Merritt College

Disability Services Program (DSP)

Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook

Mission Statement

Disability Services is committed to providing equal access, resources and support services to students with disabilities, empowering students to become independent learners and assisting students in achieving their educational and personal goals while attending Merritt College.

The Disability Services Program (DSP) Office, located in the Student Services Building, Room-109.

Table of Contents

Disability Services Program

- **Disability Services Program**
  Student Services Building, Room R-109
  Reagan Pruitt, Staff Assistant
  (510) 436-2429 Office
  (510) 434-3888 FAX

  - **Counseling**
  Frances Moy Coordinator/Counselor
  R109B
  (510)434-3974
  Mary Ciddio Counselor
  R109C
  (510) 434-3974

- **Learning Opportunity Program**
  Barbara A. Dimopoulos, Learning Disabilities Specialist
  Building P Room 305 (P-305)
  (510) 436-2579

- **High Tech Center/Computer Access Lab**
  Alexis Alexander, Instructor
  Building P Room 306 (P-306)
  (510) 436-2592

- **Alternate Media Services**
  Lee Peevy, Alternate Media Specialist
  Building P Room 304 (P-304)
  (510) 436-3910

- **Accommodation Room**
  Building P Room 303 (P-303)
  (510) 436-2494 or (510) 436-2429 DSP Office

DSP Services Offered

- Academic, personal, and vocational counseling
- Alternate media (e-text)
- Assessment of students for specific learning disabilities
- Classroom accommodations
- High Tech Center (adapted computer technology)
- Liaison with campus and community services
- On-campus mobility assistance (tram)
- Priority registration (fall and spring semesters only)
- Registration assistance
- Sign Language Interpreters/Real-time Captioning Services
- Specialized instruction
- Testing accommodations

Eligibility for services and accommodations is based upon each student's documented disability or disabilities. Discuss which services and accommodations you are entitled to receive with your DSP Counselor.

Legal Responsibilities of DSP

Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations indicates that "a district may adopt a written policy providing for the suspension or termination of Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS) services where a student fails to comply with written service provision and measurable progress policies. Such policies shall provide for written notice to the student prior to suspension or termination and shall afford the student an opportunity to appeal the decision. Each student shall be given a copy of this policy upon first applying for services from DSP&S."

In meeting its responsibility to wisely utilize resources so that all students can receive equitable services, the Disability Services Program (DSP) at Merritt College has a charge to see that services are used in a responsible manner. Accordingly, policies must be established that determine the service eligibility status of students. Likewise, DSP has the responsibility of establishing requirements for measurable progress. If students do not adhere to the established policies or a lack of measurable progress is observed, the student will be notified of the possibility of cessation of DSP services. If the student continues to not make measurable progress, DSP is responsible to discontinue service and refer the student to more appropriate services or to a more appropriate learning environment.

There are only two ways that current DSP students may be denied services through DSP:

1)   lack of measurable progress
2)   abuse of services

Measurable Progress

A lack of measurable progress may be defined in any of the following ways and may result in a complete loss of DSP services:

1. Enrollment in regular classes with appropriate accommodations for two consecutive semesters, but unable to pass them (i.e., receiving 'W' and/or NC and/or "D" and "F" grades for all courses).
2. Failure to meet Merritt College's academic standards as defined by the Academic Dismissal or Progress Dismissal.
3. Two semesters of inability to follow DSP service policies.
4. Tutor, and/or Instructor evaluations of progress, which include student input.
5. Failure to make progress toward the goals outlined in the student's Student Educational Contract for two consecutive semesters.

Abuse of Services

Abuse of services is defined as a failure to comply with the policies and procedures of individual services that students are using. Failure to comply with the terms stated within each specific service area may result in the termination of that service.

1. Only services that have been abused may be terminated in the midst of a semester.
2. Prior to the termination of a service, the student will be notified in writing that, unless he/she meets with his/her DSP Counselor to discuss the area of concern, the service will be automatically terminated one (1) week from the date of the letter.
3. Once an "Intent to Terminate Services" letter has been sent, the student must, before the service is continued past the "date of termination," agree to and sign a "Contract for Continuation of Services."
4. If a service is terminated, it will be terminated only for the current semester.
5. Terminated services may be reinstated during the current semester only on the authorization of a DSP Counselor, and only if there are extenuating circumstances which warrant the reinstatement of the service.

