

Accessibility | Access and Disability Services

Resources

STUDENT HANDBOOK

BELLINGHAM TECHNICAL COLLEGE
3028 LINDBERGH AVENUE
BELLINGHAM, WA 98225

ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES
COLLEGE SERVICES BUILDING
ADMISSIONS AND STUDENT RESOURCE CENTER
ROOM 106

Welcome to Bellingham Technical College!

This handbook was developed to address the rights, responsibilities, and expectations of students with disabilities attending Bellingham Technical College (BTC). This handbook is intended to offer information that may positively impact your academic success and ease the accommodation process while you are a student at BTC. This is not a legal document, nor is it intended to offer legal advice. This document provides guidelines for you to follow in order to access academic adjustments, auxiliary aids and resources while attending BTC.

Mission:

Accessibility Resources promotes an institutional culture of disability education and accessible learning. We strive to help students develop the self-advocacy and communication skills necessary to succeed when they leave our institution and gain employment in the workplace. The individual advising and collaborative interactions students experience with AR professionals are intentionally designed to help students identify and articulate their strengths and challenges as they prepare to pursue a career path.

The professionals in the AR Office at BTC view their positions and responsibilities as threefold:

- Move students toward greater disability awareness, competence, and responsibility while simultaneously ensuring the protection of students' civil rights by promoting a learning environment free from discrimination and barriers.
- Promote a culture of disability education. This is accomplished through the facilitation of student learning and development as well as disability education opportunities for students.
- Keep current regarding changes in disability law and maintain institutional compliance through consistent awareness of potential ADA concerns. Protect the institution, faculty, and staff from potential litigation by educating employees. This is accomplished by providing frequent educational opportunities for faculty and staff, using small and large group settings or individual consultations.

Vision:

Through intentional conversation, collaboration, and the provision of academic adjustments and auxiliary aids, support students self-efficacy development, regard themselves as capable learners, and aid in shifting the overall focus from disability to ability campus-wide.

What do we want students to learn from their connection with AR at BTC?

By the end of the second quarter of access to the services, as well as interaction with the professionals, in the AR Office at BTC, students will be able to:

1. Identify their specific disability(ies).
2. Describe the educational difficulties (i.e. functional limitations) they experience in academic settings.
3. Articulate the steps required to initially secure disability services at BTC.
4. Articulate the steps required for quarterly renewal of accommodations.
5. Demonstrate independent negotiation of their academic adjustments with their instructors.
6. Identify, locate, and utilize additional campus and community resources available to them.

What AR is...

Accessibility Resources (AR) exists as a center of disability education and resources for students, staff, and faculty. The professionals in the AR Office are happy to help students navigate the landscape of higher education as well as locate necessary services. We are invested in your academic success and goal attainment. One of the primary functions of AR is to act as a facilitator for students to obtain and utilize accommodations necessary to ensure **equal access for participation in campus programs and activities**. Additionally, AR is a strong ally for students at every level of their disability awareness, student development, and academic pursuits.

What AR is not...

While the professionals in the AR Office are able to direct you to the appropriate services, on and off campus, AR is not:

- Mental Health Counseling
- Tutoring Services
- Financial Aid Experts
- Community Services Specialists
- Able to diagnose your disability

How do I know if I qualify for Accessibility Resources at BTC?

Schedule an initial appointment with an AR professional and have a conversation regarding your disability challenges. At this time, you will be asked about previous history and documentation of your disability and asked to provide a report written by a diagnostician – which means a

medical doctor, psychologist, or psychiatrist with the training and credentials necessary to diagnose your particular disability.

IMPORTANT: An Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) from K-12 does **not** qualify as documentation. You will most likely be asked to provide more recent, additional documentation in order for AR to ascertain appropriate classroom and program adjustments.

How Do I Register with the AR Office at BTC?

Registering with the AR Office at BTC involves the following:

- Make an initial appointment with an AR professional – Initial appointments are generally scheduled for one hour. You may make an appointment by calling 360-752-8450 or stop by the Admissions and Student Resource Center in the College Services Building, Room 106, and make an appointment at the front desk.
- At your intake appointment, discuss the barriers you experience in an academic setting with an AR professional
- Complete a new student intake – this is done by computerized survey and/or through questions during initial interview
- Submit recent documentation of your disability prepared by a medical doctor, psychologist or psychiatrist – See complete Documentation Guidelines for comprehensive information (Index)*
- Sign a Release of Information Form (Index)

*Obtaining documentation can be a process and may take time. Note that not having documentation at your first appointment will not create a barrier to accommodations. Provisional accommodations for the current quarter may be approved until you can acquire appropriate documentation.

