



# Disability Support Services Handbook

## Disability Support Services

Victoria College  
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Victoria, TX 77901  
(361) 572-6411 or (361) 582-2400  
[www.VictoriaCollege.edu/DisabilityServices](http://www.VictoriaCollege.edu/DisabilityServices)

This document can be made available in alternative format upon request.

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## **Preface**

The purpose of this handbook is to assist faculty and staff with the understanding and implementation of accommodations for students with disabilities.

## **Statement of Nondiscrimination**

Victoria College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, amnesty, veteran's status, limited English proficiency, or any other legally protected characteristic. It is our policy to comply, fully, with the nondiscrimination provision of all state and federal rules and regulations.

The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies:

### **Executive Director of Human Resources**

Terri Kurtz

## **Victoria College Mission**

Victoria College is a public, open-admission college. Our mission is to provide educational opportunities and services for our students and the communities we serve.

## **Disability Support Services Mission**

The mission of Disability Support Services (DSS) is to support the College and extended campuses by ensuring access to programs, activities, and facilities and to assist students with disabilities by providing accommodations, services, and resources to promote an academic experience for students with disabilities that is fully inclusive and accessible.

### **Disability Support Services Goals**

The goals of the office of DSS are to:

- Ensure access to campus programs, activities, and facilities;
- Ensure all applicable laws and regulations are followed;
- Provide support services to allow students with disabilities to participate in the full range of campus programs and activities;
- Assist students with disabilities to maximize their independence and become integrated into the campus community;
- Foster student independence, and;
- Increase the retention and graduation rates of students with disabilities.

## **Accessibility Committee**

The Accessibility Committee is comprised of divisional online instructors and technical and support services representatives. Members are appointed by their respective deans or directors.

### **Accessibility Committee Composition:**

ADA Coordinator (chair)

Disability Support Specialist (the Specialist)

Technology Services representative

Marketing and Communications representative

Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences divisional instructor representative

Science, Mathematics, Engineering, and Physical Education divisional instructor representative

### **Accessibility Committee Purpose:**

The committee helps to identify issues associated with accessibility and accommodations, provide a forum for discussion, and suggest practices for dealing with these issues.

### **Accessibility Committee Meetings:**

The committee meets at least once every other month (either face-to-face or virtually) and discusses as needed via email.

### **Disability Support Services Handbook Updates and Revisions**

The ADA Coordinator and the Specialist, along with the Title XI Coordinator and Affirmative Action Officer will review the Disability Support Services Handbook each Spring semester and propose any changes to the Accessibility Committee for approval. The committee may make changes outside of this timeframe if it is deemed necessary.

## **Disabilities and the Law in Higher Education**

Our goal at Victoria College is to promote institutional programs and employment practices that are accessible to all individuals with disabilities in accordance with all applicable legislation.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 51.9703 of the Texas Education Code and Title I, Part 10, Chapter 213, Subchapter C of the Texas Administrative Code place obligations on institutions of higher education to accommodate students with disabilities.

### **The Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is regarded as the first “civil rights legislation for individuals with disabilities” on the national level.

Specifically, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 provides that:

“No otherwise qualified individual with disabilities in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance . . .”

This means that all programs and extracurricular activities offered by the College must be accessible to students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are required to meet the same admissions standards as any other student. Section 504 also obligates the College to provide appropriate learning aids for students with disabilities.

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 addresses Information and Communication Technology (ICT.) Section 508 was updated in 2015 via the ICT Refresher. A final rule was published in 2017 and a correction to the final rule was issued in 2018. The correction addressed several drafting errors. The final rule updates accessibility requirements to include new technology and encompass rapidly developing technology.

## Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, which includes pregnancy and parental status. Specifically, § 106.40 states that the College “shall treat pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy and recovery therefrom in the same manner and under the same policies as any other temporary disability with respect to any medical or hospital benefit, service, plan or policy which such recipient administers, operates, offers, or participates in with respect to students admitted to the recipient's educational program or activity.” The law provides that the College may require a student to obtain the certification of a physician that the student is physically and emotionally able to continue participation so long as such a certification is required of all students for other physical or emotional conditions requiring the attention of a physician. Absences related to pregnancy and childbirth must be excused and the student must be given the opportunity to makeup missed work. The College may not allow “instructor-specific” rules related to pregnancy. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the College’s designated Title XI Coordinator of the pregnancy and request accommodations, even if the student has disclosed pregnancy status to an employee of the College. Title XI also obligates the College to protect the student from harassment related to the pregnancy and have a policy in place including a grievance procedure.

The following person has been designated to handle Title XI inquiries:

### **Title XI Coordinator**

Terri Kurtz

Nursing and Allied Health programs may also fall under regulations regarding discrimination on the basis of sex including pregnancy and parental status imposed by sections 794 § 295m and 855 § 296g of the Public Health Service Act.

## Texas Education Code

Section 51.970 of the Texas Education Code requires textbook publishers to provide electronic copies of textbooks to colleges when requested by student who is blind or has dyslexia.

