

UNION COUNTY COLLEGE

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES

HANDBOOK



Office of Disability Support Services
disabilitysvc@ucc.edu

OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES

It is the mission of the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) to remove barriers and ensure equal access for all qualified students with disabilities, in keeping with Union County College's Mission to empower students to achieve their goals by providing access to high quality and affordable higher education to the residents of Union County.

Specifically, the office provides the following services:

- Coordinate and provide accommodations and related support services for students with disabilities
- Serve as an advocate for students with disabilities while promoting independence, self-determination, and responsibility
- Assist the College with compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Provide training and support for faculty, staff and administration regarding the needs of students with disabilities
- Provide consultation, information, and outreach to prospective students and other interested parties about DSS at Union County College
- Foster College-wide awareness and understanding of students with disabilities

CLASSROOM PROCEDURES FOR ACCOMMODATIONS

It is the student's responsibility to self-identify to Disability Support Services (DSS) and to provide appropriate documentation. Documentation differs depending on disability. Once disability is established the student and DSS meet to determine reasonable accommodations. Accommodation Alert Forms are then prepared and emailed to the student's Union County College email.

The student must provide to each faculty member two copies of their Accommodation Alert Form. The form will have the student's signature as well as the signature of the Coordinator of DSS. The faculty member should sign one form and give it back to the student. The other form is for the faculty member to keep as a reference. The student will return the signed form to DSS where it is kept in the student's file.

Faculty members must review and must follow the accommodations listed on the Accommodations Alert Form so that the student will receive the accommodations in class to which they are legally entitled. If there are any questions or concerns the faculty member should contact DSS to discuss their concerns.

Faculty members should not request information or documentation from students who disclose disability. All students who disclose disability should be immediately referred to DSS. The student will then be guided through the disability support services process.

Faculty should not refuse to provide required accommodations but to instead direct inquiries to DSS. Faculty should not question the student about whether the disability exists when accommodations have been authorized by the College, or to request to examine the student's documentation. If a faculty member has questions about the appropriateness of a required accommodation, they should consult with DSS.

The following excerpt from Heyward, Lawton, and Associates (Disability Accommodations Digest, Sample Issue, Summer 1995) explains faculty responsibility:

Faculty members must accept that being employed by institutions that have compliance responsibilities under federal statutes and regulations means that their employment is condition upon their assisting those institutions in satisfying their compliance obligation. There is a shared responsibility because the provision of academic adjustments to students requires the participation of those who are employed to teach. Further, it is extremely important for faculty members to understand that there have been several judicial decisions in which persons who have improperly denied services, benefits, and opportunities to individuals with disabilities have been held to be personally liable for those discriminatory acts.

Faculty members are encouraged to enhance awareness of disability issues via meetings with DSS and attending DSS workshops.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

A person with a disability is an individual with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. An individual is considered to be a person with a disability if he/she (1) has a disability, (2) has a history of a disability, or (3) is perceived by others as having a disability.

DISABILITY

A “person with a disability” is anyone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. In addition to those people who have visible disabilities - persons who are blind, deaf, or use a wheelchair - the definition includes people with a range of invisible disabilities. These include psychological problems, learning disabilities, or some chronic health impairment, such as epilepsy, diabetes, arthritis, cancer, cardiac problems, HIV/AIDS, and more. In addition, a person is considered to be a person with disability if he/she is regarded by others as having a disability.

QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY

A qualified individual with a disability is someone whose experience, education, and/or training enables the person, with or without reasonable accommodations, to perform the essential requirements of a job or an academic course or program.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

A reasonable accommodation is any modification or change in the educational, employment, or general campus environment (or in the way things are customarily done) that enables an individual with a disability to have equal opportunities to fully participate in the particular activity. This term may include:

- Making existing facilities and programs readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.
- Relocating classrooms, developing alternative testing procedures, providing educational auxiliary aids, readers, or interpreters.
- A reasonable accommodation is not a modification of policies and practices when such modification would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students with disabilities must maintain the same responsibility for their education as students without disabilities. This includes maintaining the same academic levels, maintaining appropriate behavior, and giving notification of any special needs.

It is the student's responsibility to self-disclose to DSS and to provide appropriate documentation. If the student elects to disclose disability, it is their responsibility to meet with the instructor at the beginning of each semester to discuss accommodation arrangements and to provide their Accommodation Alert form. Students may present their Accommodation Alert Form at any time during the semester, but accommodations are not retro-active. Accommodations begin on the day that the alert form is presented to the instructor.

ETIQUETTE

In writing or speaking about people who have disabilities, it is important to consider perceptions generated by language. Describing a person with abilities, rather than disabilities, can promote more positive understanding and attitudes. Appreciate what the person can do. Remember that difficulties the person faces may stem more from society's attitude and barriers than from the disability itself.

