
Disability Services Handbook For Students and Employees



 **ST. THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE**

125 Route 340, Sparkill, NY 10976-1050
1.800.999.STAC or FAX 845.359.8136

About St. Thomas...

St. Thomas Aquinas College was founded by the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill in 1952 as a three-year teacher training College for its members, graduating its first class of 30 students in 1958. Today, the College is a four-year independent institution.

St. Thomas has expanded its offerings to include: a Master of Science in Education, a Post Masters Certificate program in Education, a Master of Science in Teaching, a Master of Business Administration program, a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Science in Education, and an Associate of Arts and an Associate of Science degree, the latter two offered at the West Point Military Academy. In addition, St. Thomas is the host campus for a Master of Science in Social Work program offered by New York University.

The College's 2,700 full and part time undergraduate students major in one of almost 100 majors, minors, specializations and dual degree programs offered in five division areas: The Humanities; Business Administration; Social Sciences; Natural Sciences & Mathematics; and Teacher Education. The College offers a full scholarship Honors Program which provides students with a Summer Study experience at Oxford University in England. In addition, there are several study abroad opportunities and strategic alliances designed to offer expanded opportunities for students. For example, students can major in mathematics at St. Thomas for three years and then enter an engineering program at either George Washington University or Manhattan College as part of a dual degree program.

St. Thomas offers study abroad opportunities in Ireland, Italy, Hungary, Nova Scotia, Brazil and Japan. The College now boasts 21 buildings on a 48-acre campus and can host up to 650 resident students.



Disability Services

It is the College's goal to ensure that all people who come to St. Thomas Aquinas College's campus have the architectural and programmatic access necessary to enjoy full benefits of campus life.

People with disabilities have indicated that they want to be treated like other people on campus, so the College has designed its disability services to support that wish. At St. Thomas there is no requirement for you to make your disability known. The College's philosophy respects the rights and responsibilities of employees/students to make their own decisions about accommodations. The entire St. Thomas Aquinas College community firmly believes in giving you the control over your own life; you can make your own decisions here.

Our main goal is to assist students and employees to advocate for themselves. While you are at St. Thomas, we can help you with access to academic, residential, cultural, and recreational offerings. We can also assist with problem solving, answering questions, and designing "enabling" accommodations. Since no two people with disabilities are alike, our accommodations are individualized and decentralized so that you can fully participate in academic, employment and campus life. To find out more about disability services, you are invited to contact the Disability Services Liaison. Decisions about participation are yours!

There are several College committees that address issues related to accommodating the needs of individuals with disabilities. The Disability Services Liaison coordinates communications with these committees, and is the individual's primary contact with regard to the certification and accommodation of disabilities.

Committee for Academic Accommodation of Disabilities (CAAD)

The CAAD is comprised of individuals whose backgrounds best qualify them for reviewing and rendering decisions regarding accommodations appropriate to supporting achievement of excellence in academics.

Committee for Non-Academic Accommodation of Disabilities (CNAAD)

The CNAAD is comprised of individuals who are equipped to review and render decisions regarding access to the campus facilities.

Disability Services Compliance Review Committee (DSCRC)

The DSCRC is comprised of individuals who are responsible for overall compliance to the Americans With Disabilities Act & Section 504.

Services

St. Thomas Aquinas College provides accommodations and support services without charge to faculty, staff and students in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. These include:

- modified accessible on-campus housing
- special dietary accommodations through Campus Dining Services
- consultation for assistance in developing self-advocacy and networking skills
- academic aids as required by Section 504 and ADA

Specific disabilities often require individual accommodations. Upon documentation and assessment of need, these may include but are not limited to those listed here.

For individuals who have visual impairments

- access to state and national taping services for books, newspapers and magazines
- audio tapes of college publications including the college catalogue
- variable speed tape recorders
- Braille markings

For individuals with hearing impairments

- housing modifications upon request including visual fire alarm, visual door buzzer, amplified phone

For individuals who have mobility impairments

- accessibility to campus buildings
- relocation of classrooms when necessary
- ramps and curb cuts allowing access around campus
- accessible housing

For individuals with learning disabilities

- access to state and national taping services
- testing accommodations including additional time
- variable speed tape recorders in the library
- access to calculators for class work and testing
- tape recording of lectures