Section 51.9701 provides that an institution may not reassess a student with dyslexia in order to assess the student’s need for accommodations until the institution reevaluates the information from the student’s previous assessments.

## Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was enacted in 1990 to establish a clear and comprehensive prohibition of discrimination on the basis of disability. Specifically, Titles II and III of the ADA regulate public entities and public accommodations in connection with individuals with disabilities. The ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA) was enacted in January 1, 2009 to clarify the scope of the law and the definition of “disability.”

## General Requirements under Titles II and III of the ADA

The College must:

- Provide students with disabilities equal opportunity to obtain the same benefit or reach the same level of achievement as others;
- Not exclude from participation, deny benefits, or discriminate on the basis of disability;
- Make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the College can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity, or result in an undue burden;
- Make reasonable physical modifications when the modifications are necessary to allow physical access, unless the College can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the facility or result in an undue burden;
- Not utilize criteria or methods that have the effect of discriminating on the basis of disability;
- Enable participation in the most integrated setting;
- Provide modifications to allow the presence/use of service animals;
- Not discriminate through association;
- Not require students with disabilities to accept an accommodation, aid, service, opportunity, or benefit;
- Not require students with disabilities to cover the costs of accessibility or impose surcharges solely on persons with disabilities;
- Ensure all examinations and courses are accessible, and;
- Ensure no harassment or retaliation takes place against students with disabilities.

## Texas Administrative Code

Title I, Part 10, Chapter 213, Subchapter C of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) addresses accessibility standards for institutions of higher education. These standards were amended April 18, 2020 and align with Appendix C of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Any student who has a complaint regarding his/her rights should refer to the Grievance Procedures outlined on page 19 of this handbook.

## Definitions

It is important to remember that in the context of the ADA, disability is a legal term rather than a medical one. Because it has a legal definition, the ADA's definition of disability is different from how disability is defined under some other laws, such as for Social Security Disability related benefits. The ADA defines a **person with a disability** as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity. This includes people who have a record of such an impairment, even if they do not currently have a disability. It also includes individuals who do not have a disability but are regarded as having a disability. An impairment that substantially limits one major life activity need not limit other major life activities in order to be considered a disability. An impairment that is episodic or in remission is a disability if it would substantially limit a major life activity when active. The determination of whether an impairment substantially limits a major life activity shall be made without regard to mitigating measures such as medication, medical devices, equipment, or appliances, mobility devices, use of assistive technology, reasonable accommodations or auxiliary aids or services, or learned behavioral or adaptive neurological modifications, with the exception of glasses or contacts that fully correct visual acuity or eliminate refractive error.

**Major life activities** are those functions that are important to most people's daily lives. Examples of major life activities include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working. A major life activity also includes the operation of a major bodily function, including but not limited to, functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions.

**"Regarded as"** means that the person either:

- Has an impairment that does not substantially limit a major life activity but is regarded as such;
- Has an impairment that substantially limits a major life activity only as a result of the attitudes of others toward them; or
- Does not have any impairment, but is treated by an entity as having an impairment.
- An individual meets the requirement of "being regarded as having such an impairment" if the individual establishes that he or she has been subjected to an action prohibited under the ADA because of an actual or perceived physical or mental impairment whether or not the impairment limits or is perceived to limit a major life activity. This does not apply to minor, temporary impairments after the impairment has been resolved.



**“Record of”** means that the person has a history of, or has been misclassified as having, a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, even though the person does not currently have a disability. This does not apply to minor, temporary impairments after the impairment has been resolved.

A **“qualified student with a disability”** is defined as an individual with a disability who:

1. Meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the education program or activity; and
2. With or without reasonable modifications to rules, policies, or practices, the removal of architectural, communication, or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by the College.

A qualified student with a disability will be referred to as “student” or “the student” for the purposes of this handbook.

**Exclusions from the definition of “qualified individual with a disability”**

**Transitory or Temporary Impairments** – A transitory or temporary impairment is an impairment with an actual or expected duration of 6 months or less. Transitory impairments may not be covered disabilities depending upon the duration of the impairment and the extent to which they actually limit a major life activity of the affected individual.

The ADA guidance on temporary disabilities states: “Temporary, non-chronic impairments that may last a short time and that have little or no long-term impact are usually not deemed disabilities; e.g., sprains, concussions, appendicitis, common colds, or influenza. Conversely, a broken leg that heals normally within a few months, for example, would be a temporary disability under the ADA if the condition substantially limits the major life activity of walking.”

DSS will evaluate the impact of the temporary impairment and provide accommodations on a case-by-case basis.

**Substance Abuse** – while drug addiction is an impairment, a person engaging in the current and illegal use of controlled substances is not a qualified person with a disability.

