# 📘 Faculty FAQs

## Supporting Students with Disabilities at Hawai‘i Community College

---

### 🔷 What Is an Academic Adjustment?

Academic adjustments—also known as reasonable accommodations—are modifications to academic environments or policies designed to ensure equal educational access for students with disabilities. They are required by federal law under:

- **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**
- **The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**
- Recent **Title II regulations** finalized in 2024

Academic adjustments do **not**:

- Alter the essential requirements of a course
- Provide an unfair academic advantage
- Guarantee academic success

Rather, they provide a level playing field for students with documented disabilities.

---

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was the first “civil rights” legislation to prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities. Section 504 in particular requires that qualified individuals with disabilities shall not be excluded from, denied access to, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that receives federal financial assistance. The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 extended these rights, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, public services, public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications. As educators, it is important to understand the educational and legal issues involved in providing academic adjustment for students with disabilities. Many educators and administrators have serious questions about serving students with disabilities on campus, as more and more of these students pursue their educational goals.

---

### 🔷 Institutional Responsibilities

Hawai‘i Community College is required to:

- Ensure **equitable access** to academic programs for all qualified students with disabilities
- Provide **reasonable accommodations** free of charge
- Ensure that **instructional materials, technologies, and facilities** are accessible
- **Protect the privacy** of all disability-related student information
- Avoid **discrimination or retaliation** against any student who discloses a disability or requests accommodations

---

### 🔷 Faculty Responsibilities

Faculty play a crucial role in the accommodation process and are required to:

- Implement all accommodations listed in the **official Accommodation Letter**
- Keep student disability status and needs **strictly confidential**
- Maintain course rigor and academic integrity while ensuring access
- Contact Disability Services immediately with any questions or concerns
- Post a **syllabus statement** on disability access and review it on the first day of class

---

### 🔷 Key Faculty Guidelines (DOs and DON’Ts)

#### ✅ DO:

- Implement accommodations listed in the student’s official Accommodation Letter.
- Keep all disability-related information **confidential**.
- Refer students who disclose a disability to the **Disability Services Office**.
- Engage in an interactive process when questions arise about accommodations.
- Provide accommodations even if you are uncertain—**contact Disability Services immediately** for clarification.

#### 🚫 DO NOT:

- **Disclose** a student’s disability or accommodations to others.
- **Deny access** or restrict participation based on disability.
- **Lower academic standards** unless determined necessary through the interactive process.
- **Ask about a student’s diagnosis** or disability details—disclosure is voluntary.

- **Charge students** for accommodations, including note-taking, interpreters, or alternative format texts.

---

### 🔷 Examples of Academic Adjustments

These may include (but are not limited to):

- Extended time for exams and quizzes
- Testing in a reduced-distraction environment
- Use of assistive technology (e.g., screen readers, speech-to-text software)
- Lecture recording, note-taking support, or captioned media
- Alternative format textbooks (e.g., large print, audio, Braille)
- Use of calculators or spell-check tools for qualifying conditions
- Priority registration for students with mobility/accessibility needs
- Interpreters or real-time captioning for deaf or hard-of-hearing students

All accommodations are determined through an **individualized, interactive process** between the student and the Disability Services Office.

---

### ❓ Faculty FAQ: Accommodations & Instruction

**Q: What do I do if I disagree with the accommodation?**
**A:** Contact the Disability Services Office. You must **provide the accommodation** as listed until the matter is reviewed. Under federal law, denying access may result in legal consequences for both the faculty member and the institution.

**Q: May I prohibit certain aids, like recorders or service animals?**
**A:** No. Section 504 states institutions may not prohibit tools or aids that enable participation, such as audio recorders or service animals. The Disability Services Office has each of the students sign a **confidentiality agreement** for classroom recordings.

**Q: Do accommodations affect the academic rigor of my course?**
**A:** No. Accommodations are designed to ensure **equal access**, not to alter core course content. Instructors maintain academic integrity but must adjust delivery or assessment methods when appropriate.

