

Tarleton State University  
Student Disability Services  
Rules and Practices

Mission Statement: Our mission is to enable equal access to an education and University life by creating an accessible campus community where students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to fully participate in all aspects of the educational environment.

#### Equal Access

Within the guidelines set forth in this policy, Tarleton State University faculty, staff, and students are committed to providing an accessible and supportive environment for students with disabilities. Equal access for qualified students with disabilities is an obligation of the University under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Tarleton State University does not discriminate on the basis of disability against otherwise qualified individuals in any program, service or activity offered by the University. The University is committed to insuring that no qualified individual with a disability is excluded, denied services, segregated or otherwise treated differently than other individuals because of the absence of auxiliary aids or other reasonable services.

#### Declaration of Need

Upon admission to the University, students with disabilities must identify themselves to the Office of Student Disability Services in order to receive consideration for accommodations or services. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate contact and to provide sufficient documentation from a credentialed evaluator.

#### Documentation

Provision of appropriate documentation is of two-fold importance: establishing that a student is a person with a disability and thereby entitled to equal access according to federal mandates AND establishing that a student has a need for accommodation in order to obtain equal access. Documentation must demonstrate that the physical or mental disability creates a substantial limitation to a major life activity. In order to be considered for accommodations, the student's documentation must establish a current need for the requested accommodation(s). Timely documentation should be from an appropriately credentialed professional.

#### Determining Accommodations

The Director of Student Disability Services has been appointed the authority to make decisions on behalf of the institution regarding accommodation requests by University administration. The Director may consult with an advisory committee comprised of faculty and professional staff in considering specific student requests and with the University Committee for Disability Services regarding policy, guidelines, and resources.

#### Requesting Accommodations

Requests for accommodations are made in person with the Director of Student Disability Services after the provision of appropriate documentation. Requests for accommodations may be made at any time; however, it is to the benefit of the student to contact Student Disability Services prior to the semester for which accommodations are being requested. Typically, decisions regarding accommodations will be determined within two weeks of the request. Longer consideration may be needed in certain circumstances (i.e. additional documentation needed, exploration of options with technology, etc.) Once appropriate accommodations have been identified, letters to faculty will be created that describe the accommodations the student may be requesting for his/her respective courses. It is the responsibility of the student to deliver the letters to faculty and to discuss any course specific issues at that time. Some students with testing related accommodations may take departmental exams with University Testing. Students are responsible for being familiar with and following University Testing procedures. Although Student Disability Services works closely with University Testing, University Testing has the final authority for scheduling exams. Students who believe that agreed upon accommodations are not appropriately provided should contact the Director of Student Disability Services for support in mediation. If a student is not satisfied with actions taken by Student Disability Services, s/he should follow the grievance procedure outlined in this document.

#### Confidentiality

Student Disability Services and Tarleton State University recognize and respect the sensitive nature of disability related information and adhere to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) in handling such information. All disability related information is collected and maintained by Student Disability Services. Documentation of disability is held in the office of the Director and is accessed only by Student Disability Services staff or by members of the advisory committee. Disability related information that is pertinent to other departments will be housed by that department and afforded the same concern for privacy (i.e. Financial Aid or Residential Living and Learning).

#### Reduced Course Load

Students requesting a reduced course load (less than 12 semester hours) while maintaining status as a full time student should pursue the request as described previously in this document. The Director of Student Disability Services in consultation with the advisory committee will make a determination. In order to be considered for a reduced course load, a student must provide a full scale psychological evaluation or comprehensive medical records supporting the request. Students approved for this accommodation will access all of the rights and privileges afforded any full time student at the University. However, issues may arise that are beyond the University's scope of decision making (such as federal financial aid) that must be negotiated by the student.

#### Grievance

A student, faculty member, or staff person has the right to file a grievance concerning allegations of failure to comply with laws, regulations, and policies set forth for students with disabilities. The following procedure should be followed in doing so:

1. The student, faculty, or staff member will present, in writing, to the Director of Student Disability Services reasons why the accommodation in question does or does not compromise the essential requirements of a course or program. If the grievance is against the Director of Student Disability Services, communications should be directed to the Dean of General Studies.
2. The Director of Student Disability Services will address the issue in coordination with the Student Disability Services Advisory Committee, and will provide the decision to the grieving party in writing.
3. If the student, faculty member, or staff person chooses to request a review of the appeal, s/he may do so by providing a written request to Academic Affairs.

The grieving party may also, at any time, contact the Office of Civil Rights (OCR); completion of this process is not a requirement for OCR involvement.