**Excluded Conditions** – homosexuality, bisexuality, transvestism, transsexualism, pedophilia, exhibitionism, voyeurism, gender identity disorders, compulsive gambling, kleptomania, pyromania, and psychoactive disorders are specifically excluded from the definition of disability. Under the ADA, these conditions on their own do not qualify an individual as an individual with a disability.

**Direct Threat** – a significant threat to the health or safety of the individual or others that cannot be eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level by: modification of policies, practices, or procedures; through the provision of auxiliary aids or services; or by reasonable accommodations. An individual who poses a direct threat to the health or safety of the individual or others is not a qualified individual with a disability.

## **Contacts**

Official titles referred to in this handbook have been designated to the following people:

### **Accessibility Specialist**

Haley Marek

Instructional Technology and Accessibility Specialist

(361) 485-6806

[Haley.Marek@VictoriaCollege.edu](mailto:Haley.Marek@VictoriaCollege.edu)

### **ADA Coordinator**

Haley Marek

Instructional Technology and Accessibility Specialist

(361) 485-6806

[Haley.Marek@VictoriaCollege.edu](mailto:Haley.Marek@VictoriaCollege.edu)

### **Affirmative Action Officer**

Terri Kurtz

Executive Director of Human Resources

(361) 572-6463

[Terri.Kurtz@VictoriaCollege.edu](mailto:Terri.Kurtz@VictoriaCollege.edu)

### **Disability Support Specialist**

Karen Friedel

Disability Support Specialist

(361) 572-6411

[Karen.Friedel@VictoriaCollege.edu](mailto:Karen.Friedel@VictoriaCollege.edu)

### **Title XI Coordinator**

Terri Kurtz

Executive Director of Human Resources

(361) 572-6463

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# Policies and Procedures for Admissions and Establishing Services at Victoria College

## Admission to the College

Individuals with disabilities enter Victoria College through the established admission procedures that are required of all applicants.

## Eligibility

Neither the nature nor the severity of one's disability is used as a criterion for admission. A student may not be denied admission to the College or program on the basis that they will not be able to perform the essential job functions of the job that the chosen program is preparing them to perform, but may be denied on the basis that their disability or disabilities prevent(s) them from performing the requirements of the chosen program.

## Establishing Support Services

Once admitted to Victoria College, students who need special accommodations must self-identify and register with DSS. All services and accommodations are elective and must be requested by the student.

The following procedure should be followed when requesting support services and/or accommodations.

1. The student should make an appointment with the Specialist at least 30 days before the start of the semester. The appointment can be scheduled electronically, or in person in the Advising & Counseling Services Office or by calling either (361) 572-6411 or (361) 582-2400.
2. During the intake interview, the student should be prepared to share pertinent information about any disability they have. The student will be given an **Application for Assistance**, which will need to be completed and returned to the Specialist.
3. Documentation of each disability will be required to determine the nature of the disability and the appropriate accommodations.

### **Documentation must:**

- Be from a qualified or licensed professional (physician, psychologist, etc.) and
- Include a detailed description of how this impairment significantly limits a major life function in an educational setting.

### **Accepted forms of documentation include:**

- Test results from school districts
- Assessment results from the Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Assessment reports from a private psychologist or educational diagnostician
- Assessment results from a neurologist or other medical doctor
- Other forms of documentation will be evaluated and considered on a case-by-case basis

4. The student will sign a **Consent for Exchange of Information Form** so that the Specialist, instructors, and agencies that serve the student may coordinate services for the student. Note: This form does not give DSS the right to disclose the nature of the student's disability.
5. The Specialist will review the application, documentation, information from the intake interview, and information provided by agencies and the student's instructors to determine appropriate accommodations for the student.  
**Accommodations will be determined on a case-by-case basis.**
6. The Specialist will coordinate with the student to complete the necessary paperwork for accommodations.
7. The student will sign a **Faculty/Staff Information Form**. The form is distributed to each of the student's instructors by the Specialist. This form does not disclose the nature of the student's disability.
8. It is the student's responsibility to complete all required forms in a timely manner.  
**Failure to do so may result in a delay in implementation of accommodations.**
9. If accommodations provided are not suitable, the student may request an alternative accommodation. All attempts will be made to satisfy reasonable requests from the student.

### Maintaining Services

Students are expected to comply with the following procedure each semester to continue receiving services and accommodations:

1. Notify the Specialist that they have registered for the semester so the Faculty/Staff Information Forms can be prepared and distributed.
2. Schedule an appointment with the Specialist to sign Faculty/Staff Information Forms.
3. Keep the Specialist informed about their academic status, needs, problems with services and/or accommodations and/or changes in their disability.
4. Schedule any specialized services in a timely manner.

### Clinical Assignments

The purpose of the clinical experience is to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate the application of classroom theory in a realistic setting. This is conducted under the supervision of professionals employed at the site and the Victoria College faculty. In many programs, the clinical experience is the "capstone" for assessing student abilities and skills in that field.