For individuals with emotional disabilities

- on campus short-term counseling
- testing accommodations

Additional College Services

Beyond the services required by law for students with learning disabilities, St. Thomas also has a program for individuals with learning disabilities known as “Pathways.” Students who wish to choose this type of comprehensive support and qualify may apply for the program. This program extends the services required by law at extra cost to the student accepted into the program and includes:

- a director and a trained staff of mentors
- availability of individualized work with students on a regular basis each week during the academic year
- a supportive summer program
- a complete program of seminars emphasizing learning strategies specifically designed for students with learning disabilities

Student/Employee Responsibilities

Students/employees should become familiar with the College’s policies, procedures, and services regarding the certification and accommodation of disabilities to enable them to advocate for themselves. You are responsible for:

- initiating the support process by completing a Request for Accommodation form and submitting it to the Disability Services Liaison.
- submitting current and appropriate documentation and information sufficient to enable the College to consider the existence and nature of the disability and the appropriateness and necessity of the requested auxiliary aids and services and/or academic or job-related adjustments.
- communicating, as needed, with faculty and staff to assist in the implementation of auxiliary aids and services and/or academic or employment related adjustments that the College has determined should be provided.



Disability Grievance Procedure

Individuals with disabilities may from time to time have concerns related to the administration of the College's policies and procedures regarding the certification and accommodation of disabilities. The College endorses the tradition of an informal resolution of individual concerns. You are therefore encouraged to first relay concerns informally to the Disability Services Liaison. You should be prepared to discuss the specific action or decision about which you are concerned and your proposed resolution of those concerns. The liaison will serve as a conduit through which those concerns may be channeled with the objective of addressing them in an expeditious manner.

The College recognizes that all concerns may not be resolved satisfactorily in this manner. Therefore, the College provides the procedure outlined herein for your grievances related to the certification and accommodation of disabilities that are not resolved satisfactorily through informal discussion.

Step One: You may submit the grievance, in writing, on a form supplied by the Colleges Disability Services Liaison to The Chair of the Disability Services Compliance Review Committee, who also serves as the College's ADA and Section 504 Compliance Officer. If you are grieving a decision rendered by the CAAD or CNAAD, the written grievance should be submitted within **10** working days after you are informed of the committee action that is the subject of the grievance. If you are grieving some other issue regarding the certification or accommodation of a disability, you should submit your grievance within **10** working days after the occurrence of the alleged act or omission complained of. The DSCRC's consideration of the grievance may include, where appropriate, meeting with you, gathering pertinent information, and consulting with other involved parties. The DSCRC will render a decision on the matter within **5** working days from when the formal grievance was received, if practicable.

Step Two: If you are dissatisfied with the decision of the DSCRC, you should notify the Chair of the DSCRC, in writing, on a form available from the Disability Services Liaison, within **5** working days after the date of the *Step One* decision of your desire to proceed to *Step Two* of this Disability Grievance Procedure. Such notification must include a copy of the original grievance and your explanation of your objective to the *Step One* decision. The Chair of the DSCRC will forward the grievance to the appropriate Executive Administrative Officer. The Executive Administrative Officer's consideration of the grievance may include, where appropriate, meeting with you, gathering pertinent information, and consulting with other involved parties. The Executive Administrative Officer will notify you of his/her decision within **5** working days following the date the written notification is received, if practicable.

Step Three: If you are dissatisfied with the decision of the Executive Administrative Officer, you should notify the Executive Administrative Officer, in writing, on a form available from the Disability Services Liaison, within **5** working days after the date of the *Step Two* decision, of your desire to proceed to *Step Three* of this Disability Grievance Procedure. Such notification must include a copy of the original grievance, and your explanation of your objection to the *Step Two* decision. The Executive Administrative Officer will forward the grievance to the President of the College. Consideration of the grievance by the President or his/her designee may include, where appropriate, meeting with you, gathering pertinent information, and consulting with other involved parties. The President shall render the *final College decision* on the matter within **5** working days following the date the written notification is received, if practicable.

2009-2010 Directory of Contacts

Disability Services Liaison	Ms. Andrea Kraeft 845.398.4088
Section 504/ADA Compliance Officer Title IX Coordinator Age Act Coordinator Chair, Disability Services Compliance Review Committee	Ms. Patricia Pacchiana 845.398.4044
Chair, Committee for Academic Accommodation of Disabilities	Dr. Meenakshi Gajria 845.398.4154
Chair, Committee for Non-Academic Accommodation of Disabilities	Ms. Millie Alexiou 845.398.4310
Director, Pathways Programs	Dr. Richard Heath 845.398.4231



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