

# BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

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## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**AREA:** Academic Affairs

**NUMBER:** Policy 2.37

**SUBJECT:** Accommodating Students With Disabilities

### 1. Overview

Blue Mountain College has a tradition of providing assistance to students with disabilities. In addition to moral responsibility and the College's commitment to access, there is a legal imperative which is embodied in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

To comply with these mandates, Blue Mountain College ensures that comparable educational programs and services offered to other qualified students are available to qualified students with disabilities. A "qualified student with disabilities" is one who, with reasonable accommodation, can meet all of an educational program's requirements notwithstanding the disability.

To accomplish this goal, both physical and programmatic access is provided. This means that reasonable accommodations are made in the instructional process to ensure appropriate educational opportunity. This principle applies to teaching strategies and modes, as well as to institutional and departmental policies. It does not mean, however, that essential elements of a course or program will be deleted or substantially altered because of the disability, but instead, will be modified to meet the needs of the student. The objective is to assist the student in meeting established academic standards, not to provide a program different in substance from that provided to other qualified students.

### 2. Policy and Procedure

It is the policy of Blue Mountain College to comply with applicable laws and regulations. Any student with a documented disability is eligible for assistance in meeting the needs for accommodation. To access services, students should follow these procedures:

- A. The point of contact for initiating, receiving and monitoring referrals for reasonable accommodation requests is the Vice President for Academic Affairs of the College.
- B. Students are required to complete a *Request for Special Accommodations* form identifying the disability. Since the purpose of the documentation is to assist the student and the College in determining reasonable academic adjustments as stipulated under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (e.g., extended test time, reduced course load, auxiliary aids, assistance in the Library), the following guidelines should be followed to assure that the diagnostic evaluation report appropriately verifies the accommodation(s) being sought:
  - 1) Testing must be comprehensive.
  - 2) Testing must be current. In most cases, this means within the past three years.

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- 3) There must be clear and specific evidence and identification of a disability.
- 4) Professionals conducting the assessment must be qualified to do so. "Qualified" means licensed or certified in relevant area.
- 5) Diagnostic reports must include the names and titles of the evaluators as well as the date(s) of testing. Recommendations for educational interventions must also be included.

All materials submitted to verify the disability and to determine academic adjustments are treated as confidential information. They are not a part of the student's permanent record but are kept on file in the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs while the student is enrolled at Blue Mountain College.

- C. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will review the report, secure any additional feedback that is needed, meet with the student to discuss the accommodation requests and clarify follow-up recommendations with the student.
- D. The Vice President for Academic Affairs and the student will complete and sign a form (Request for Special Accommodations), stating the mutually agreed upon accommodations, and a form (*Permission to Notify Faculty of Student Disability*) giving the VPAA permission to send a copy of the mutually agreed upon accommodations to the faculty members who teach the student and/or appropriate Library staff. Copies of appropriate forms may be obtained from the VPAA.
- E. At the completion of the semester, the faculty member and/or appropriate library staff will signify on the *Request for Special Accommodations* form that the accommodations were made. The form will be kept on file in the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- F. If any accommodation needs to be changed, the student is required to submit the change in writing to the VPAA who will follow the process identified in steps 2(c) and 2(d).
- G. Accommodation requests are effective for only one semester. Students are to meet with the VPAA at the beginning of each semester to evaluate the student's needs. Step 2(d) will be followed.
- H. Students are expected to practice self-advocacy. This means that students recognize and meet the needs specific to their disability without compromising the dignity of themselves or others. Students are expected to adhere to the procedures as responsible partners in this Disabilities Policy.
- I. If the student does not receive acceptable accommodations from the VPAA and faculty members, the following procedure may be followed to file an appeal:
  - 1) Complaints must be filed in writing with the course instructor. If a satisfactory resolution is not made, the appeal is then filed with the department chair. Finally the appeal is filed in writing with the VPAA within 30 days after the alleged discriminatory act by contacting the Vice President for Academic Affairs at Blue Mountain College, P.O. Box 160, Blue Mountain, MS 38610.

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- 2) The VPAA will interview the complainant to obtain complete accounts of the allegations. The VPAA and the complainant will come to an agreement on steps to be taken to address the complaint. The VPAA (or an appropriate designee) will be responsible for appropriate follow-up.
  - 3) If the student still does not receive acceptable accommodations, then an appeal may be filed with the President of the College. Such an appeal must be in writing and filed within 30 days of the VPAA's action referenced in 2(i)(2).
- J. Faculty members may inform the VPAA of students in their classes who have self-reported disabilities but who have not followed the procedures listed above, by completing the *Faculty Referral Form for Students with Self-reported Disabilities* and returning it to the VPAA.
- K. Appropriate forms for student and faculty use may be obtained from the VPAA.

SOURCE: Board of Trustees: February 22, 2013; February 26, 2010; February 21, 2003; October 03, 2003.

EDITORIAL CHANGES: February 02, 2004