It is important for the college instructor who places and supervises the student to understand that clinical assignments are still considered Victoria College courses and thus bound by all the same legal requirements. Should a clinical site refuse to honor a reasonable, approved accommodation, Victoria College may be held liable. The faculty member should contact DSS to attempt to resolve the issue.

If the student has difficulty meeting the requirements of the clinical site with accommodations, the Victoria College faculty may refer the student to the Career Center for assistance in exploring other career options.

## The Rights and Responsibilities of Students with Disabilities

**Students with disabilities have the right to:**

- Full and equal participation in the services and activities of Victoria College;
- Reasonable accommodations, academic/work adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services;
- Confidentiality to not have private information freely disseminated throughout the campus;
- Limit access to confidential records. In doing so, however, disabled individuals recognize that implementing accommodations may become more difficult;
- Information readily available in accessible formats;
- Be evaluated based on their ability, not their disability;

- Appeal the institution's decisions concerning accommodations following the procedures outlined in Victoria College Student Handbook.

**Students with disabilities have the responsibility to:**

- Identify as an individual with a disability in a timely fashion when an accommodation is needed and to seek information, counsel, and assistance as necessary;
- Demonstrate or document how their disability affects a particular delivery system, instructional method, or evaluation criteria when requesting an accommodation;
- Meet qualifications and maintain essential institutional standards for courses, programs, services, jobs, and activities;
- Comply with the Code of Conduct;
- Demonstrate and/or document (from a qualified professional) how the disability limits their participation in courses, programs, services, jobs, and activities, and
- Follow published procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodations, academic/work adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services or when requesting barrier removal.

## **The Rights and Responsibilities of Victoria College**

### **Victoria College has the right to:**

- Establish essential functions, abilities, skills, knowledge and standards for courses, programs, services, jobs and activities or facilities and to evaluate individuals with disabilities on this basis;
- Determine the appropriate standards in developing, constructing, remodeling, and maintaining facilities;
- Confirm disability status and request and receive current, relevant documentation that supports requests for accommodations, academic/work adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services;
- Have appropriate staff discuss individuals and their respective disabilities in order to implement requested accommodations;
- Deny a request for accommodations, academic/work adjustments or auxiliary aids and services, and/or barrier removal in facilities, or request additional documentation, if the documentation does not demonstrate a specific need for an accommodation;
- Select among equally effective accommodations, academic/work adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services; and
- Deny unreasonable accommodations, academic/work adjustments or auxiliary aids and services, and/or facility-related barrier removal requests that impose a fundamental alteration on a program or activity or an undue burden on the College.

### **Victoria College has the responsibility to:**

- Inform prospective and current students about the availability and the range of accommodations;
- Provide information in accessible formats upon request;
- Ensure accessibility of facilities and programs;
- Evaluate students on the basis of their abilities and not their disabilities;
- Respond to requests on a timely basis;
- Provide or arrange reasonable accommodations, academic/work adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services in courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities;
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication except where permitted or required by law;
- Designate and maintain an Accessibility Coordinator; and;
- Establish an accessibility policy.

## Grievance Procedure

Students who feel that their rights have been violated have the right to file a grievance in accordance with the following procedures.

Students may file grievances to address issues with DSS, including but not limited to the denial or non-delivery of accommodations, the type of accommodations which are provided, and the manner in which accommodations are provided, and the accessibility of Victoria College programs or activities. Students who feel that their rights have been violated should first contact the Specialist to resolve the issue. If the Specialist is not able to resolve the issue, the student may follow the following grievance procedure:

1. Students who wish to file a grievance should contact the Affirmative Action Officer (AAO) within 30 calendar days of the occurrence. The AAO will provide the student with a Student Complaint of Denial of Rights Form. The student should include as much detailed information as possible on the form.
2. The AAO will investigate any complaint of discrimination based on disability. The AAO may require the student to provide additional information as necessary to investigate the complaint. Regardless of whether it is requested by the AAO, the student shall have the right to provide additional information if the student believes additional information would be relevant.
3. If a complaint is brought by a student regarding denial of an accommodation needed in an ongoing class, the DSS decision will be upheld until such time as a formal resolution of the grievance process is achieved.
4. The AAO shall complete the investigation within 14 working days of receiving the Student Complaint of Denial of Rights Form. If the complaint is found to have merit, the AAO shall have the authority to recommend appropriate action to the appropriate College Administrator. If the complaint is found not to have merit, the AAO may dismiss the case. The student will be notified in writing once a decision has been reached. To appeal this finding the student may follow the grievance procedure outlined in the Student Handbook.

## Medical Emergency Response Procedure for Students with Disabilities

It is the student's responsibility to notify DSS and their individual instructors of medical conditions that might result in emergency situations. Students with any medical condition that may cause an emergency should inform DSS to ensure proper care.

If a medical emergency should occur while the student is on campus, 9-1-1 and Campus Security will be called and an ambulance requested. If medical professionals deem it necessary, the student will be transported to nearby hospital at their expense.