Priority Registration Guidelines

Priority registration will be provided for students who have <u>verified</u> disabilities, have maintained good academic status with the college, have completed an intake interview with a DSP Counselor, and who meet with a DSP Counselor once per semester to review and update their Student Educational Contract. This registration will follow basic guidelines established by the Admissions and Records Office (e.g., deadlines, application guidelines, use of telephone registration, tuition and fee payments, Board of Governor's Waivers (BOGW), authorizations from the Department of Rehabilitation). Students who exceed 90 units may not be eligible for priority registration and may need to request a waiver.

Absence Notification Guidelines

The DSP office will not notify instructors of an absence unless the absence will be long term (i.e. one or more weeks) and is caused by the student's disabling condition. When a student is unable to attend classes as a result of a non-disability related problem, the DSP office will not notify instructors of the absence. This is the responsibility of the student. Students may be required to present medical verification of illness from their physicians.

Duplication Guidelines

The DSP office provides duplication services only for the enlargement of tests and handouts to students with low vision disabilities.

Telephone Usage Guidelines

The telephones in the DSP office are for official use only. Student usage is limited to emergencies.

Students' Responsibilities

Students receiving services through the DSP office shall:

1. Comply with the Students' Code of Conduct adopted by the college as written in the college catalog.
2. Be responsible in their use of DSP services and adhere to written service provision policies adopted by DSP.
3. Make measurable progress toward the goals established in the student's Student Educational Contract, or, when the student is enrolled in a regular college course, meet academic standards established by the college.
4. Merritt College expressly forbids sexual harassment of its students and employees by faculty, administrators, supervisors, district employees, other students, vendors or members of the general public. Please refer to the college catalog for sexual harassment policy and procedures.
5. The student is responsible for providing the DSP office with a copy of the syllabus for each class that reader services are being requested as soon as it is available from the instructor.
6. The student is responsible for informing the DSP office whenever changes occur which affect the student's need for reader services.
7. The student is responsible for informing the DSP office whenever changes occur that affect the student's need for note-taking services, for example <u>if a student drops the class, s/he must inform DSP.</u>

Failing to comply with the standards above may result in the termination of DSP services. Students seeking to appeal the termination of services should seek remedy through the DSP Coordinator. If, after consulting with the DSP Coordinator, students are still not satisfied, they may appeal to the Vice President of Student Services.

Specific Services Guidelines

A specific service will only be provided to a student who has a verified disability that necessitates the use of that specific service. A DSP Counselor must provide authorization for each specific service.

Mobility Services

To establish pick up by the tram, a student must arrange an appointment with a DSP Counselor and complete the tram schedule form at front desk.

1. Mobility services will be provided to a student who has a verified disability and whose disability related functional limitations prevent the student from walking distances while on campus.
2. Mobility services are provided to and from classes. Other course related mobility services must be prearranged with the mobility assistant. Students may not, while being provided mobility services, ask the mobility assistant to stop to allow them to socialize.
3. The student must be at the designated area and be ready at the prearranged time for tram pick-up.
4. Mobility services are available on an emergency basis (e.g., after a fall, a call from the nurse's office, etc.)
5. If excused from class early, the student either needs to wait for the scheduled mobility assistant or have someone call the DSP office (e.g., often the instructor is willing to do this).
6. It is the student's responsibility to notify the DSP office as soon as it is known that he/she will be unable to meet the mobility assistant as scheduled, so the mobility assistant can be notified of the change. Three (3) failures to notify the DSP office prior to meeting your scheduled mobility assistant may result in termination of these services.
7. The student is responsible for informing the DSP office whenever changes occur that affects the student's need for mobility services.

Equipment Loan

To determine eligibility for these services, students must arrange a counseling appointment with a DSP Counselor by calling (510) 436-2429.