How do I know what accommodations I qualify for?

Accommodations are based on the documentation you provide to the AR Office at BTC. At your first appointment, you should be prepared to discuss the history of your disability, the limitations or challenges you experience in learning environments due to your disability, and any accommodations you have received in previous institutions of learning. You and the professionals in the AR Office at BTC will, together, determine appropriate, reasonable accommodations based on your documented disability. There are times when a facilitated discussion with your instructor may be requested in order to gain more information regarding the classroom environment and how accommodations will impact that environment.

How do I request my accommodations?

Once accommodations have been determined, you will need to sign a Request for Accommodations Form – **verbal requests are not honored**. You will receive

a copy of your request. Additionally, the AR Office at BTC will send a Letter of Accommodation to your instructor(s) for the current quarter – the instructor will not honor your accommodation until they receive this notification. However, it is the student's responsibility to let their instructor(s) know they (a) have registered with AR and (b) are requesting academic accommodations for the quarter. It is the responsibility of the student, instructor, and AR professionals to negotiate how accommodations will be fulfilled.

Do I need to request my accommodations each quarter I am a student at BTC?

Yes! Your accommodations do not roll over from quarter to quarter. Just like submitting your financial aid application and registering for classes, it is *your responsibility* to make accommodation renewals a part of your academic planning.

Confidentiality and Documentation

All information shared with AR regarding a student's disability is maintained in a confidential file and is available for AR staff referral only. Clinical information is not released to any other individuals, offices or departments without the express written permission of the student.

In order for AR to provide appropriate services, recent documentation (ideally created within the last three years) and assessment of the student's needs are required. Documentation must be written by a qualified healthcare professional trained to diagnose the student's disability and should be written according to our *Documentation Guidelines* (Index). Visible disabilities can be in the form of a letter on letterhead or diagnostic testing that states the diagnosis of disability. Non-visible disabilities (heart condition, learning disabilities, carpal tunnel, psychological, and others) will require written documentation stating functional limitations, or ways the disability affects the student's learning in the classroom.

A confidential file (paper and electronic) will be kept containing documentation, intake and release forms, appointment records, scheduling/advising sheets, as well as other educational and service-related information in the AR office. This file will be kept as long as the student is enrolled at BTC plus 7 years thereafter. After that time, all information within the paper file will be destroyed, including documentation.

What Are My Responsibilities?

The college will work collaboratively with each student in determining reasonable accommodations. To ensure the delivery of accommodations for which the student qualifies, students shall:

- Provide timely notice and documentation of the nature and extent of their disability, and the services they are requesting to the AR office. Requests for accommodations should be received by the AR office four (4) weeks prior to the beginning of the quarter for which the request is made. Lack of advance notice may delay the availability of some accommodations.
- Provide additional documentation if requested by the AR staff to determine appropriate adjustments. Such documentation may include, but is not limited to
 - identification of tests administered
 - test results
 - description of the qualifying disability
 - recommended accommodations.
- Cooperate with AR to develop an appropriate educational plan and any academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, or related services needed.
- Follow through with additional tasks to ensure set-up of your accommodations (i.e. reduced-distraction testing, alternate text requests, etc.)
- When receiving services provided by hourly AR personnel (readers, scribes, TypeWell transcribers, ASL interpreters), you are responsible for:
 - exchanging contact information with assigned reader/scribe/interpreter/transcriber
 - notifying the AR Office AND your reader/scribe/interpreter/transcriber at least 24 hours in advance of a planned absence
 - notifying the AR Office AND your reader/scribe/interpreter/transcriber as soon as possible if you will have an unplanned absence.
- Promptly notify AR of any problems encountered in receiving the agreed-upon accommodations.
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress and attendance.

IMPORTANT! All students are subject to the Academic Progress Policy and the Student Conduct Code as outlined in the current BTC Catalog and Student Handbook.