Victoria College employees are not medical personnel. Therefore, 9-1-1 should be called first for the student to receive appropriate medical attention. DSS should be notified for support of the student, which includes notifying the student's designated emergency contact, providing health information if the student is unable to do so, and serving as a liaison with faculty following an emergency.

## Disability Support Services Offered at Victoria College

### Interpreting Services

Interpreting services are provided for deaf or hard of hearing students. DSS provides interpreting services for scheduled classes, labs, and other college events and activities. Interpreters may be local or remote. Since few interpreters are available in Victoria, students are encouraged to request services as early as possible.

### Note-Taking Services

Note taking services may be available to individuals whose disability makes note-taking difficult.

The following are the procedures for establishing a note-taker:

- The instructor will poll the class for a volunteer to take notes.
- Those selected to be note takers must come to DSS to complete a Note Taker Application. DSS will provide the note taker with NCR paper. Note takers will be paid hourly at the Victoria College Student Worker wage, paid monthly.
- When a note taker is provided, the student with a disability is encouraged to attempt to take notes. This assists the student to stay focused in class.
- If the note taker has prior knowledge that he/she will be absent, they should make every effort to ask another student to take notes for that day.
- Students who serve in the capacity of a note taker are required to sign a **Note Taker Agreement** concerning duties.
- In the event a note-taker cannot be established, DSS may recommend digital automated note-taking services.



### Reader/Scribe Services

Students will be provided with a qualified Reader/Scribe if a Reader/Scribe is an approved accommodation.

- The student must contact DSS at least one week prior to the time the Reader/Scribe is needed.
- DSS will attempt to hire a Reader/Scribe to fulfill those duties at the necessary time. In some cases, alternate times may need to be set to have the service provided.
- Available job postings for Reader/Scribes will be posted to the Victoria College Job Opportunities page.
- Reader/Scribes must have a Bachelor's degree and are paid \$10/hr., monthly.
- Reader/Scribes should read information verbatim and may not elaborate or answer student questions. Reader/Scribes should write student answers verbatim.
- Reader/Scribes are required to sign a Reader/Scribe agreement.

### Lab Assistant Services

Students will be provided with a qualified Lab Assistant if a Lab Assistant is an approved accommodation.

- The student must contact DSS at least one week prior to the time the lab assistant is needed.
- DSS will then attempt to provide an assistant to fulfill those duties at the necessary time. In some cases, alternate times may need to be set to have the service provided.
- Lab Assistant are required to sign a Lab Assistant agreement.

### Testing Services

For accommodated testing arrangements (extended time for proctored exams, use of Reader/Scribe, quiet room, etc.) the student will schedule an appointment to test in the Testing Center.

- The student should call the Testing Center at least 48 hours in advance of the scheduled test to schedule a testing time. Students testing at the Gonzales Center should call to schedule testing no later than one week in advance of the scheduled test.
- Tests should be administered in accordance with the course schedule. Any deviations must be approved by the instructor.

### Extended Time

If extended time is an approved accommodation, the amount of extended time is determined on a case-by-case basis.

### Recording Class Meetings/Lectures

If recording class meetings/lectures is an approved accommodation, the student will be asked to sign a Recording Agreement. In all cases, recordings are to be used for personal study only and destroyed/deleted at the end of the semester.

### Captioning/Transcripts

If captioning or transcripts are an approved accommodation, they will be provided in a timely manner.

- Every attempt will be made to provide captions and transcripts within two weeks from the time the request is approved or the video is published to students, however, courses with a large number of videos may take longer.
- Transcripts will be provided to the instructor to distribute to the student as the content is presented.
- Transcripts are to be used for personal study only and destroyed/deleted at the end of the semester.

## **Adaptive Equipment and Assistive Technology**

### **Handicapped Parking**

Individuals who park in designated handicapped parking spaces must display an authorized handicapped parking decal, placard, or state-approved plate. Any vehicle parked in the designated spaces not displaying the proper plate or placard and decal will be fined and subject to towing.

### **Push Button Door Openers**

Many building entrance doors on campus are equipped with push button openers. Students should contact DSS if an entrance without a push button opener is impeding their access or if a push button door is inoperable.

### **Wheelchair Accessible Desk**

Desks without attached chairs are available for those classrooms that are not equipped with desks that can accommodate a wheelchair.

### **CCTV (Closed Circuit Television)**

Enlarges printed material onto a monitor for visually impaired students in both color and black and white. The CCTV Systems are available in the Testing Center and the Library.

### **Fusion (JAWS/ZoomText)**

Job Access with Speech (JAWS) is computer screen reader and ZoomText is a digital screen magnifier designed for Windows programs for visually impaired students. The manufacturer has combined these two softwares into one package named Fusion. Fusion is installed in the Testing Center, Tutoring Center, and Library and may be installed on computers across campus upon request.

### **NVDA (Non-Visual Desktop Access)**

NVDA is a free, open-source computer screen reader designed for Windows programs for visually impaired students. The Help Desk can help the student to install NVDA on their personal computer.

