

Frequently Asked Questions for Students

How do I receive Disability Services at Alvin Community College?

Newly admitted or returning students seeking accommodation should contact Student Accessibility Services at 281-756-5701 or 281-756-3533 or visit the website (<https://www.alvincollege.edu/disability-services/index.html>). The Request for Services (intake forms), Documentation Guidelines, and Contact information can be found on the Student Accessibility Services webpage.

What Constitutes a Disability?

A disability is defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities. Learning is considered a major life activity. If you have a mental or physical condition, a history of such a condition, or a condition considered to be substantially limiting, you may have a legally defined disability.

I received services in High School and understand that they will continue in College. Is this true?

Not necessarily, because as the law changes, so do the services. It's important to note that each post-secondary institution sets the parameters by which they determine eligibility and accommodation for disability services in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

I have dyslexia and got help in high school; will I automatically qualify for help in college?

Although you may have a diagnosis of dyslexia, that does not mean you will automatically be eligible for accommodations in college. High school support services from a 504 may not automatically carry over to college. Determining eligibility and the type of accommodations requires a specific diagnosis and updated testing that indicates current functional / academic limitations. See our **Disability Guidelines** for more information.

How does the law change from High School to College for individuals with disabilities?

In public schools K-12, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) governs special education services, and can involve testing, diagnosis, educational

planning, remediation, modification, and implementation of special programs. At the college level, IDEA no longer applies and special education services or funding for students no longer exists. The law is transitioned to the ADA/Section 504, and becomes more of a civil rights concern, protecting the student from discrimination and ensuring equal access to all educational programs and services for those with a qualified disability.

Will my 504 Accommodation Plan in High School be adequate documentation?

Generally, students under a 504 plan in high school receive services based on the history of a disability. Diagnostic testing may not have been recently completed or adequately identify current limitations and severity, as ADA outline. In this case, updated and comprehensive testing may be needed. If services have been provided for because of an Other Health Impairment (OHI), current documentation from a health professional may suffice. The SAS Office will consider any documentation presented.

Can my parents handle all this for me?

No, it is the student's responsibility, and it is expected that the student handle everything pertaining to his or her college education. However, it is not uncommon for parents to play a part in getting started at college, and with your written consent, are allowed limited involvement.

How does college differ from high school disability services? In College...

- The student must seek out disability services and request them each semester.
- reasonable accommodations (adjustments) are used to provide equal access, curriculum modifications (changes) are not provided.
- Services are optional and not mandatory.
- No accommodations are provided without self-disclosure and supportive documentation.
- Parents have limited involvement, and only at the written consent of the student.

If my documentation is too old or not in compliance, what do I do?

It is the responsibility of the student to obtain additional information or testing if it is required to determine eligibility for accommodations. The cost of providing

documentation is the responsibility of the student as well. Alvin College does not provide testing, but can provide resources to students by request.

What kind of documentation do I need?

You will need current documentation that verifies the disability and details the severity and functional limitations that impact academic performance and accessibility. Please refer to our **Documentation Guidelines** for more information.

Will I have to get new documentation or testing when I go to College?

If you are coming directly from high school where you received Special Education Services, then you may be able to provide a report commonly referred to as the Full Individual Evaluation (FIE) or Re-evaluation of Existing Data (REED). It's important to note that Alvin Community College does not accept IEP's (Individual Education Plans) or ARD (Admission, Review, Dismissal) papers as appropriate disability documentation alone. For other areas of disability, documentation can include a current letter and/or evaluation completed by a health professional or specialist. We encourage you to print and share the **Documentation Guidelines** with your health professional in order to obtain the correct documentation. A Verification of Disability Form is available for use at the students request.

How do I receive services as a dual enrollment student and does Alvin Community College implement them?

Taking a dual enrollment course means taking a college course, therefore, the student must comply with the college's disability guidelines and accommodation policies outline under ADA not IDEA. In most instances, if the class is taken at a high school campus, the high school will implement the accommodations that are approved by Alvin Community College Student Accessibility Services. However, if the course is at an Alvin Community College campus, then the college will provide the accommodations. *We recommend that you apply for services with Student Accessibility Services as soon as you know you will be signing up for dual enrollment classes (at least two months before the semester starts).*

Is this true that my transcript and other college records will disclose my disability, or show that I had academic accommodations?

No, in compliance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the Americans with Disabilities Act, strict confidentiality is respected and maintained. Those involved in the educational process, including instructors, do

not have access to any information pertaining to your disability other than the specific accommodations that are provided, and no record or reference to the nature of the disability is disclosed on transcripts or other college records. Your affiliation with disability services is not disclosed unless you choose to share that information.

What is FERPA?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a post-secondary institution (including Dual Enrollment students). Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students." Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. For additional information, follow the link (www.ed.gov/ferpa) or you may call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327)

Can I receive accommodations without disclosing my disability?

Unfortunately, you cannot. It is necessary to disclose your disability to the appropriate disability services office in the post-secondary environment to qualify for any accommodations. Professors are not obligated to provide any accommodations to you without having first come through a disability services office for approval.

Do I have to go through Student Accessibility Services to attend Alvin Community College?

No, utilizing disability services in college is completely voluntary, but highly encouraged if you have a documented disability to ensure the maximum support in achieving college success.

Do you provide accommodations at the UHCL – Pearland Campus and other off-site locations?

Yes, academic accommodations will be provided by Alvin Community College Student Accessibility Services, however, physical accommodations (accessible furniture, ingress/egress to classrooms/buildings, etc.) will need to be arranged

with that particular site. SAS will make efforts to assist, but you are encouraged to contact their disability office for information.

Can I apply for services anytime throughout the year?

Yes! However, please keep in mind that if you are approved for accommodations, they are not retroactive and cannot apply to any coursework prior to the date which the accommodation letter is provided to the instructor.

When is the best time to contact Student Accessibility Services?

After you have been admitted to the college and received your Student ID, please contact us to schedule an appointment. Students are encouraged to request services up to one month prior to the start of classes.

I still have questions, who should I contact?

Please feel free to contact Student Accessibility Services for any questions you may have at 281-756-5701 or 281-756-3533. We look forward to hearing from you!