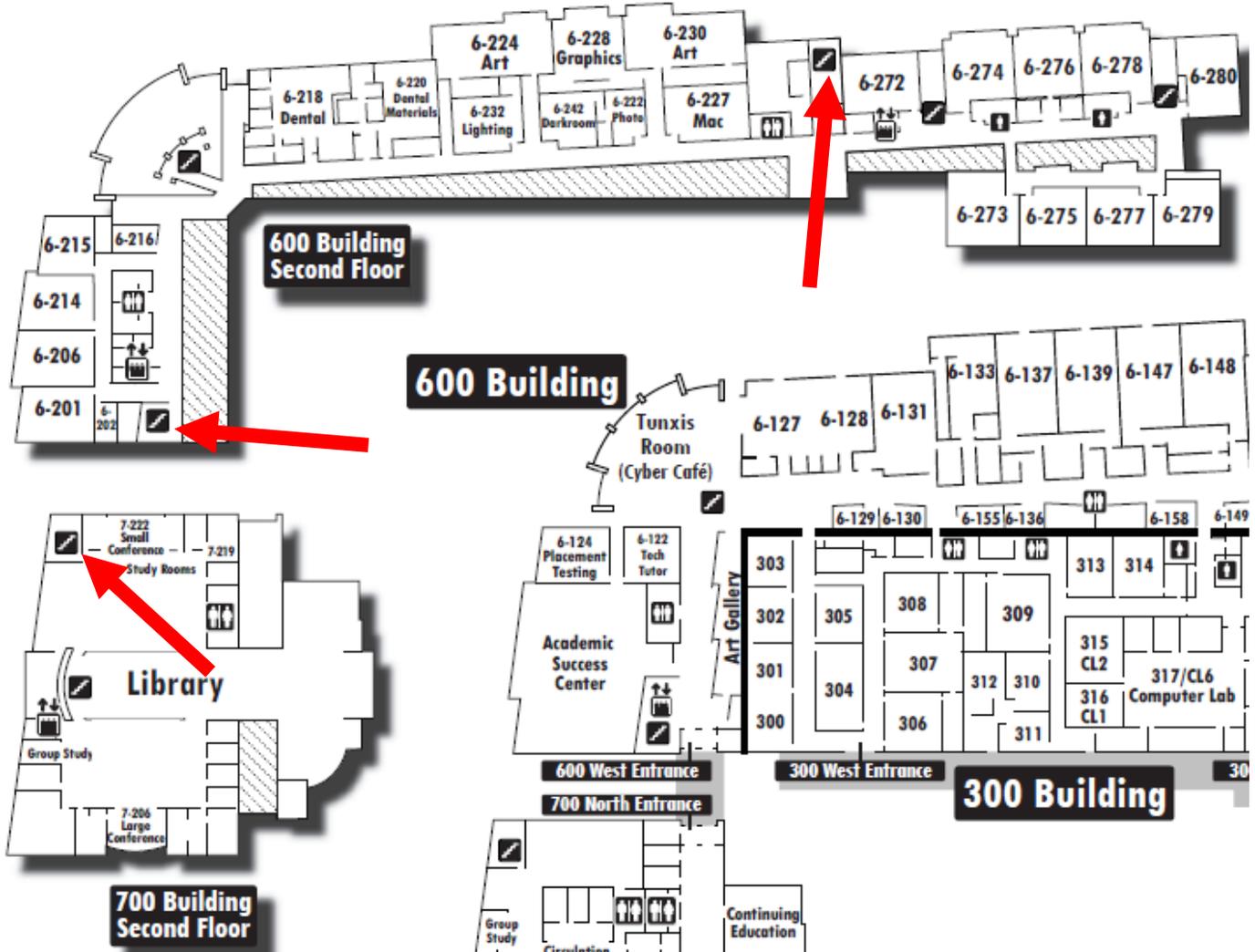
# Emergency Evacuation Plan

The Academic Success & Tutoring Center works with the Dean of Administration to provide students with disabilities information on emergency response planning. Emergency rescue chairs have been installed on the second-floor stairways of the 600 building and at the top of the second-floor landing of the 700 building. Individuals with disabilities who cannot use stairwells:

- Please do not use the elevators. Go to closest stairwell marked on the map below and wait for assistance.

600 Building- 2<sup>nd</sup> floor stairwells located at both ends of the building  
 700 Building (Library)—2<sup>nd</sup> floor stairwell

- The Fire Department will be the first to respond in case of an emergency.
- All indicated stairwells will be checked by emergency personnel.
- Remain in stairwell until all clear or assistance arrives.



# Grievance Procedure

Students with disabilities who feel they are not receiving the services they are due by law should address their concerns to the Interim Dean of Academic Affairs and ADA/504 Coordinator, Susan Winn ([swinn@tunxis.edu](mailto:swinn@tunxis.edu) or 860.773.1430).

## Office of Disability Services Contact Information

Debbie Kosior  
Learning Disabilities Specialist  
860-773-1526  
[dkosior@tunxis.edu](mailto:dkosior@tunxis.edu)

Shelly Castiola  
Education Assistant  
860-773-1524  
[mcastiola@tunxis.edu](mailto:mcastiola@tunxis.edu)

# Student Resources

Academic Success & Tutoring Center (tx-asc@tunxis.edu)	773-1530
Admissions & Enrollment Center	773-1490
Academic Advising Center (tx-advising@tunxis.edu)	773-1510
Bookstore (txcc-shop.com)	773-1338
Business Office/Cashier's Office (tx-cashiering@tunxis.edu)	773-1320
Civic Engagement Institute (CEI)	773-1642
Computer Center	773-1390
Connecticut Talent Assistance Cooperative (Conntacinc.org)	773-1492
Continuing Ed & Workforce Dvlpment (tx-continuing-ed@tunxis.edu)	773-1448
Counseling (tx-counseling@tunxis.edu)	773-1530
Dean of Student Services	773-1302
Early Childhood Center Lab School (tx-childcare@tunxis.edu)	773-1350
Financial Aid Services (tx-finaid@tunxis.edu)	773-1422
Food Services (tx-cafeteria@tunxis.edu)	773-1353
Information Center	773-1300
Library & Instructional Technologies (tx-library@tunxis.edu)	773-1550
Registrar/Records (tx-records@tunxis.edu)	773-1440
Student Activities/Student Lounge (tx-std-activities@tunxis.edu)	773-1361
Student Government Association (SGA)	773-1363
Veterans' Oasis (tx-veterans@tunxis.edu)	773-1364
Tunxis Weather Line	773-1301