### **Kurzweil 3000**

Kurzweil 3000 is a screen reading software for students with learning and visual disabilities. This is installed in the Testing Center, Tutoring Center, and Library and may be installed on computers across campus upon request.

Students who wish to use Kurzweil 3000 should contact DSS to be assigned an account and receive login information.

### **NaturalReader**

NaturalReader is a free or low-cost screen reader that can be used on Windows or Mac. The Help Desk can help the student to install Natural Reader on their personal computer. Natural Reader can be installed on computers across campus upon request.

### **Dragon NaturallySpeaking**

Dragon NaturallySpeaking is a voice-to-text dictation software that can also be used for voice control.

### **Electronic Textbooks**

DSS will provide information concerning recorded textbooks from Learning Ally (formerly Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic) to individuals who inquire about them.

Where the publisher does not provide a digital version of the textbook, DSS can provide digital versions of textbooks to students with a documented disability from AccessText network when available. Other options may be available if the textbook is not available from AccessText, including direct from publisher or scanned copies with Optical Character Recognition.

## **Service and Comfort Animals**

The College is committed to complying with the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 in relation to the use of service animals by students. A service animal will be allowed to accompany a student with disabilities into any areas of the College to which a student without disabilities or other members of the public or invitees would ordinarily have access, including, but not limited to, public dining facilities.

Please see the Service and Comfort Animal Policy Addendum for specific policies and guidelines.

## **Student Frequently Asked Questions**

### **How do I apply for disability services?**

You should contact the DSS office one month prior to the semester you plan to enroll at Victoria College. You will need to complete an **Application for Services** and the **Consent for Exchange of Information**. You must provide documentation verifying your disability.

### **How are accommodations determined?**

The Specialist will review the documentation you provide. Then the Specialist will meet with you to discuss your disability and how it will affect your ability to complete the courses in which you are enrolled. Accommodations will be provided based on this information.

### **How will my instructor know what accommodations I am eligible to receive?**

After you and the Specialist have discussed the accommodations that are appropriate for your disability, the Specialist will provide your instructors with a **Faculty/Staff Information Form**.

### **Do I have to tell my instructor what my disability is?**

No. It is not necessary to disclose your disability to your instructor in order to receive services. However, in some instances, it may be useful for your instructor to know about your disability. Ultimately, the choice to disclose or not is up to each individual student.

### **I often miss classes due to my disability and my instructors have warned me that they may deduct points for missed classes. Can they do this?**

Yes. If instructors view classroom attendance and participation as essential components of the class, then all students can be held to this standard.

### **Does DSS provide on-campus mobility assistance?**

At this time there are no mobility services available to students to assist them in getting to and from their classes. Students with mobility impairments must provide their own wheelchairs and/or other individually prescribed devices.

### **What should I expect in the classroom?**

Expect to maintain the standards that apply to everyone else in the course. With the exception of appropriate accommodations, course content will not be altered.

### **What about confidentiality?**

DSS makes every effort to maintain the privacy of students with disabilities. The student's disability and eligible accommodations are confidential and not a part of the student's academic record or public information.

### **Can I use a service animal in the classroom?**

A service animal will be allowed to accompany a student with disabilities into any areas of the College to which a student without disabilities or other members of the public or invitees would ordinarily have access, including, but not limited to, public dining facilities.

## Victoria College Resources

### Tutoring Services

Tutoring services are available to all students enrolled at Victoria College and should be utilized whenever possible. The Tutoring Center has subject-specific tutors that are available virtually and in-person during scheduled times. Students are encouraged to contact the Tutoring Center to learn more about tutoring opportunities.

Students are responsible for paying for any private tutorial services they deem necessary.

### The KEY Center

Free services are offered to qualified individuals. Applications are available in The KEY Center. In order to qualify a student must:

- Be a first-generation college student (neither parent has completed a four-year college degree);
- Meet income guidelines; or
- Have a documented disability.

### Services offered include:

- Individual and group tutoring in a variety of academic areas
- College success skills
- Transfer assistance to students who plan to continue their education beyond a certificate or associate degree program
- Workshops and seminars in the areas of time management, study skills, test anxiety, and other areas of interest
- Learning styles and self-exploration assistance
- Career interest, explorations, and preparation sessions
- Advising in academics, financial aid, and personal concerns
- Cultural and educational enrichment activities, and
- Referral services to other campus and community resources.

### Special Assistance by Library Staff

The staff of Victoria College Library are available to assist individuals with disabilities. Individuals can learn about library services and receive assistance by contacting personnel at the main desk.

