



Los Angeles Mission College
Disabled Student Programs & Services (DSP&S)
ORIENTATION & INTRODUCTION

IT'S THE LAW: Students with disabilities are protected by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). According to these laws, "no otherwise qualified person with a disability shall, solely by reason of disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of any public entity."

Students with disabilities must meet all standard requirements for admission, and "otherwise qualified," with respect to post-secondary education, means "a person who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission."

WHAT IS A DISABILITY? A person with a disability is defined as any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity, including learning. It is the responsibility of the student to disclose a disability, provide the necessary and appropriate documentation of the disability, and request accommodations for disability to equalize meaningful access to learning. Disabled Student Programs & Services (DSP&S) has established standardized guidelines regarding disability documentation; documentation must come from a qualified professional and must contain all the data needed to determine appropriate and reasonable academic accommodations.

IT'S CONFIDENTIAL: Section 504 and the ADA are very specific regarding confidentiality issues. Students voluntarily affiliate themselves with DSP&S, and we take our responsibility to protect their confidentiality seriously. The law permits dissemination of limited disability-related information when necessary for the student's educational benefit. Therefore, when we communicate with faculty, we may disclose only the existence, not the nature, of disability and what accommodations are necessary to equalize access to learning for that student. Asking intrusive questions of the student or discussing the student's disability with others, no matter how well-intentioned, is a violation of federal law.

WHAT ARE ACCOMMODATIONS? An accommodation is any change or modification in the instructional setting or in the way things are customarily done that ensures equal access for individuals with disabilities. Such accommodations are not meant to alter the standards for academic performance. Rather, academic accommodations make it possible for the student to access the material, for the instructor to fairly assess the student's mastery of the material, and to minimize discrimination. Services may include (but are not limited to) extended time on quizzes and tests, assistive technology and adaptive furniture. Academic accommodations must be requested by the student, and must be reasonable, appropriate and timely.

PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN FACULTY, STUDENT AND INSTITUTION: A significant responsibility of the College is to create a culture where everyone on campus fully understands his or her legal and institutional obligations to students with disabilities. It is especially important that faculty members understand their role in the process.

INCLUDE A DISABILITY STATEMENT IN YOUR SYLLABUS/COURSE OUTLINE: Why a disability syllabus statement?

- Provides an invitation to students who have disabilities to interact with the faculty member
- Normalizes the accommodation process by treating it as part of the course
- Opens the lines of communication between student and instructor, thus making the student feel more comfortable approaching faculty to disclose their disability and need for accommodation
- Reminds students that it is their responsibility to request accommodations and follow the DSP&S procedures

Colleagues –

Please read the following statement to your classes *and* include the statement in your syllabus and publications. All faculty and staff are encouraged to use the following procedure when responding to requests from students with disabilities.

Please note that this procedure also applies to student requests to bring Personal Service Attendants (PSA) who are not LAMC employees into classes. Note, Instructors will be notified, in advance, if a PSA is approved as an accommodation for a student for a specific class. Therefore, all individuals attending your class should be accounted for.

“LAMC students with verified disabilities who are requesting academic accommodations should use the following procedure:

Step 1: Obtain documentation of your disability from a licensed professional. You may contact DSP&S to request a *Disability Verification Form*.

Step 2: Make an appointment to meet with a DSP&S Specialist to review your documentation and discuss reasonable accommodations. To schedule a meeting, please call DSP&S at (818) 364-7732.

Step 3: Bring your disability documentation to your DSP&S appointment. The DSP&S office is located in room 1018 of the Instructional Administration (IA) building.

Step 4: *Each semester*, reach written accommodation agreement with the DSP&S Specialist and your instructor.

Please complete this process in a timely manner to allow adequate time to provide accommodation.”

The statement above is valuable in assuring an equitable LAMC procedure and is important for three main reasons:

1. Educational Support for Student Success: A referral to a DSP&S Specialist assures the student has the opportunity to learn about disability-related support. Your referral gives the student the opportunity to utilize programs and services that promotes student success.

2. Civil Rights and Responsibilities: This process of referral to DSP&S is an opportunity to teach students their civil rights. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates a level of student responsibility that involves many skills. At LAMC students learn how to request their accommodations and support ahead of time. In DSP&S students learn how to communicate their disability-related educational limitations, analyze their academic strengths, identify the resources necessary to be successful, understand the fundamental requirements of their courses, and communicate their need for reasonable accommodation. In this way, we hope the students will be better prepared for transfer and employment.

3. Compliance: The Office of Civil Rights requires a standardized, published procedure for students with disabilities requesting accommodations. LAMC strives to be in legal compliance. A standardized, published procedure lends assurance that LAMC decisions regarding accommodations are equitable and consistent. Such a process not only protects the students, but also protects faculty and staff. LAMC wants students to receive accommodations in order to have access to learning. However, LAMC also wants to ensure that students are meeting the fundamental requirements of our LAMC programs and curricula.

Please respect the student’s privacy regarding disability disclosure. Many thanks for your attention to this important procedure!