

Disability & Access Center

Students with Disabilities:

Course Substitution Policy

All students must be able to meet the academic and technical standards required for admission or participation in their chosen program of study. Students with disabilities, therefore, are not excused from course prerequisites, GPA requirements, or degree requirements. However, in some limited circumstances, substitution of course requirements on the basis of a documented disability may be appropriate. Such substitutions are granted only when it is clear that the student's disability makes completion of the requirement(s) almost impossible and when the course in question is not a fundamental element of the curriculum. Note that course waivers are not granted. The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights has consistently upheld the right of an institution to safeguard the integrity of its academic programs. A course substitution simply means that the credit hours for the course are met through an alternate course. A course substitution does not alter or reduce the number of credits needed for degree completion.

Students should understand that the Disability & Access Center provides consultations to the academic units based solely on students' needs and the impact disabilities may have on specific courses. Academic units determine whether or not a particular course or assignment is fundamental to degree programs. Consideration of a course substitution is done on a case-by-case basis and requires the following actions by the student with a disability:

1. The student must request a course substitution as part of his/her Disability & Access Center semester plan for accommodations. The student's documentation must contain specific and reasonably current information that supports the request and be provided by qualified experts.
2. The student must write a letter to the appropriate academic dean (e.g., Arts & Humanities, Business, Health Sciences and Homeland Security, Technical Education and Workforce Development, Math & Sciences).
3. Disability & Access Center staff will provide the student with the appropriate instructional staff name and contact information.

This letter should include:

- The student's name, address, student ID number and major;
- The name of the course where the substitution is requested;
- An explanation of the disability and its impact;
- A rationale for the substitution request;
- A history of any previous attempts to complete the course in question;
- Any past history of course substitutions granted by previously attended colleges or universities (this does not obligate Southwestern Illinois College to reach a similar conclusion);
- A statement that the appropriate documentation verifying the disability is on file with the Disability & Access Center.

The academic dean may collaborate with the Disability & Access Center regarding the advisability of the course substitution request based on the available documentation. Be advised that the student requesting a course substitution may be asked to submit additional disability documentation if the documentation on file with the Disability & Access Center is deemed inadequate to make a determination.

Once the academic dean has made a decision, the student will be notified in writing of the result within 30 working days. A student with a disability who is denied a course substitution may appeal that decision to the Chief Academic Officer.