Refer to the person first, not the disability, to invite the perception of inclusion into a community rather than the image of a separate and unusual group. Terms like "handicapped" tend to develop an image of inadequacy, whereas the descriptive phrase "person who uses a wheelchair" tends to suggest an identifying attribute of a group member with a particular ability. Look at the student as a person first, not as a person with a disability.

LEGISLATION

THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, is a civil rights legislation that affects some 43,000,000 Americans with disabilities. The purpose of this act is to provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities. The ADA applies to all institutions of higher education regardless of receipt of federal funds.

SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

"No otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities in the United States ... shall solely by reason of his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

This Act now falls under the umbrella of the ADA.

THE NEW JERSEY LAW AGAINST DISCRIMINATION (LAD)

The New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD) makes it unlawful to subject people to differential treatment based on race, creed, color, national origin, nationality, ancestry, age, sex, (including pregnancy), familial status, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, atypical hereditary cellular or blood trait, genetic information, liability for military service, and mental or physical disability, including perceived disability and AIDS and HIV status. The LAD prohibits unlawful discrimination in employment, housing, places of public accommodation, credit, and business contracts. Not all of the

foregoing prohibited bases for discrimination are protected in all of these areas of activity. For example, familial status is only protected with respect to housing.

PROVISIONS OF SECTION 504

Union County College, as an institution of higher education that receives federal assistance, is legally bound to prohibit discrimination in the recruitment process, the admission process, and the educational process of students with disabilities. Students with documented disabilities are entitled to receive approved accommodations, appropriate academic adjustments, or auxiliary aids that will enable them to participate in and have the opportunity to benefit from all educational programs and activities of Union County College.

Under the provisions of Section 504, Union County College may not:

- Limit the number of otherwise qualified students with disabilities admitted;
- Make pre-admission inquiries as to whether an applicant is disabled;
- Exclude an otherwise qualified student with a disability from any course of study;
- Provide less financial assistance to students with disabilities than is provided to non-disabled students, or limit eligibility for scholarships on the basis of disability;
- Counsel students with disabilities into more restrictive career paths than are recommended to non-disabled students;
- Measure student achievement using modes that adversely discriminate against a student with a disability; or
- Establish rules and policies that have the effect of limiting participation of students with disabilities in educational programs or activities.

STANDARD DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Introduction

As defined by law, if a student has self-identified as a person with a disability and wishes to seek accommodations, appropriate documentation must be submitted.

All documentation must verify the disability, functional limitations and the need for accommodations. Students must meet all requirements and institutional standards for all classes. Depending upon the disability, documentation might include:

Language and Learning Disabilities

Specific Learning Disability, Speech or Communication Impairment:

- Educational Evaluation (usually less than three years old), with the specific diagnosis by a licensed psychologist or a learning consultant, including standardized test scores
 - acceptable tests include: Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement, Wechsler Individual Achievement Test, Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement
- AND**
- Psychological Evaluation (usually less than three years old), with the specific diagnosis by a licensed psychologist or a learning consultant, including standardized test scores

- acceptable tests include: Woodcock Johnson Test of Cognitive Abilities, Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Stanford Binet Intelligence Scale

OPTIONAL:

- Speech and Language Evaluation, if appropriate
- Most recent Individual Education Program (IEP) helps to inform about the support the student has received in the past.

Medical, Developmental, Physical or Sensory Disabilities: Intellectual Disability, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Orthopedic Disability, Seizure Disorder, Other Health Impairment

- Comprehensive physician diagnosis and report, (usually less than one year old) including:
 - type and severity of current symptoms
 - functional impact of the disability
 - current medications, treatments, and/or services currently prescribed
 - description of expected progression or stability of the disability or illness over time
 - recommendations for accommodations or services connecting the need for the accommodations to the functional impact of the disability.

OR

- Students may use the Disability Verification Form provided by DSS to provide appropriate documentation.

Psychiatric/Psychological Disabilities

- Current documentation (usually less than one year old); an official report from a licensed psychiatrist, licensed psychologist, licensed social worker, or licensed mental health provider to include:
 - specific diagnosis
 - description of current symptoms
 - summary of comprehensive assessment
 - history of symptoms
 - validation of need for services related to the functional impact of the disability
 - current treatment and medication - including any side effects
 - recommendations including suggested academic accommodations justified by the link to functional limitations in the academic environment

OR

- Students may use the Disability Verification Form provided by DSS to provide appropriate documentation.

Individual Educational Plans (IEPs), 504 Plans, or documentation of past accommodations may be used to determine appropriate accommodations only if they contain the complete information specific to the disability as required above.