1. Equipment shall only be loaned to a student who is officially enrolled in classes and/or by DSP Counselor staff approval. Equipment (e.g. tape recorders, Smart pens, FM systems) shall not be loaned to a student for any purpose or activity that is not school sponsored.
2. Contact the DSP office to check out equipment and to complete the Equipment Loan Contract Form.
3. If equipment is not returned at the appropriate time and place, or has been abused, the student will forfeit his/her rights to future equipment loans, and a hold will be placed on his/her transcript until the equipment is returned or replaced.
4. If equipment is not returned or replaced, the student will be responsible for replacement costs.

Interpreting Services

To establish interpreter services, students must arrange a counseling appointment with a DSP Counselor by calling (510) 436-2429.

Interpreter services will be provided for students with documented profound hearing and/or speech impairments through the DSP office and only for course required activities. The DSP office will contact and assign interpreters.

1. Students will report absences at least 24 hours in advance to the DSP office. If there is no answer, a message may be left using California Relay Services and leaving a message. Any absence that is not reported at least 24 hours in advance will be considered unexcused, unless the DSP office receives documentation, (e.g., a doctor's notice documenting illness) that verifies an excused absence.
2. In case of an emergency, that prevents a student from attending class, s/he will notify the DSP office as soon as possible. It will be determined at the time of the situation whether the emergency will be considered as an excused or unexcused absence. In the event of 3 (three) unexcused absences, a decision whether to continue providing Interpreter Services will be made by DSP. The student may arrange an appointment to see the DSP Coordinator if there are extenuating circumstances.
3. Interpreters will wait only 15 minutes per hour of class time outside the classroom for a student. Interpreters are required to notify the DSP office when a student is absent from class.
4. If the interpreter does not attend a class session, the student should notify the DSP office.
5. Failure to comply with the above conditions may result in the permanent cessation of interpreter services.

Note-Taking Services

To establish note-taking services, students should arrange an appointment with a DSP counselor by calling (510) 436-2429.

1. Note-taking services will only be provided to a student whose disability-related functional limitations prevent the student from taking his/her own notes.
2. Note-taking services are designed to provide assistance to students in the classroom.
3. Students are required to be in class to receive notes from that day unless the absence was disability related.
4. Students needing these services are to either 1) ask a fellow student in their classes to assist them with notes in exchange for free note-taking paper, or 2) ask the instructor to announce the need for a note-taker in class and arrange to meet immediately after the class.
5. The student is responsible for informing the DSP office whenever changes occur that affects the student's need for note-taking services.
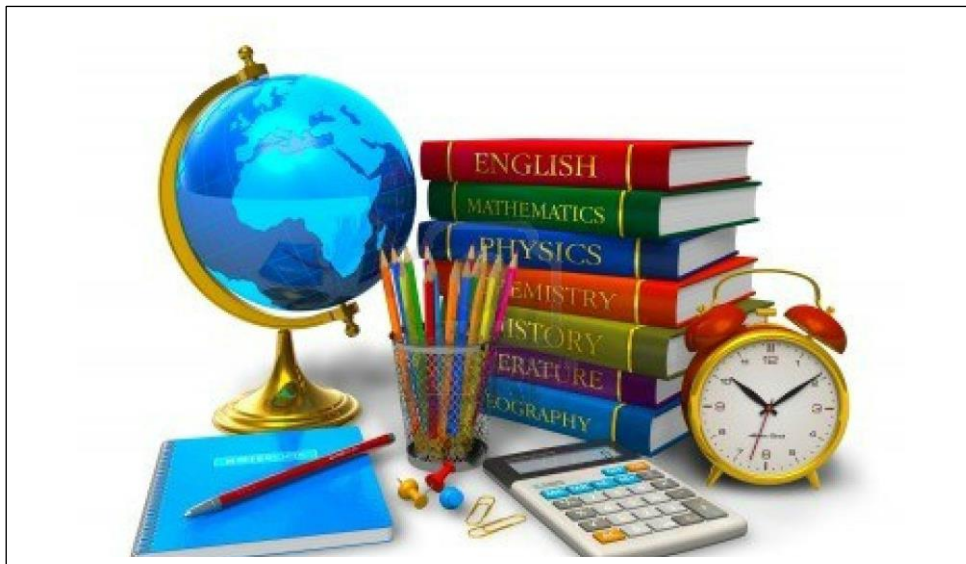
Reader Services

To establish reader services, students should arrange an appointment with a DSP Counselor by calling (510) 436-2429.

