

## Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

### **If a student has an IEP/504 plan in high school will the same accommodations and services be provided in college?**

The laws governing accommodations for students with disabilities are different in college than in K-12. In some cases, the accommodations that students receive in high school may be the same, but some accommodations may not be reasonable and appropriate at the college level. Information about these differences can be found on the Transition Guide for Parents of Students with Disabilities (<https://www.nvcc.edu/disability-services/guidelines.html>) on the Disability Support Services website.

### **How does the college know that a student needs accommodations? Does the Disability Support Services office seek students out to provide services?**

It is the student's responsibility to self-identify and request accommodations by registering with the Disability Support Services office. Under the ADA and Section 504 students have a right to confidentiality and non-disclosure. When students arrive at college, there is no record of that student having a disability. The student must apply for accommodations and provide the necessary disability documentation as explained under Disability Documentation Guidelines (<https://www.nvcc.edu/disability-services/guidelines.html>) on the Disability Support Services website.

### **How do students request accommodations?**

Once a student is admitted to NOVA, the student applies for accommodations online on the Disability Support Services webpage. After the application is submitted along with disability documentation, a DSS counselor will contact the student to set up an intake appointment. Email communication between students and NOVA faculty and staff is conducted via student email. Students may access their email through My NOVA.

### **What types of accommodations are provided at NOVA?**

Accommodations are determined on a case by case basis during the intake appointment, at which time the counselor will consider the disability documentation, the student's self-report and the classes and activities in which the student is participating. Accommodations ensure that a student with disabilities has equal access to programs and classes. An accommodation will not be approved if it causes a fundamental alteration to the essential elements of a course or program.

**What documentation do you require?**

Disability documentation, completed by a qualified professional, establish the existence of a disability and provide evidence of a substantial limitation in one or more major life activities. The documentation may include suggestions of reasonable accommodations in a college environment. Disability Documentation Guidelines can be found on the Disability Support Services website (<https://www.nvcc.edu/disability-services/guidelines.html>).

**May a parent apply for accommodations on behalf of the student?**

All requests for accommodations must come directly from the student. Counselors will communicate with students through their NOVA email address and will not discuss accommodations or other issues with parents in the absence of the student. This applies to all students, including those who are dual enrolled high school students and whether or not they have reached the age of 18.

**Do parents attend intakes and other meetings with the DSS counselor?**

Students determine if they would like to include a parent in the intake meeting. The meeting will be between the student and counselor with the parent in the role of advocate.

**What if I have a FERPA release or Legal Guardianship?**

Students with disabilities are expected to take an active role in their education and meet all of the same requirements as any other student such as meeting with counselors and advisers. Students are required to handle any matters related to our office, including requesting accommodations and reporting issues. We do not work with parents in place of students.

Parents or legal guardians may have access to student records with the consent of the student or by providing evidence that the student is a dependent for tax purposes. Parents requesting information about academic records may submit a Consent to Release Educational Records form (<http://www.nvcc.edu/forms/pdf/125-356.pdf>). All requests for information must be made through the campus registrar or Dean of Students. However, even if a student signs a release, staff generally only communicates with parents in the presence of the student.

**Are students required to request accommodations at the beginning of the semester? What if the student wants to try taking classes without accommodations? Is there a deadline for making the request?**

Students may request accommodations any time during the semester, however the Disability Support Services office strongly encourages students to request accommodations before classes begin. Once accommodations have been approved, students have the option of using them as needed. Accommodations are not retroactive. If a student does not request accommodations, or chooses not to use approved accommodations, the student will not be permitted to re-submit classwork, tests, quizzes or homework completed without accommodations.

### **How will the professors know that the student is receiving accommodations?**

During the intake meeting, the counselor will generate a Memorandum of Accommodations (MOA). The MOA will be emailed to the student. The student may print out hard copies of the MOA to provide to professors or send copies by email. If the student is using accommodations in the Testing Center, a copy of the MOA must be submitted there as well. The student and counselor will go over a Disability Support Services Agreement that helps guide the student to self-advocate and explain his or her accommodations to the appropriate faculty and staff. Students should ask their counselors for help with this process whenever they need it.

### **In high school, teachers kept me informed of how my son or daughter was doing. Will a professor contact me if my student is having difficulties in class?**

In college, students are responsible for seeking assistance if they are having problems. Parents will not be contacted regarding grades or any other academic issues. Parents may refer to their student with any questions regarding academic progress.

### **What if the student has questions about classes, instructors, homework and new friends?**

The DSS counselors are also academic advisers. Students should direct questions about classes, instructors, homework, etc. to their counselors. NOVA has many other services and supports such as Student Life, Tutoring and Academic Success Centers, Libraries, Bookstores, Computer Labs, etc. Students starting at NOVA should search our website and check their NOVA student email often to see what activities are available to them throughout the semester. All first-year students at NOVA take an SDV – Student Development – course. This class helps students navigate college, both from the academic and social perspective.

### **If I am concerned for my student's well-being, can I express my concerns to the staff of Disability Support Services?**

Yes, when appropriate. It is best to speak with your student first with any concerns you may have. You may report your concern but we cannot take action without the direct involvement of your student. The only exception to this is a life-threatening situation or one that could cause substantial harm to the student. We will respond appropriately to ensure your student's safety and well-being while still respecting their legal rights as an adult.

### **How can I help my son or daughter who is struggling in classes even with accommodations?**

Ask your student if they are using all of the accommodations granted. Encourage them to go to Disability Support Services to ask for assistance. If accommodations need revising, the student is responsible for requesting any changes and providing documentation to substantiate those changes. Tutoring is also available through the Center for Academic Excellence.