

Quinebaug Valley Community College
Disability Services FAQs for Faculty
2019-2020 SPRING Edition

1. **Who at QVCC works with students with disabilities?** John Lepore (860.932.4069, jlepore@qvcc.edu) and Mikaela Kitka (860-932-4299, mkitka@qvcc.edu) work with students in Danielson and Willimantic as Disability Service Providers.
2. **What should I do if a student requests additional time for tests because of a disability?**
Without granting or denying the request, ask the student to see a Disability Service Provider. We can meet with the student and initiate the appropriate academic adjustment process. Requests for academic adjustments that are not authorized in writing from a Disability Service Provider should not be granted unless such an adjustment would be made equally available to any student.
3. **What should I do if a student brings me documentation of a disability?** Rather than accept it, ask the student to bring or send the documentation to a Disability Service Provider.
4. **What should I do if a student complains that it is unfair that a classmate is getting additional time for tests or some other academic adjustment?** You can reply that the situation in question is authorized due to special circumstances. If the student with complaints expresses a need for a similar academic adjustment, feel free to refer the student to a Disability Service Provider.
5. **What should I do if a student asks me to alter my curriculum because of a learning disability?** Federal law prohibits colleges from altering the essential nature of a course or program as an academic adjustment. Generally, academic adjustments affect the way we deliver and receive content, but not the nature or amount of content. The intent is to “provide access” relative to an individual’s documented disability without compromising academic integrity.
6. **Who determines if a student has a qualifying disability that requires reasonable academic adjustments?** The student must initiate the academic adjustment process by contacting and meeting with a college Disability Service Provider, signing a Self-Disclosure Form, and providing documentation from a medical or clinical professional. A Disability Service Provider reviews and evaluates the documentation, meets with the student, and determines if the requested academic adjustments are reasonable and appropriate as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Instructors are welcome to provide input and suggestions about academic adjustments to a Disability Service Provider at any time. However, academic adjustments should not be altered or refused without prior consultation with one of the Disability Service Providers. There may be legal or procedural issues unknown to the instructor.
7. **Should I discuss a student’s disability with the student?** Yes, if the student initiates, but please proceed with care, bearing in mind that a student’s confidentiality is protected by federal law and all reasonable precautions should be taken. Students are not required to divulge the nature or details of a disability and questions about details are best avoided. In some cases, the student may choose to self-advocate because testing for documentation is too expensive. Or, the student may have obvious disabilities with minor needs for academic adjustments that the instructor would willingly provide within class guidelines. You may wish to have that discussion with the student and make an informed pedagogical decision. After listening to the student, you may also recommend that the student seek assistance from a Disability Service Provider.

8. **Should I discuss a student's academic adjustments with the student?** Yes, please discuss how the academic adjustments will be implemented in your course. For example, a student may choose to use adjustments on an as needed basis. Bear in mind that a student's confidentiality is protected by federal law and all reasonable precautions should be taken. If a situation should arise where you need to immediately address a question regarding an academic adjustment, such as during an exam, try to do so in as private a manner as possible.
9. **At what point am I required to provide academic adjustments?**
Academic adjustments take effect when you receive written authorization. The student will bring an authorization memo to you after meeting with a Disability Service Provider. Adjustments should not be provided prior to receiving the authorization memo and are not usually applied retroactively to exams or assignments that were due prior to your receiving the memo from the student.
10. **What do I do once I have received a student's academic adjustments memo?**
Please read the memo immediately and provide the academic adjustments listed, but no others. If you have suggestions, concerns, or questions please feel free to contact a Disability Service Provider. Adjustment memos are updated each semester. Please keep them confidential and discard the paperwork at the end of each semester.
11. **How do I provide the "extended time for tests" academic adjustment?** This adjustment typically allows the student to work for 150% of the time that is granted to the class- for example, ninety minutes for a one-hour exam. The testing should take place at a time and location that is reasonably convenient for both of you, such as the Learning Center (860.932.4014).
12. **What if a student has "extended time for assignments" as an academic adjustment?** For some students with learning differences, reasonable extended deadlines are an appropriate academic adjustment. However, for some assignments, this adjustment can pose difficulties or even interfere with the learning process. An example might be when due dates are designed to prepare students for required upcoming classroom activities. In this case, it might be appropriate to deny an extended due date as an academic adjustment. When considering denial of an adjustment, please inform a Disability Service Provider- we are available to help explain the situation to the student and/or help work on an alternative solution.
13. **What if a student has "flexible attendance" as an academic adjustment?** The impact on learning could vary based on the design of a course; for some classes, this academic adjustment might have little impact; for other classes, it might strongly interfere with the learning process. A key question to answer is, "Does interaction between instructor and student, or among students constitute a significant component of the learning process?" Please inform the student soon and regularly about the impact of missed classes. If lack of attendance becomes an issue or begins to seriously impact with the learning process, please inform a Disability Service Provider- we would be glad to help explain the situation to the student if you wish.
14. **What about calculators as an accommodation?** The Academic Division has determined that calculators will not be used as a disabilities accommodation in any Mathematics course.

15. What are the “Suggested Instructional Strategies” on the academic adjustments memo?

These are not academic adjustments. Rather, they are offered as suggestions about individualized instructional strategies that may be helpful to that student based on their individual learning style and/or circumstances. Feel free to utilize the strategies, adapt them to your teaching style, or make other suggestions.

16. What verbiage about disabilities would be useful in my syllabus? It would be best if syllabi include a brief disabilities statement. Here are some examples that you may wish to use:

- a. If you have a disability that may impact you in this course, and wish to discuss or request academic adjustments, please contact our Office of Disabilities Services (DS) as soon as possible. (John Lepore 860.932.4069; jlepore@qvcc.edu, Mikaela Kitka 860.932.4299, mkitka@qvcc.edu). If you have already established academic adjustments with DS, please communicate these to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss and implement them in a timely manner.
- b. **Barriers to Participation:** QVCC respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds. If you encounter or anticipate you may encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in this course due to the impact of a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (DS). Disabilities may include: mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts – or others. The advisors in DS can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic adjustments. You can reach DS at: jlepore@qvcc.edu; 860.932.4069, mkitka@qvcc.edu; 860.932.4299; or learn more at <https://qvcc.edu/student-resources-2/student-resources/disability-services>. If you have already established academic adjustments with DS, please communicate these to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss and implement them in a timely manner.