**Q: What language should I use on my syllabus?**
**A:** Yes, every syllabus must include a Disability Services statement. You can find the suggested language in the template provided below.

*Hawai'i Community College is committed to providing equal access to the campus, classes, and programs for students who have disabilities. If you have a documented disability and/or related access needs, please contact:*

> ***Manono Campus – Kānanaola***
> *Bldg. 379A, Room 2*
> ***Pālamanui Campus –***
> *Elama Building, Room 175*
> *hawccds@hawaii.edu*
> *(808) 934-2825*

*Disability Services can provide disability-related support for you to be successful in this class. If you are a student who needs an accommodation, please make your request to discuss your needs in a timely manner.*

**Q: Do international students with disabilities qualify for accommodations?**
**A:** Yes. Federal protections apply to **all qualified students**, including international students with disabilities.

**Q: Who pays for the cost of accommodations?**
**A:** The institution covers the cost. Students may not be charged. Costs must be absorbed unless the institution demonstrates an undue burden.

**Q: What if I'm unsure how to support a student?**
**A:** Ask the student how you can support them and **contact Disability Services** for guidance. Open, respectful communication is key.

**Q: Do accommodations apply to field trips and off-campus events?**
**A:** Yes. If you offer a field trip or activity, accessible alternatives (e.g., transportation) must be provided so all students can participate in the **most integrated setting** possible.

**Q: What if I fail to provide an accommodation?**
**A:** Students may file a complaint with the **U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR)** or under **Title II of the ADA**. Faculty may be held **personally liable** under federal law if they knowingly deny access.

**Q: Do I have to accommodate a student who is auditing the course?**
**A:** Yes. **All students with disabilities** must be provided equal access to programs, regardless of credit status.

---

## Grievance Procedure for Disability-Related Concerns

Hawai‘i Community College is committed to upholding the rights of students with disabilities as outlined under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If a student believes they have been denied equal access to educational programs, services, or accommodations due to a disability, they are encouraged to file a grievance.

Students may file a grievance for reasons including, but not limited to:

- Denial of requested academic accommodations
- Discrimination or harassment based on disability
- Failure to provide equal access to a campus program, activity, or service

**Step 1: Informal Resolution (Optional but Encouraged)**
Students are encouraged to first attempt to resolve concerns informally by speaking directly with the Disability Services counselor or the faculty/staff involved. Most concerns can be resolved through open communication and clarification of policy.

**Step 2: Formal Grievance**
If informal resolution is not successful or not desired, a formal grievance may be submitted in writing to the college's ADA/504 Coordinator.

**Include in the formal grievance:**

- Your name and contact information
- A description of the issue, including dates, individuals involved, and the impact
- Any supporting documentation
- A statement of the resolution you are seeking

**Submit your grievance to:**
**ADA/Section 504 Coordinator**
Mari Giel
marigiel@hawaii.edu
808-934-2725
Building 379A, Room 1B

**Timeline:**
Grievances should be submitted within **30 calendar days** of the alleged incident. A response will typically be issued within **30 days** of receipt.

**Right to Appeal:**
If you are unsatisfied with the outcome, you may appeal the decision to the Vice

Chancellor of Student Affairs or their designee within **10 business days** of receiving the outcome. Instructions for appeal will be included in your decision letter.

**External Complaint Options:**
Students also have the right to file a complaint with the **U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR)** at any time.
https://www.ed.gov/ocr

---

### 🔷 Questions or Concerns?

We're here to help. Please reach out if you have questions about implementing accommodations or if a conflict arises.

**Disability Services Office**
Mari Giel, Disability Services Coordinator
**Manono Campus – Kānanaola**
Bldg. 379A, Room 2
**Pālamanui Campus –**
Elama Building, Room 175
✉️ hawccds@hawaii.edu
📞 (808) 934-2825