Maine College of Art
Disability Services Policies + Procedures

Maine College of Art (MECA) is committed to providing access, accommodations, and services to students with various disabilities. We strive to ensure that students with disabilities have the tools necessary to be successful inside and outside of the classroom. Individual students have the right and responsibility to decide whether to take advantage of available services.

Students seeking services are encouraged to contact the Disability Services Coordinator prior to or upon admission. The determination of disability-related accommodations and support services does not affect MECA's admission process.

To ensure the provision of reasonable and appropriate services, students must first register and provide documentation that meets the eligibility criteria established by the Department of Student Affairs. In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Maine College of Art is committed to helping qualified students with disabilities achieve their individual educational goals. Upon request and verification of the disability, MECA will provide service coordination and reasonable accommodations to remediate the competitive disadvantage that a disability can create in the educational setting. MECA has no legal obligation to recognize any students having a disability until that student has established eligibility with the Disability Services Coordinator. Records related to disability services, including evaluations, are not part of a student's academic record and are strictly confidential.

Students with disabilities who need special services to access MECA programs or who wish to seek programmatic accommodations based on their disability should contact the Disability Services Coordinator, Adrea Jaehnig (telephone 207.699.5035; email ajaehnig@meca.edu). Please include the words Disability Services in the heading of the email and do not send personal information such as social security numbers and documentation via e-mail. The Disability Services Coordinator will aid students through the process and procedures to access services.

**BRIEF STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE:**
1. Admitted or enrolled at Maine College of Art
2. Disclose that you need services to Disability Services Coordinator
3. Meet with Disability Services Coordinator to review procedures and disability
4. Complete application and waiver form
5. Provide documentation
6. Review of student's request with documentation
7. Implementation and completion of accommodations or appeals process
8. Notify faculty of accommodations
9. Attend class and be a success at MECA

**DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES FOR DISABILITY SERVICES**

Student with disabilities must provide evidence/documentation of both the disorder and its current, significant, functional impairment to become eligible for accommodations. Accommodations are designed to provide equal access based on the functional limitations of a disability as they clearly intersect with academic demands. Accommodations do not include interventions needed for personal study and care or designed to ensure desired outcomes. All documentation must be current, printed on official letterhead, include the title, professional credentials as well as licensing and certification information, and signed by a qualified evaluator as listed below in each of the disability categories. Additional documentation is required for disabilities listed below, in addition to those listed in this section. A school plan, such as an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) or 504 Plan is not sufficient documentation, but can be included as part of a more comprehensive evaluative report.

In order to consider the request and to ensure the provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodations, MECA requires that a qualified professional provide current and comprehensive verification of the disability. Additional documentation may be required according to the specific categories listed below. Current documentation must be within 3 years of the request for Disability Services. A qualified professional (M.D., D.O., or APRN) must have qualifications recognized by the State of Maine as affirming his/her eligibility to render a medical diagnosis.
Acceptable documentation includes:

- Information that diagnoses the learning disability;
- Description of current functional limitations pertaining to an educational setting that are presumably a direct result of problems with attention;
- Indication of the severity and longevity of the condition; and
- A recommendation for necessary and appropriate academic accommodations, including but not limited to auxiliary aid(s), service(s), academic adjustment(s) or other accommodations. Professionals providing documentation may choose to complete the MECA Disability Services Documentation Form attached to this document.

**SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES**

Students with Specific Learning Disabilities requesting access must present specific additional documentation to comply with ADA and Section 504. The eligibility for support is validated by a current neuropsychological or psychoeducational assessment within the last three years and completed by a qualified professional.