## Community Resources

### Victoria College Disability Support Services

Advising & Counseling Services

Student Services Building, Room 105K

2200 E. Red River Street

Victoria, TX 77901

(361) 572-6411 (voice)

(361) 582-2400 (voice)

(361) 582-2525 (fax)

Karen.Friedel@VictoriaCollege.edu

### Learning Ally National Headquarters

20 Roszel Road

Princeton, NJ 08540

(800) 221-4792

<http://www.learningally.org/>

### Texas Workforce Solutions – Vocational Rehabilitation Services

120 Main St., Ste. 110

Victoria, TX 77901

(361) 578-0341

(361) 576-5872

(800) 735-2988 (Voice)

(800) 735-2989 (TDD)

<http://www.twc.state.tx.us/jobseekers/vocational-rehabilitation-services>

<http://www.gcworkforce.org/>

### Texas School for the Deaf – Statewide Outreach Center

1102 S Congress Ave

Austin, TX 78704

(512) 462-5329

(512) 982-1646 (Video)

(800) 332-3873

<https://www.texasdeafed.org/>

## Faculty Expectations

- During the first class and in the course syllabus, provide information about DSS for students with disabilities.
- Sample Syllabus Statement:  
“The College will make reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. These students must contact Advising & Counseling Services before classroom accommodations can be provided.”
- This information is also provided in the Student Services Addendum to Course Syllabus.
- Be familiar with services available for students with disabilities.
- All courses should meet ADA and Section 508 requirements for accessibility. Please see the Accessibility Specialist for assistance if needed.
- Faculty members must honor approved accommodations.
- Students with disabilities may not always exhibit outward symptoms. Approved accommodations must be honored even if the disability is not obvious.
- If you feel a student would benefit from an accommodation, refer the student to DSS.
- If a student requests an accommodation without a **Faculty/Staff Information Form** from DSS, refer the student to DSS.
- Faculty should not provide any unauthorized accommodations.
- If a faculty member feels that an accommodation fundamentally alters the curriculum of the course, they should contact DSS so that a determination can be made.
- Contact the Specialist and/or the Accessibility Specialist for help with any accommodations.

## Disability-Specific Expectations for all Victoria College Employees

Some disabilities require specific considerations for safety or have etiquette rules that all employees should follow.

- Never touch or acknowledge a service animal, or allow other students to do so. Doing so could distract it from the task it is trained to do for the student.
- Consider mobility devices (wheelchairs, scooters, canes) to be extensions of a student’s individual space. You should not touch or move a student’s device without permission, including pushing a student in a wheelchair.
- Familiarize yourself with the locations of accessible rest rooms, water fountains, parking spaces, entrances, and ramps.
- Notify DSS if physical modifications (ex. ramps, push button doors, etc.) need to be made in order to allow a student to access the campus.
- Allow students to speak for themselves. If a student has an assistant, companion, or interpreter, speak directly to the student, not the assistant. Ask, "What did you think of the basketball game?" rather than "What did he think of the game?"
- Do not leave a student with a visual impairment alone without notifying them.
- If a student with a visual impairment requires assistance with navigation, you may offer your arm to help guide them with permission, if you feel comfortable doing so. Do not take their arm unless asked.
- To get the attention of a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, tap the person on the shoulder or wave your hand.
- All students must follow the code of conduct. If disruptive behavior persistently occurs or the student code of conduct is violated, regardless of a student’s disability, an early alert should be issued, or campus police called if the student is exhibiting behavior that is dangerous to themselves or others.

## Addendum

### Service and Comfort Animal Policy

Service Animals: Victoria College ("College") and the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) are committed to complying with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 related to the use of service animals by students with disabilities.

#### Definitions:

**Service Animal:** Under the ADA, a service animal is defined as a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. The task(s) performed by the dog must be directly related to the person's disability. The dog must be trained to take a specific action when needed to assist the person with a disability. Under Title II and III of the ADA, service animals are limited to dogs. However, entities must make reasonable modifications in policies to allow individuals with disabilities to use miniature horses if they have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for individuals with disabilities.

**Therapy/Emotional Support Animal:** A therapy/emotional support animal is an animal designated by a mental provider to play a part in the treatment process of an individual with a disability. However, a therapy/emotional support animal does not assist an individual with a disability in the activities of daily living, nor does it accompany a person with a disability at all times. Therefore, an animal that has crime deterrent effects by its mere presence, and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks, thus, the animal does not qualify as a service animal.

#### Access:

Subject to certain restrictions set forth in the section titled "Restrictions and Exclusions of Service Animals," a service animal will be allowed to accompany a student with disabilities into any areas of the College to which a student without disabilities or other members of the public or invitees would ordinarily have access, including, but not limited to, public dining facilities.

#### Registration and Documentation:

When requesting accommodations involving the use of a service animal, VC may not require students to register service animals or provide any type of documentation such as proof of disability for the student, or proof of training, licensure, or certification for the service animal. Students are required, however, to prove their service animal has been vaccinated in accordance with local, municipal, and county law.

The ADA does not require service animals to wear a vest, ID tag, or specific harness.