ACCOMMODATIONS ALERT FORM

STUDENT: _____ **ID#:** _____
COURSE NAME: _____ **SECTION #:** _____ **PROFESSOR:** _____
SEMESTER: _____ (i.e.-fall, winter, spring, summer I, summer II) **YEAR:** _____

The purpose of this form is to inform faculty members that the above named student is eligible for accommodations. The above student is registered for your class this semester. The student has met stringent requirements as established by Union County College Disability Support Services to document his/her disability. The provision of reasonable accommodations is **mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**. Accommodations are designed to equalize opportunities while maintaining institutional academic standards. Accommodations are provided on an individualized basis with the cooperation of the student, the Disability Support Services Office, and you, the instructor. **Disability information is confidential.** Thank you for your assistance. Should you have any questions or concerns please contact the Coordinator of Disability Support Services at (908) 709-7164, karen.cimorelli@ucc.edu.

The following accommodations have been determined appropriate and reasonable for this student:

*****TESTS MUST BE GIVEN IN THE TESTING CENTER*****

(If on Plainfield Campus arrangement should be made by the Professor in advance.)

(Please contact Testing Center at assessmentcenter@ucc.edu for more information about testing procedures)

- ACCOMMODATIONS ARE LISTED IN THIS AREA!

Acknowledgements to Student: By signing below I certify that I understand and accept the following:

- Student must notify professor of accommodation needs in writing and communicate about their implementation.
- Student is encouraged to provide the accommodations form to professor(s) at the beginning of each semester.
- Accommodations begin on the date that the professor is provided the accommodations alert form.
- By using accommodations/assistive technologies in class peers may be aware of my unique needs.

Student Signature

Date

Acknowledgements to Faculty: By signing below I certify that I understand and accept the following:

- All accommodations listed on this form will be honored throughout the semester.
- Accommodation requests are private and confidential.
- Faculty is encouraged to communicate with the Coordinator concerning any accommodation request.

Faculty Signature

Date

Acknowledgements to Coordinator: By signing below I certify that I understand and accept the following:

- The student has provided appropriate documentation of disability to Disability Support Services.
- Documentation has been reviewed and the student qualifies for the accommodations listed above.

Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities

Date Accommodations were approved

After this form has been signed, it should be returned to Disability Support Services.

FREQUENTLY UTILIZED ACCOMMODATIONS

- Extended time for testing- usually time and a half, sometimes double time
 - Students who received extended time should always take their tests in the testing center. This allows for students to have less distraction and lowers the anxiety of other students handing in tests when they are still working on theirs. It also respects instructors' time and resources.

- Distraction limited environment for tests and/or quizzes-
 - Cranford and Elizabeth campus- students should be sent to the testing center
 - Plainfield campus- please email testingcenter@ucc.edu to arrange for proctor and separate room

- Preferential seating- student should sit in the front of classroom
- Clarification of directions- written directions for assignments and exams whenever possible
- Four function calculator- student may use a basic calculator for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division
- Recording lectures for later study- students may record lectures. Students sign a recorded lecture policy agreement. (see below)
- Sign language interpreter- student will have two sign language interpreters in classroom who will interpret lecture in American Sign Language.
- Note Sharer- the professor should identify student in the class willing to share notes. If unable to do so, please contact DSS immediately in order to have other arrangements made.

RECORDING LECTURES AGREEMENT

Students with disabilities who are unable to take or read notes have the right to record class lectures for their personal study only.* Lectures recorded for this purpose may not be shared with other people without the consent of the lecturer. Recorded lectures may not be used in any way against the faculty member, other lecturers, or students whose classroom comments are recorded as part of the class activity. Information contained in the recorded lecture is protected under federal copyright laws and may not be published or quoted without the express consent of the lecturer and without giving proper identity and credit to the lecturer.

Pledge: I have read and understand the above requirements on recorded lectures at the Union County College and I pledge to abide by the above requirements with regard to any lectures I record while enrolled as a student at Union County College.

Student Name: _____ (Please Print)

Student Signature: _____

Witness Signature: _____

Date Witnessed: _____

*84.44 of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-112, amended P.L. 93-156).

References

- *A Blueprint for Conducting Faculty Workshops on Learning Disabilities*, The University of Connecticut
- *College Students with Disabilities – A Resource Guide for Faculty and Staff*, Calhoun Community College
- *Student Handbook on Campus Disability Resource Center Services*, Ocean County College
- *LD Services on a Shoestring*, LD Training Institute, 1990, University of Connecticut
- *Reasonable Accommodations: A Faculty Guide to Teaching College Students with Disabilities – Professional Staff*, Congress (AFT Local # 2334) of the City University of New York
- *College Students with Learning Disabilities*, Association of Higher Education and Disability
- *Americans with Disabilities Staff Handbook*, 1994-1996, Thomas Edison State College
- *Subpart E, The Impact of Section 504 on Postsecondary Education*, by Jane E. Jarrow, Ph.D., Association on Higher Education and Disability
- *Faculty Guide to Disability Services*, Montclair University