1. Assessment: Testing to document a learning disability must be comprehensive. It is not acceptable to administer only one test for the purpose of diagnosis. Trained and certified/licensed psychologists, learning disability specialists and educational therapists are typically involved in the assessment process. Experience working with an adult population is essential. Minimally, domains to be addressed must include but shall not be limited to:
   
a. **Aptitude.** The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale - Revised (WAIS-R) with subtest scaled scores is the preferred instrument. The Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery-Revised: Tests of Cognitive Ability, or the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale: Fifth Edition, are acceptable.
   
b. **Achievement.** Current levels of functioning in the areas of reading, mathematics, and written language are required. Acceptable instruments include the Woodcock Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery – Revised; Tests of Achievement; Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK); Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults; or specific achievement tests such as the Test of Written Language - 2 (TOWL-2), the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test - Revised, or the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test. The Wide Range Achievement Test - Revised is not a comprehensive measure of achievement and is therefore not suitable.
   
c. **Information Processing.** Specific areas of information processing (e.g. short- and long-term memory; sequential memory; auditory and visual perception/processing and processing speed) must be assessed. Use of subtest scaled scores from the WAIS-R or the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Ability are acceptable. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list or to restrict assessment in other pertinent or helpful areas such as vocational interests and aptitudes.

2. **Specific Diagnoses:** Comprehensive diagnostic reports must contain the name and credentials of the evaluator(s) and the date(s) of testing. The report must contain the following information:
   
a. Background information on the student and the reason for referral, to include: current areas of difficulty, medical history, employment history, psychological history, interpersonal skills, educational history, developmental history, academic strengths and weaknesses, and personal factors which might affect academic functioning.
   
b. A statement concerning the evaluation measures that were used and a brief description of each measure.
   
c. Information concerning the student’s behavior during the assessment process, including but not limited to attitude towards testing; physical appearance; attention; visual, auditory and/or motor problems; language; affect/mood; and any unusual behaviors or verbalizations.
   
d. An analysis and interpretation of the results of the assessment, including both a narrative explanation and illustrative test scores.
   
e. A summary of the entire assessment process which specifically addresses the concerns of the referral and includes an explicit determination of the presence of a learning disability.
   
f. Recommendations that include the student’s strengths and weaknesses, in order to determine appropriate strategies to assist the student to be successful in the competitive post-secondary learning environment.

3. **Recommended Accommodations:** The diagnostic report should include specific recommendations for accommodations that are realistic and that the College can reasonably provide. A detailed explanation should be provided as to why each accommodation is recommended and should be correlated with specific functional limitations determined through interview, observation and/or testing. A prior history of accommodations without clear demonstration of current needs does not warrant the provision of like accommodations. The determination of reasonable accommodations for a disabled student at MECA rests with the Disability Services Coordinator working in collaboration with the individual with the disability.
ATTENTION-DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY DISORDERS

Students with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders (ADD/ADHD) requesting access must present specific additional documentation to comply with ADA and Section 504. The eligibility for support is validated by a current neuropsychological or psychoeducational assessment within the last three years and completed by a qualified professional.

1. Diagnostic Interview: Because ADD/ADHD is, by definition, first exhibited in childhood (although it may not have been formally diagnosed at that time) and manifests itself in more than one setting, relevant historical information is essential. In addition to providing detailed evidence of a childhood history of the impairment, the following areas must be investigated:
   a. A history of the individual’s presenting attentional symptoms should be provided, including evidence of ongoing impulsive/hyperactive or inattentive behaviors that significantly impair functioning in two or more settings.
   b. The individual’s developmental history.
   c. Family history which explores the presence of ADD and other educational, learning, physical or psychological difficulties deemed relevant by the examiner.
   d. Relevant medical history, including medications and determination of the absence of a medical basis for the symptoms being evaluated.
   e. A thorough academic history of elementary, secondary and postsecondary education, including review of prior psychoeducational reports to determine whether a pattern of strengths and weaknesses is supportive of attention-based learning problems.
   f. Description of current functional limitations pertaining to an educational setting that are presumably a direct result of problems with attention.

2. Assessment: Neuropsychological or psychoeducational assessment is important in determining the current impact of the disorder in the academic setting. The evaluator should objectively review relevant testing to support the diagnosis. If grade equivalents are reported, they must be accompanied by standard scores and/or percentiles. Test scores or subtest scales should not be used as the sole measure for diagnostic profile. Checklists and/or surveys can serve to supplement the diagnostic profile but are not adequate in and of themselves for the diagnosis of ADD and do not substitute for clinical observations and sound diagnostic judgment. Data must logically reflect a substantial limitation for learning for which the individual is requesting accommodations(s).