Upon receipt of a request for accommodation involving the use of a service animal, VC employees may not ask questions regarding the nature or extent of the student's disability. If it is not readily apparent that an animal is trained to do work or perform tasks for a student with a disability, DSS staff may only ask 1) "Is the animal required because of a disability?" and 2) "What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?"



### Conflicting Disabilities:

Students with disabilities utilizing service animals will not be denied access where other students or employees of the College have medical conditions that are affected by animals including, but not limited to, respiratory diseases, asthma or severe allergies. Other students or employees of the College with medical condition(s) that are affected by animals should contact the DSS (students) or the Human Resources Department (employees) if they have a concern about exposure to a service animal. The employee or student asserting the medical condition affected by a service animal will be accommodated as necessary and as provided by law.

### Service Animal Management:

Victoria College is not responsible for the care and supervision of a service animal. Service animals shall be under the control of its student handler/handler at all times through the use of a harness, leash or other tether. In those cases where the student handler is unable, due to disability, to use a harness, leash or other tether, or where the use of a harness, leash, or other tether would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks, the service animal must otherwise be under the student handler's control through such means as voice control or signals.

The student handler/handler is responsible for caring for and supervising the service animal, which includes toileting, feeding, grooming and veterinary care. In cases where the student handler is physically unable to tend to the toileting cleanup needs of the service animal while on campus, the student handler may designate an assistant for the task.

### Restrictions and Exclusion of Service Animals:

Service animals can be excluded from campus if the animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control it, or if the animal is not housebroken.

An animal is "out of control" when it is not under the control of its student handler either through the use of a harness, leash, other tether, or through such means as voice control or signals. An animal that barks or whines repeatedly and inappropriately without being provoked, or otherwise poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others may also be defined as "out of control."

Any request to restrict a service animal must be received by the DSS. The Director of DSS shall make a determination whether or not to remove or restrict the service animal.

The use of a service animal may be restricted in certain College locations where it can be established that the presence of the service animal fundamentally alters the nature of the service, program or activity offered.

In cases where a service animal is properly restricted or excluded from campus under this section, the student with a disability shall be given an opportunity to participate in any service, program or activity of Victoria College without having the service animal on campus.

### Treatment of Service Animals by the College Community:

Employees and students of the College community will abide by the following practices with regard to service animals:

1. Service animals are allowed to accompany a student with a disability/handler at all times and in all places on campus to which a student without disability or other members of the public or invitees would ordinarily have access, except as provided by the section titled "Restrictions and Exclusions of Service Animals";
2. Touching or petting of a service animal is prohibited unless invited to do so by the disabled student/handler;
3. Feeding of a service animal is prohibited except by the disabled student/handler;
4. A service animal should not be deliberately startled;

5. No action should be taken to separate a disabled student/handler from his or her service animal, except under emergency situations where it may become necessary.

#### Exceptions for Emotional Support Animals:

The College may exercise its discretion in determining whether a student may be allowed the use of an animal whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support as an accommodation under certain circumstances. Students must be able to establish a medical need as documented by a mental health provider for an emotional support animal through documentation from his or her mental health provider. If a student is allowed the use of an emotional support animal, policy regarding the management and exclusion of service animals set forth herein will be applicable.

**The President of Victoria College may make exceptions to these rules on a case-by-case basis.**

#### Additional Standards for Approved Service Animals

All approved service animals must comply with applicable state, county laws, and city ordinances for their treatment and care:

- a) The College requests that a Certificate of Health, signed by a veterinarian, certifying the animal is healthy and free from any signs of infectious or contagious diseases, parasites, etc. be on file with the College's Student Services Office.
- b) All required immunizations must be up-to-date and a copy of those immunizations on file according to applicable state, county, and city laws, such as the City of Victoria, Texas, Code of Ordinances.
- c) Animals which constitute a threat or nuisance to staff, students, or property, as determined by the Director of Advising and Counseling, must be removed.
- d) If City of Victoria Police or Campus Safety personnel determines that an animal poses an immediate threat, animal control may be summoned to remove the animal.
- e) If the behavior of an animal can be addressed by the owner and the owner can change the behavior of an animal so that it does not have to be removed, then a written action plan must be submitted by the owner.
  - i. The action plan must outline the proposed action to address the problems and also must give a deadline as to length of time the plan will take to complete.
  - ii. Any action plan must meet the approval of the Dean of Student Services or designee. Any animal owner found not adhering to the removal directive will be subject to disciplinary action, which could include expulsion from classes and/or from the campus.
- f) An animal's behavior must not result in either the threat of, or an actual injury. The animal owner/handler will take all reasonable precautions to protect people and property.
- g) Animal waste must be taken care of and any animal handler or owner must comply with local ordinances and rules regarding defecation on public property.
  - i. Animal feces must be disposed of properly. It is the owner's responsibility to remove feces from campus, dispose of it in a plastic bag, and then place that bag in the garbage dumpsters outside. Cleanup must occur immediately.
  - ii. Animal feces may not be disposed of in any trash receptacle or through the sewer system inside any building on campus.