What Are My Rights?

Bellingham Technical College is committed to providing qualified students with a disability an equal opportunity to access the benefits, rights and privileges of college services, programs, and activities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and State of Washington Laws of 1994, Chapter 105 ensure that students not be discriminated against due to their disability.

- All qualified students have the right to receive appropriate services under these laws.
- All qualified students have the right to appeal any decisions made regarding accommodations.
- All students have the right to confidentiality.

Under the ADA, a person with a disability is someone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Academic Adjustments

Under the ADA, the College is *not* required to alter the fundamental nature of a program to accommodate a student with a disability. BTC will not waive degree requirements. However, academic adjustments may be applied through the AR Office at BTC in order to level the academic playing field for a qualified student with a disability.

Access

Review of the campus and coordination of efforts is ongoing to ensure campus accessibility, including barrier-free design, signage, identification of hazards or mobility barriers, maintenance of access during construction, snow and ice clearance, and an adequate number of disability parking for all facilities. If you experience a barrier on campus, please contact the AR Office at 360-752-8576 and let them know.

Referral for appropriate off-campus resources, services and agencies are available. Additionally, on-campus resources, including academic tutoring, counseling, and academic advising, are available for all students.

Basic Academic Skills (BAS):

Unlike elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities are *not* required to design special academic programs for students with disabilities. Therefore, **BAS classes are open to adults who can participate**

appropriately in groups and learn from others. They must be able to recall and restate information and read and use simple materials. Individuals must be able to write with limited proficiency, complete personal information on forms, copy text, write in simple sentences, and add, subtract, multiply and divide whole numbers. Individuals must be aware of the connection between behavior and outcomes and are subject to the Academic Standards of Progress Policy and the Student Conduct Code as outlined in the current BTC Catalog and Student Handbook.

Disputes

For denial of academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, or other disability related services by the AR Office, or when a faculty member denies AR approved accommodations, or for general disability discrimination complaints, students must obtain a copy of the Procedures Manual and discuss the steps for resolution with the Coordinator of Accessibility Resources. If the issue cannot be resolved, the student is encouraged to make an appointment with the Vice-President of Student Services by calling 360-752-8443.

NOTE: Accommodations are not entitlements. You are not entitled to receive accommodations because you have a disability. You are entitled not to be discriminated against. If an accommodation can be made for you not to be discriminated against, then you should receive it.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

Bellingham Technical College does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, sex, genetic information, or age in admission, treatment, or participation in its programs, services and activities, or in employment. All Inquiries regarding compliance with access, equal opportunity and/or grievance procedures should be directed to the Associate Director of Human Resources, Bellingham Technical College, 3028 Lindbergh Avenue, Bellingham, WA 98225, or call (360) 752-8354.

BTC publications are available in alternate formats upon request by contacting Accessibility Resources at (360) 752-8576.

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CANVAS PARTICIPATION

Community Building

The Accessibility Resources (AR) Canvas site has many community-building benefits, such as:

- Information Sharing
- Communication
- Accommodation Renewal
- Promoting Thoughtful Conversation
- Announcements & Important Dates
- Student Resources

As a student engaging in Canvas, your name may be viewed by other members of this Canvas platform. Much like other classes you are enrolled in, when you participate in discussions on Canvas or utilize the inbox feature, individuals' names may appear. Please be mindful that it is only your name, and no other identifying information, being displayed to others.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

The primary objective of Bellingham Technical College is to prepare an educated workforce. In educating students, Bellingham Technical College stresses equally the development of technical skills, communication and interpersonal skills, positive work habits, and attitudes that are required for employment. In light of this, BTC expects that students demonstrate academic progress.

In 2003, the Legislature of the State of Washington established a law requiring colleges to develop policies “to ensure that undergraduate students complete degree and certificate programs in a timely manner in order to make the most efficient use of instructional resources and provide capacity within the institution for additional students.”

Students who wish to graduate and receive a degree or certificate must earn a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or better in the program course requirements for the specific degree or certificate.

