

## **ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS FOR EQUINE STUDIES**

The Vermont Technical College Equine Studies Program is committed to a policy of equal educational opportunity and welcomes individuals with diverse backgrounds and abilities. The Program prohibits discrimination of any kind, including on the basis of disability. At the same time, students in the Equine Studies Program must be able to perform the essential lab and academic requirements, as the overall curricular objectives are to prepare students for successful careers in their chosen field. This document is provided to ensure that students entering the program know and understand the requirements and can make informed decisions about their pursuit of a degree in this field of study, where students must fulfill the requirements either with or without reasonable accommodation. If you have questions about this document or about your ability to perform the essential functions listed below, please contact the Equine Studies Program Director or the Learning Specialist. Note: This document is subject to modification.

### **Cognitive functions - The student must be able to thoroughly, efficiently, and reliably:**

1. recall, interpret, extrapolate and apply information from a variety of sources, including: reading material, lecture, discussion, direct observation, examination and evaluation/assessment;
2. determine what data are needed to solve problems; and
3. analyze, synthesize and evaluate information from a variety of sources, including, for example, written material, lecture/instructions, discussion, and visual evaluation/assessment of a school horse or situation.

### **Affective functions - The student must be able to:**

1. establish professional, trusting, empathetic relationships with a variety of individuals;
2. demonstrate respect and engage in non-judgmental interactions regardless of, for example, an individual's age, gender, race, socio-economic status, religion, life-style, and/or culture;
3. work effectively in groups;
4. meet externally established deadlines;
5. be an active and engaged learner in classroom, lab, and Equine Center settings;
6. attend to cognitive, communication, and psychomotor tasks for as long as three hours at a time within the academic environment, and as long as eight hours at a time within the Equine Center environment;
7. identify sources of stress and develop effective coping behaviors; and
8. recognize and respond appropriately to potentially hazardous situations.

### **Communication functions - The student must be able to:**

1. attend selectively and in a controlled and respectful manner to various types of communication, including the spoken and written word and non-verbal communication;
2. relay information in oral and written form effectively, accurately, reliably, thoroughly, and intelligibly to individuals and groups, using the English language;
3. read and comprehend English

### **Psychomotor functions - The student must be able to:**

1. accurately and reliably inspect and observe the facial expression, posture and movement of clients and school horses, as well as horses' anatomical structures;
2. lift, move, and otherwise work with heavy objects (saddles, hay bales, etc.) and have the strength, balance, and agility necessary to work safely around horses, both within the stable area and in classes and labs;
3. negotiate level surfaces, ramps and stairs to assist clients, school horses, and classmates appropriately;
4. react and effectively respond quickly to sudden or unexpected movements of horses/classmates;
5. transport self/horses from one area to another, from any combination of paddock, stall, or other enclosure to exam, class, or lab area;
6. put on and take off clothing, including necessary riding and work gear;
7. exhibit sufficient manual dexterity, strength, and hand-eye coordination to effectively manipulate training or riding materials or equipment and to perform functions, including but not limited to:
  - medication administration by mouth, injection, or eye, ear, or skin application;
  - bandage changes;
  - grooming, tacking, un-tacking, bathing, and other necessary horse care, including stable cleaning and maintenance work in the Equine Center.

### **Procedure for new students**

1. The program will provide copies of the policy regarding essential functions to students during the first week of classes.
2. Following a presentation of the standards and an opportunity for questions, the College will ask students to sign a form indicating they understand the policies related to essential functions, as well as their rights and responsibilities to be answered. This presentation will occur as early as possible during the first week of classes.
3. It is the responsibility of all students seeking disability accommodations to self-identify by contacting the Learning Specialist and supplying adequate and comprehensive documentation of the disability. Students are strongly encouraged to self-identify as early as possible. Accommodations cannot be made retroactively.
4. It is the responsibility of the Learning Specialist to certify student disabilities and to recommend reasonable and appropriate accommodations in light of the nature of a student's disability and academic program requirements.
5. Once accommodations have been agreed upon by the student and the Learning Specialist, the faculty for whom the accommodation is relevant will be notified, in writing. A student's specific disability will not be revealed to faculty unless communicated directly by the student or as necessary to facilitate provision of the accommodation/s.
6. Once the faculty member has been notified of the need for accommodations, she/he may meet and/or communicate in other ways with the student and/or the disability specialists to discuss the recommended accommodations and to work in a collaborative manner to determine their feasibility and effective ways of meeting the student's needs.

If accommodations are required in the Equine Center and/or field trip settings, the faculty responsible for the course will attempt to arrange the requested accommodations. The student is not guaranteed that his/her requested accommodations can be made in these settings.

### **Procedure for current students with newly-identified conditions**

1. Any student not requesting accommodation at the time of admission will not be granted accommodation after beginning the program until the student has contacted the Learning Specialist, that officer has certified that a disability exists, and that office has recommended reasonable accommodations, in writing, to the faculty involved.
2. Faculty who suspect that a student may have an unrecognized disability may discuss the concern with the student, but are not obliged to do so. The student may determine whether to pursue the issue further through diagnosis or request for accommodation, but is not obliged to do so.
3. If a student develops a health condition, has a worsening of an existing health condition, or is diagnosed with a disability while a student and requests accommodations, s/he must provide documentation of the condition from a recognized professional capable of identifying such a condition to the Learning Specialist.
4. It is the responsibility of the staff of the Learning Specialist to certify student disabilities and to recommend reasonable and appropriate accommodations in light of the nature of a student's disability and academic program requirements.
5. Once accommodations have been agreed upon by the student and the Learning Specialist, the faculty for whom the accommodation is relevant will be notified in writing. A student's specific disability will not be revealed to faculty unless communicated directly by the student or as necessary to facilitate provision of the accommodation/s.
6. Once the faculty member has been notified of the need for accommodations, she/he may meet and/or communicate in other ways with the student and/or the disability specialist to discuss the recommended accommodations, and work in a collaborative manner to determine their feasibility, and effective ways of meeting the student's needs.
7. If accommodations are required in the Equine Center and/or field trip settings, the faculty responsible for the externship course will attempt to provide the requested accommodations. The student is not guaranteed, however, that accommodations can be made in every situation.

I have read the Essential Functions Information for the Equine Studies Program. I understand that I am expected to be able to accomplish, with or without reasonable accommodations, the essential functions of the program to which I have been accepted. I understand my rights with respect to such accommodations, and that if I seek such accommodations, it is my responsibility to disclose the disabilities for which I am seeking accommodations to the Learning Specialist (Robin Goodall @ (802) 728-1278 or [rgoodall@vtc.edu](mailto:rgoodall@vtc.edu) ). I understand that once the Learning Specialist notifies the faculty of my need for reasonable accommodations, the Equine Studies Program in which I am enrolled will provide reasonable accommodations, as defined by the Learning Specialist, in the classroom and laboratory setting. In addition, efforts will be made to arrange learning experiences where appropriate accommodations can be made; however, such accommodations in the Equine Center and/or field trip environments might be beyond the Department's ability to provide.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please fill out and sign this acknowledgement and return it to Jessica Stewart Riley, Program Director.