3. Specific Diagnoses: The report must include a specific diagnosis of ADD/ADHD based on the DSM-IV diagnostic criteria. Use of terms such as “suggests,” “is indicative of” and “attention problems” is not acceptable. Individuals who report only problems with organization, test anxiety, memory and concentration in selective situations do not fit the prescribed diagnostic criteria for ADD/ADHD. A positive response to medication or the use of medication does not in and of itself support or negate the need for accommodations.

4. Recommended Accommodations: The diagnostic report should include specific recommendations for accommodations that are realistic and that the College can reasonably provide. A detailed explanation should be provided as to why each accommodation is recommended and should be correlated with specific functional limitations determined through interview, observation and/or testing. A prior history of accommodations without clear demonstration of current needs does not warrant the provision of like accommodations. The determination of reasonable accommodations for a disabled student at MECA rests with the Disability Services Coordinator working in collaboration with the individual with the disability.

CHRONIC HEALTH/PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENTS INCLUDING HEARING AND VISION LOSS/TEMPORARY DISABILITIES

Students with Chronic Health Impairments requesting access must present specific additional documentation to comply with ADA and Section 504. The eligibility for support is validated by a current medical assessment within the last three years and completed by a qualified professional.

1. Assessment: The evaluation should describe the type and severity of the individual’s symptoms at the time of first diagnosis and should state the approximate date of onset. It should also describe the subsequent course of the disabling condition and specify the current treatment of the condition, detailing any currently prescribed or recommended medication, therapies, care or assistive devices. The evaluation should contain a description of the type and severity of the current symptoms and note the impact of the disability in all relevant spheres of functioning. The evaluation should address how the disability may affect the individual’s ability to function in the academic setting, e.g., reading, comprehension, memory, writing, note taking, test taking, endurance and attention. The evaluation should indicate any activities that are typically a part of an academic program that would be specifically contraindicated by the individual’s disability or disabilities.

2. Recommended Accommodations: The evaluation should include specific recommendations for accommodations that are realistic and that the College can reasonably provide. Accommodations are adjustments to the academic environment provided to ensure equal access to an enrolled student based on his or her substantial impairment of functional capacity. They are not remedial in nature, nor can they fundamentally alter the nature, nor can they fundamentally alter the nature of, or reduce the academic standards of, a course or degree program. A detailed explanation should be provided as to why each accommodation is recommended and each recommendation should be correlated with the specific functional limitations related to the disability or disabilities. A prior history of accommodations without clear demonstration of current needs does not warrant the provision of like accommodations. The determination of reasonable accommodations for a disabled student at MECA rests with the Disability Services Coordinator working in collaboration with the individual with the disability.
PSYCHIATRIC IMPAIRMENTS

Students with Psychiatric Impairments requesting access must present specific additional documentation to comply with ADA and Section 504. The eligibility for support is validated by a current medical and/or psychological assessment within the last three years and completed by a qualified professional.

1. Assessment: Professionals conducting evaluations and providing a diagnosis of a psychiatric disability must have training and competency in assessing the full range of psychiatric disorders. The name, title, professional credentials as well as licensing and certification information should be clearly stated in the evaluation. The following professionals are generally considered to be qualified to evaluate and diagnose psychiatric disorders: clinical psychologists, clinical social workers, psychiatrists and other relevantly trained medical doctors. The evaluation should be based on a comprehensive clinical interview and psychological testing where clinically indicated. The evaluation should include a developmental, social and family history, a relevant medical history, and a complete mental status examination that includes global assessment of current functioning. Current prescription medications should be noted, and note of any side effects which would compromise academic functioning should be included. The evaluation report must include a specific diagnosis of a psychiatric disorder based on the DSM-IV diagnostic criteria with an accompanying description of the specific symptoms that the individual presents.