1. All students will maintain regular attendance for each enrollment period. This standard will be reflected in the grading policy within each degree/certificate program. BTC believes that attendance is a critical workplace competency and is important to overall student success.
2. All students will demonstrate satisfactory progress toward meeting program objectives. This standard is defined as maintaining a cumulative GPA of 2.0. Individual programs may require higher level grades in program or individual course requirements in defining satisfactory progress. These requirements will be published and made available to students upon enrollment in the program.
3. Failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress can lead to academic probation and suspension.

Academic Alert/Probation/Suspension/Readmission:

Students who do not demonstrate satisfactory progress, as defined above, will be placed on academic alert. Students who demonstrate satisfactory progress the following quarter, but whose cumulative GPA remains below 2.0 will remain on academic alert. Students who do not demonstrate satisfactory progress for the following quarter will be placed on academic probation. Students who demonstrate satisfactory progress the following quarter, but whose cumulative GPA remains below 2.0 will remain on academic probation. Students on academic probation who do not demonstrate satisfactory progress for the following quarter will be suspended.

Students who have been suspended as a result of unsatisfactory academic progress may petition for readmission. The suspended student must meet with a counselor to complete a plan for improvement. The Academic Probation Readmission Plan form can be obtained from the Counseling & Career Center. Once completed, the plan will need to be signed by the student's instructor and submitted to the Appeals Committee for consideration of approval. All students readmitted following suspension will remain on academic probation until their cumulative GPA is 2.0 or above.

CAMPUS CODE OF CONDUCT

This is not the complete Campus Code of Conduct. This is a simplified version of the key points. The complete code is available in the Admissions & Student Resource Center, CSB106. **The Code is in the process of being revised and once the new version is in effect, students will be expected to comply with any new version.**

Bellingham Technical College is maintained by the State of Washington for the provision of programs of instruction in higher education and related community services. Like any other institution having its own special purposes, the College must maintain conditions conducive to the effective performance of its functions. Consequently, it has special expectations regarding the conduct of the various participants in the College community.

Admission to the College carries with it the expectation that the student will conduct himself or herself as a responsible member of the College community. The College requires a community free from violence, threats, and intimidation; protective of free inquiry, respectful of the rights of others; open to change; supportive of democratic and law procedures; and dedicated to the rational and orderly approach to the resolution of human problems.

Students will obey appropriate laws, will comply with the rules of the College and its departments, and will maintain a high standard of integrity and honesty. Sanctions for violations of College rules or conduct that interferes with the operation of college affairs will be dealt with by the College and the College may impose sanctions independently of any action taken by civil or criminal authorities. In the case of minors, misconduct may be referred to parents or legal guardians.

The following are prohibited and subject to disciplinary action:

Student Misconduct

- Smoking on campus except in designated smoking areas
- Alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs
- Lewd, indecent, or obscene behavior
- Threatening or dangerous behavior
- Cheating, lying, or plagiarism
- Failure to follow College standards of academic progress or attendance
- False statements or false charges against the College or staff
- Forgery, alteration, or misuse of College documents
- Theft or damage to property
- Failure to follow directions from College staff
- Weapons, explosives, and dangerous chemicals that can be used to harm people or property
- Sexual harassment (Engaging in unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that offends the recipient, causes discomfort or humiliation, or interferes with job or academic performance)

Academic Dishonesty

- Copying other people's work and presenting it to the instructor as your own
- Cheating on tests
- Doing other students' work for them

Instructors have the authority to take action, such as adjusting the student's grade.

Classroom Conduct

- Disrupting the class so that it is difficult or impossible for the instructor to conduct class
Instructors have the authority to take action to maintain order and proper conduct in the classroom. Students have the right to appeal disciplinary action to the Vice President of Student Services.

Disciplinary Process

- The instructor or staff member may refer a student to the Vice President of Student Services (or Vice President of Instruction) for disciplinary action.
- The vice president may take disciplinary action.
- The student may appeal to the student disciplinary committee.
- The student disciplinary committee shall hold a hearing, reach conclusions, and may impose sanctions.
- The student may appeal the matter to the president of the College.
- The president's decision is final.

DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES

Documentation:

- Must be written by the student's diagnostician
- Must be on official letterhead
- Should have been written within the last three years
- Prescription pad documentation is not acceptable

Documentation must include:

- The credentials of the evaluator(s)
- A diagnostic statement identifying the disability
- A description of the diagnostic methodology used (examples: WAIS-R, MRI, Audiogram, W.J. Cognitive, etc.)
- A summary of the evaluation results
- A description of the current functional limitations (the nature and current status of the disability, including the impact of any medication on the student's ability to meet the demands of the college environment)
- A description of the expected progression or stability of the disability (permanent or temporary)
- A description of current and past accommodations, services, and/or medications
- Recommendations for accommodations, adaptive devices, assistive services, compensatory strategies, and/or collateral support services (if supported by the student's diagnosis)
- The diagnosis must meet the definition of "disability" according to state and federal laws

Diagnostician:

- The licensed physician and/or licensed mental health care provider who determined the student's diagnosis
- He/she must have the expertise, certification, and credentials to practice and diagnose the type of disability with which the student has been diagnosed
- Documentation cannot be accepted from a diagnostician who is a family member
- Documentation must be on official letterhead from the diagnostician

IMPORTANT: *Documentation must be accompanied by a signed 'Documentation and Release of Information' Form.* Documentation must be reviewed by BTC Accessibility Resources staff before accommodations can be provided.

PLEASE READ: If accommodations are to be requested, documentation must be received by BTC Accessibility Resources at least **six weeks** prior to your Accuplacer test and/or before starting a program or taking a class at BTC.

For the purpose of determining appropriate accommodations, BTC Accessibility Resources reserves the right to contact a diagnostician to discuss a student's diagnosis, in order to coordinate college-related services that will be most beneficial to the student.

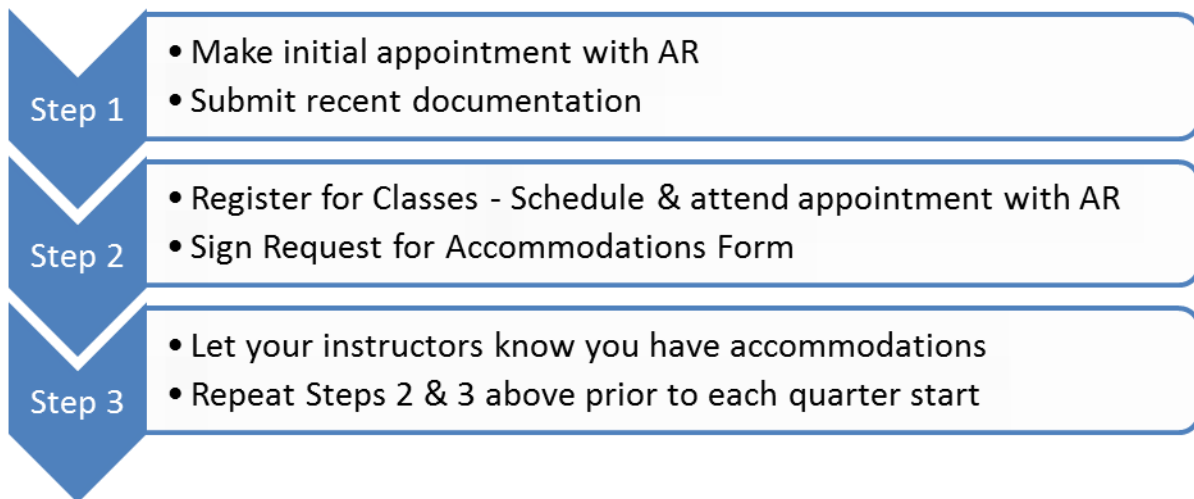
A current Individualized Educational Plans (IEP) is not an acceptable form of documentation.

If you would prefer to deliver documentation in person, please make an appointment to see the Coordinator of Accessibility Resources by calling 360-752-8450 or visiting the Admissions & Student Resource Center in the College Services Building, room 106. Documentation may also be faxed (including a signed 'Documentation and Release of Information' form) to 360-752-7376.

An initial intake assessment meeting will be required to discuss any new request for accommodations. To make an appointment, call 360-752-8450 or visit the Admissions & Student Resource Center in the College Services Building, room 106.

IMPORTANT: ACCOMMODATIONS MUST BE RENEWED EACH QUARTER.

Process for requesting accommodations:



ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES • College Services Building Room 106
Phone: 360-752-8450 • Email: ar@btc.edu • Fax: 360-752-7376

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