1.   Reader services may be provided for students with disabilities and will consist of the translation of textbooks and handouts from written to oral form via audio taped recordings.
2.   Reader services will only be provided to a student whose disability-related functional limitations prevent him/her from reading regular print.
3.   If the student is a client of the Department of Rehabilitation (DR), the student must complete the DR reader form prior to the initiation of reader services. The student or reader is then responsible for turning in the reader forms directly to DR for payment.
4.   The student is responsible for providing the DSP office with a copy of the syllabus for each class that reader services are being requested as soon as it is available from the instructor.
5.   The student is responsible for informing the DSP office whenever changes occur that affect the student's need for reader services.
6.   The student is responsible for supplying the audiotapes used by the reader.
7.   Tape recorders may be checked out to both the reader and the student by completing the DSP equipment loan contract through the DSP office.
8.   The student can access Braille and computer programs that "read" in the High Tech Center (P-306) or the Accommodation Room (P-303).
9.   Failure to comply with these terms may result in the termination of this service.

Testing Accommodation Services

To establish testing accommodation services, arrange an appointment with a DSP Counselor by calling (510) 436-2429.

1. Testing accommodations will be provided when a student's eligibility for such a service has been verified.
2. Testing accommodations will occur either before or during the scheduled test time when other students are taking the exam. The only exception will be when the student has courses immediately before and after the class where the test is occurring, and would not have enough time to complete the test with accommodations. In this case, the student will take the exam at the earliest possible time on the same day. Instructors will be notified of this exception.
3. Once a DSP Counselor has obtained verification of a student's disability, the student is referred to the DSP testing accommodations assistant. The assistant will provide the student with the step-by-step instructions necessary to utilize this service.
4. Instructors will be notified if cheating, unauthorized use of notes, books, calculators, or other improper behaviors are observed during the examination. In addition, testing accommodation services will be terminated for the rest of the semester, and also for the following semester if these behaviors are observed on final examinations.
5. Students may not be excused from the testing environment once the test has begun. Further, students must complete the exam on the same day it is started.
6. Testing accommodations will be provided to students only in the courses where their disability related educational limitations indicate that they are necessary.
7. Failure to comply with DSP procedures may also result in termination of this service.
8. Students will be asked to sign a form stating that they are aware the testing session is being videotaped.
9. Students will NOT be permitted to have their personal belongings, especially cell phones, with them. A secured locker will be available to store students' belongings.

High Tech Center/Computer Access Lab P-306

Adapted Computer Classes and Use of Equipment
The Center provides computer access to students with physical and cognitive disabilities. To receive High Tech Center services, arrange a counseling appointment with a DSP Counselor.

The High Tech Center offers the following classes:

Computer Access, LRNRE 211

A one-semester, 2-3 unit class that can be repeated as often as necessary, Computer Access teaches students how to use a popular word processing program to create letters, flyers, essays, a resume, and other projects. Students who need accommodations also learn to use adaptive computer equipment, such as: screen magnification, voice output, programs that help with spelling and any other adaptation that the student needs. Interested students have an opportunity to learn to do some basic desktop publishing. This class fulfills the computer literacy requirement for the A.A./A.S. degrees.

Students can sign up for either section. Students who are enrolled in Computer Access **must** take Computer Access Projects as a co-requisite for two hours each week.

Computer Access Projects LRNRE 272

Every semester, students in the Disability Services Program at Merritt College can use the adapted computer lab to complete projects for Computer Access class or to use the computers and adaptive equipment to complete projects for other classes. Students who have difficulty accessing ink print can use the scan and read program available in the lab to read their textbooks or any other printed matter. Students must enroll in lab for .5 unit to obtain access to the computers and equipment.