2. Recommended Accommodations: An interpretive summary based on the comprehensive evaluative process is a necessary component of the documentation. This summary should include indication and discussion of the substantial limitation to learning presented by the psychiatric disorder and the degree to which this affects the individual in a learning environment. The diagnostic report should include specific recommendations for accommodations that are realistic and that the College can reasonably provide. A detailed explanation should be provided as to why each accommodation is recommended and should be correlated with specific functional limitations and the specific diagnosis indicated. A prior history of accommodations without clear demonstration of current needs does not warrant the provision of like accommodations. The determination of reasonable accommodations for a disabled student at MECA rests with the Disability Services Coordinator working in collaboration with the individual with the disability.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

1. Contents: The grievance must be in writing; must contain the name, address, and telephone number of the student; and must include the location, date and description of the alleged discrimination. Alternative means of grieving, such as a personal interview or tape-recording, are available upon request.

2. Filing: The student, or, if necessary because of disability, a designee, must submit the grievance to the Disability Services Coordinator as soon as possible and no later than twenty (20) calendar days after the alleged violation. The Disability Services Coordinator may be contacted at: Disability Services Coordinator, Maine College of Art, 522 Congress Street., Portland, ME 04101; telephone 207.699.5035 or ajaehnig@meca.edu.

3. Decision: As soon as practical after receipt of the grievance, the Disability Services Coordinator Officer will meet with the student to discuss the complaint. As soon as practical after the meeting, the Disability Services Coordinator will respond in a format accessible to the student (such as large print, braille or audiotape). The response will explain the position of the College and, where practical, will offer options for substantive resolution.

4. Student Appeal to the Dean of the College: Within fifteen (15) calendar days after receiving the Officer’s decision, the student may appeal to the Dean of the College. Such an appeal should be directed to Ian Anderson, Dean of the College, Maine College of Art, 522 Congress Street, Portland, ME 04101; telephone 207.699.5036 or ianderson@meca.edu.

5. Decision of the Dean of the College: As soon as practical after the receipt of the appeal, the Dean of the College will meet with the student to discuss the appeal. As soon as practical after the meeting, the Dean of the College will issue, in a format accessible to the student, a final decision regarding the grievance.

6. Record Retention: The College will retain all documentation of grievances, appeals and responses in the above procedure for at least three (3) years.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The nature of your disability, the content of your documentation and other records on file with the ADA Coordinator are confidential. Information will be released to appropriate third parties only as necessary to administer matters relating to the College’s accommodation of your disability. You are free to disclose any information that you choose about your disability to any concerned person but you should not be compelled to divulge any information beyond what is contained or implied in the accommodation memo.

DISTRIBUTION POLICY

The disability services policy shall be distributed to all employees and added to the Student Handbook. Notice of the College’s non-discrimination statement and contact information for the Affirmative Action Officer/ADA Compliance Officer and the Disability Services Coordinator shall be posted in conspicuous locations throughout the campus.
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MECA COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Students must:
1. Identify and meet with the Disability Services Coordinator.
2. Provide documentation.
3. Discuss accommodations with faculty.
4. Meet academic standards of courses.

Disability Services Coordinator must:
1. Maintain the confidential records that identify students with disabilities.
2. Evaluate the documentation and determine eligibility for services and accommodations.
3. In conjunction with the student, and with faculty as appropriate, determine reasonable accommodations and provide consultation and assistance as needed for their timely and effective provision.
4. Educate faculty and institutional members on ADA policies and procedures.
5. Work to resolve conflicts between students and instructors in accommodation provision.
6. Ensure that facilities are in disability compliance.
7. Ensure that academic standards are met in the course.
8. Follow up with students and faculty to evaluate the success of accommodations.

Faculty must:
1. Make a reasonable effort to be informed of ADA policies and procedures.
2. Provide notice to students of ADA services and how they can access them via a syllabus statement.
3. Provide reasonable accommodations to registered students in coordination with program chairs and the Disability Services Coordinator;
4. Ensure that academic standards are met in compliance with ADA policies.
5. Refer students with accommodations to the Disability Services Coordinator when issues arise involving accommodations.
6. Serve as role models to set the tone for sensitivity and acceptance of students with disabilities.

Department Chairs must:
1. Ensure that students are notified of ADA services and access procedures in every class in their department at the beginning of each term; and
2. Ensure that students receive fair and respectful treatment in their departments.

The Dean of the College:
1. Serves as the primary source of appeal in accordance with established grievance procedures.
2. Ensures that students receive fair and respectful treatment at the institutional level.
3. Serves as a role model to set the tone for sensitivity and acceptance of students with disabilities to faculty.
4. Ensures that reasonable equal access has been extended to students with disabilities applying to and attending the College.

STUDENT INFORMATION ON ACCOMMODATIONS

DISTRIBUTION OF ACCOMMODATION MEMO: The accommodation memo sets forth the accommodations for which you are eligible. Once signed by you and the Disability Services Coordinator, copies of the memo along with other appropriate information will be assembled for each class in which you are requesting accommodations. You will return to the Department of Student Affairs to pick up your accommodation packets, usually within five business days. It is then your responsibility to forward these packets to your respective instructors. You will be asked to provide a copy of your current class schedule for this purpose.

PROVISION OF ACCOMMODATIONS: Your instructor is notified of your registration as a student with a disability and of the accommodations which have been deemed reasonable at the point when you deliver the accommodation packet to him or her. At this time, you should take the opportunity to discuss with your instructor how the accommodations are to be provided for each course. If a disagreement or conflict arises that cannot be resolved satisfactorily between you and the instructor, you must contact the Disability Services Coordinator for further assistance as soon as possible. Instructors have also been notified to contact that office in the event of questions or concerns. You must notify the faculty member of accommodations at the beginning of each semester. If you chose not to use accommodations and then decide to implement them in the middle of the semester, the accommodations are put into effect at the time of notice. Accommodations are never retroactive.

FURTHER REQUESTS FOR ACCOMMODATIONS: Your signature on the accommodation memo does not preclude the approval of additional accommodations. However, requests for additional accommodations will require notification of need and a meeting with the Disability Services Coordinator, who will then conduct an analysis of current documentation and of the reasonableness of the additional accommodation requested will occur. Further documentation may be needed if current documentation does not address the need in
question. If the additional accommodation is deemed reasonable, the accommodation will be added to your accommodation memo and a copy provided to you to distribute to your instructor(s). The denial of any requested accommodation by the Disability Services Coordinator can be appealed.

USE OF ACCOMMODATIONS: You may decline to use an accommodation if you determine that the accommodation is not needed for a given course. You may defer use of an accommodation in order to determine if the accommodation is necessary or useful to you. Please inform your instructor if you opt to decline or defer use of an accommodation. For testing accommodations involving extended time, an alternative test location or alternative format, you should discuss with your instructor(s) how these accommodations are to be utilized, particularly as regards the timing of testing. Reasonable notice to the instructor is required in order to ensure timely provision of the accommodation. If an approved accommodation is not being provided in a timely or effective manner, you must contact the Disability Services Coordinator as soon as possible to seek resolution.

RENEWAL OF THE ACCOMMODATION MEMO: The accommodation memo will be provided to you for distribution to faculty on a semester-by-semester basis. Your accommodation memo is not automatically renewed each semester. Each semester, you must inform the Disability Services Coordinator of your intent to renew your accommodations. You may call for an appointment at any time to review your accommodations, discuss service needs or request renewal. Following notice of your intent to renew, your accommodation packets will be assembled for you to pick up and deliver to your instructors.

CONFIDENTIALITY: The nature of your disability, the content of your documentation and other records on file with the Disability Services Coordinator are confidential. Information will be released to appropriate third parties only as necessary to administer matters relating to the College’s accommodation of your disability. You are free to disclose any information that you choose about your disability to any concerned person but you should not be compelled to divulge any information beyond what is contained or implied in the accommodation memo.

ADA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AT MAINE COLLEGE OF ART: The College’s grievance procedure for disability discrimination claims is referenced in the Student Handbook. The Student Handbook is available online (visit www.meca.edu). A separate copy of the complete Disability Services Policy and Procedures will be made available to you via email. Disability Services Coordinator Adrea Jaehnig can be contacted at 207.699.5035 or by e-mail at ajaehnig@meca.edu.