Learning Opportunity Program P-305

The Disability Service Program (DSP) offers classes for students with learning disabilities. Students must meet the eligibility criteria for qualification as an adult with specific learning disabilities according to Title 5 and the California Community Colleges Learning Disabilities Eligibility Services Model (LDESM) guidelines. Individualized assessment to determine eligibility for services is available at Merritt through the "Metacognitive Learning I" (LRNRE 297A) course. However, "California Community College L.D. eligibility does not guarantee L.D. eligibility at other institutions." Prior assessment for learning disabilities must be reviewed by the L.D. Specialist.

How to Arrange for an Assessment

Schedule an appointment with a Disability Services Program Counselor by calling (510) 436-2429 or by dropping in to the Disability Services Program Office R-109.

Courses

Metacognitive Learning I: LRNRE 297A (1.0 unit)
Study Skills: LRNRE 280 - Lecture and Lab (1.0 – 2.0 units)

How to Enroll in Learning Resource Courses

1. Arrange an appointment with a DSP Counselor who will assist in determining the most appropriate course placement.

2. To be eligible to enroll in the DSP Learning Resource courses, students should be enrolled in at least two (2) college courses (6 units).

Special Course Repeatability

Specialized courses designed for students with disabilities may be taken more than four (4) times under the following circumstances:

1. When continuing success of the student in other general and/or special classes is dependent on additional repetitions of a specific class

2. When additional repetitions of a specific class are essential to completing a student's preparation for enrollment into other regular classes

3. When the student has a student educational contract which involves a goal other than completion of the special class in question, and repetition will further the achievement of the goal.

Alternate Media Services

The terms "Alternate Media" or "Accessible Formats" generally refer to methods of making information accessible to persons with disabilities.

Types of Alternate Media

Braille   MP3 Format
Electronic Text   Recorded Audio Format
Large Print   Tactile graphics

One important aspect of providing alternate media is adequate advance notice and planning. Assessment and verification of disability is required.

How to Arrange for an Assessment

Schedule an appointment with a Disability Services Program Counselor by calling (510) 436-2429 or by dropping in to the Disability Services Program Office R-109.

Important Phone Numbers
Disability Services Program (510) Area Code

Disability Services Program Office	436-2429	R-109
Alexis Alexander, Instructor High Tech Center/Computer Access Lab	436-3532	P-306A
Mary Ciddio, Counselor	434-3948	R-109C
Rissa Coplan, Counselor	436-2429	R-109D
Peggy DeCoursey, Counselor	436-2429	R-109C
Barbara Dimopoulos, Learning Disabilities Specialist Learning Opportunity Program	436-2579	P-305A
Frances Moy, DSP Coordinator/Counselor	434-3974	R-109B
Ron Nelson, Advocate	436-2429	R-109C
Lee Peevy, Alternate Media Specialist	434-3510	P-304
Reagan Pruitt, Staff Assistant	436-2519	R-109

Other Campus Phone Numbers (510) Area Code

Admission and Records	436-2598	R-112
Bookstore	436-2438	R-101
CalWORKs	436-2449	R-128A
CARE (Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education)	436-2476	R-109
Cashier's Office (Bursar's Office)	436-2402	Q-228
Centro Latino	536-1830	R-105B
Citizens for Education	436-2504	P-112
Counseling	436-2475	R-109 & R-105
Disability Services Program	436-2429	R-109
EOPS (Extended Opportunity Programs & Services)	436-2470	R-109
Financial Aid	436-2465	R-113
First-Year Experience	434-3972	R-109C
Health Services	436-2534	R-105F
Learning Center/Tutoring	436-2442	Library 1st Floor
Library General Information	436-2457	Library 2nd Floor
Lost and Found	436-2535	R-124
Police Services	466-7236	R-117
Puente	436-2648	P-108
Sankofa	464-3958	R-106F
Student Activities Office (Photo I.D.'s)	434-2535	R-124
The Street Scholars Peer Mentoring Program	436-2475	P-112
Veterans Affairs	436-2595	R-105J
Vice President of Student Services	436-2478	R-113
Welcome Center/Transfer Center	436-2559	R-105

Campus Map
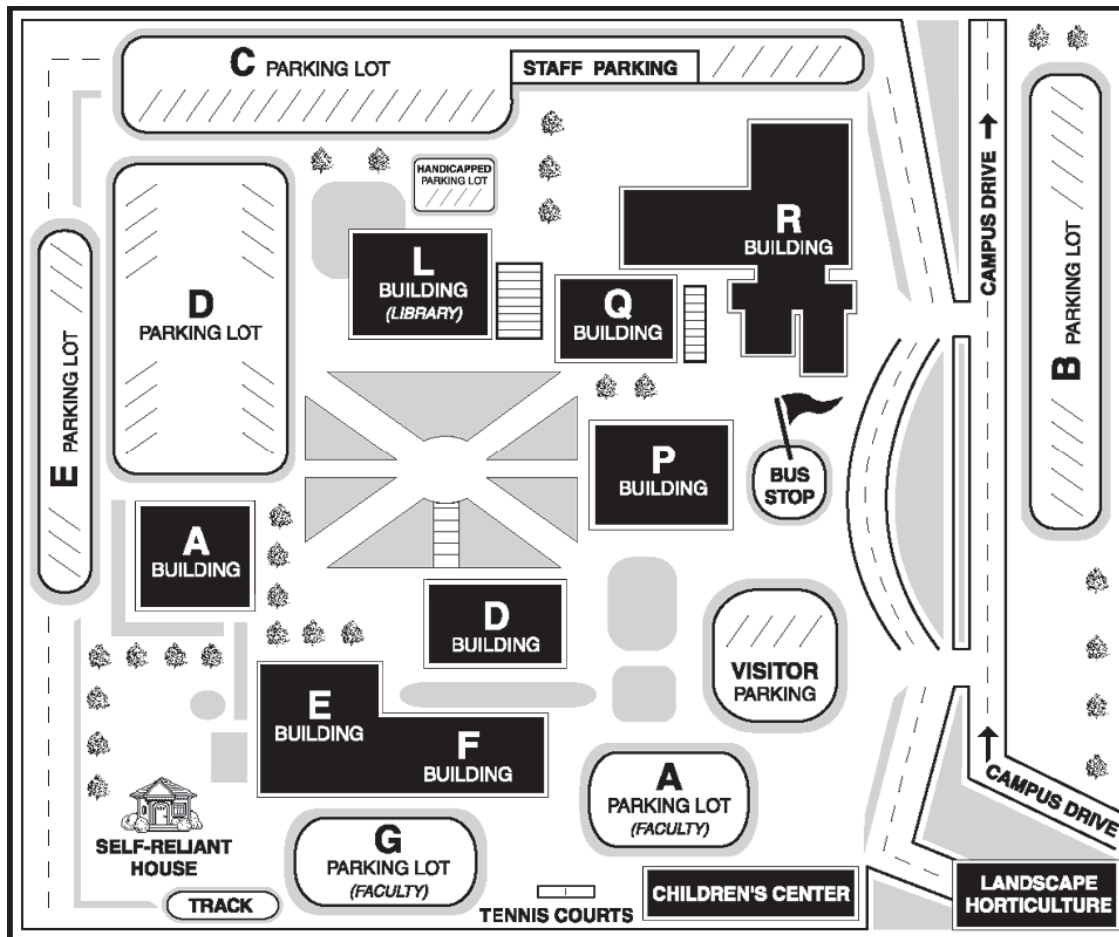
BUILDING	PROGRAMS/OFFICES
A	Art, Child Development, Classrooms, Faculty Offices, Fitness Center, Library (temporary space), Music
D	Allied Health Programs, Classrooms, Division Deans, Faculty Offices, Teaching & Learning Resource Center
E	Gymnasium, Classrooms
F	Locker Rooms, Faculty Offices, Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Center
H	Landscape Horticulture
L	Library, Teaching & Learning Resource Center (currently under construction)
P	Adapted Computer Learning Center / DSPS, Classrooms, Computer Labs, Puente Program
Q	Administration - Business Services, Cashier's Office, Mailroom, Office of Instruction, President's Office, Production Center
R	Student Services - Admissions and Records, Assessment, Bookstore, Career Center, Counseling, DSPS, EOPS, Financial Aid, Health Services, Puente Program, Safety and Police Services, Student Activities, Transfer Center, Veterans Affairs, Vice President and Dean of Students
SRH	Self-Reliant House (Environmental Management Program