

Access Services Handbook for Student Accommodation

Policies and Procedures

Nondiscrimination Statement

(Revised statement approved by the Board of Trustees March 5, 2009)

Highline Community College provides equal opportunity in education and employment and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, creed, religion or status as a veteran of war. Prohibited sex discrimination includes sexual harassment (unwelcome sexual conduct of various types).

Diversity Policy

Highline Community College actively promotes work and learning environments that value inclusion, social justice, mutual respect, understanding, civility and non-violence. Highline is committed to the elimination of discrimination based on sex, gender, race, class, educational and socio-economic status, ethnic background, sexual orientation, age, disability status and cultural or religious backgrounds.

Scope and Procedure

At Highline Community College, we are committed to delivering one of the core values of our institution - *access*. In an effort to provide education to all those who seek it, Access Services supports and assists students with disabilities with campus and classroom accommodations. In addition, Access Services and Human Resources collaborate to provide accommodations for employees and applicants.

Highline Community College provides reasonable accommodations for qualified students, employees and applicants with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act, Section 504.

Highline Community College is committed to providing academic adjustments, auxiliary aids and services to qualified students with disabilities. The purpose of this document is to identify the rights and responsibilities of students under the Rehabilitation Act, Section 504; the ADA of 1990, as amended in 2008; and the Washington state Core Services Act (RCW 28B.10.910-916). This document establishes guidelines and procedures for requesting and receiving academic accommodations and the responsibilities of the student and Highline Community College in this process. Access Services is the designated program to verify and determine the need for accommodations.

To receive academic adjustments, auxiliary aids and services, students are responsible for providing appropriate documentation of the nature and extent of their disability and request accommodations in a timely manner to Access Services.

Highline Community College will provide appropriate accommodations that: (1.) will ensure that qualified students with disability will be given equal access to programs and services and (2.) do not create a fundamental alteration to the essential elements of a program or impose an undue financial burden on the college.

A. Section 202 of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act states:

“No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from the participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of any private entity, or be subject to discrimination by any such entity.”

B. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act states:

“No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States, as defined in section 7(20), shall, solely by reason of her or 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.”

Definitions

- A. **“Academic adjustments, auxiliary aids and services,”** also referred to in this handbook as **“accommodations,”** are those modifications to programs, policies, practices and procedures that enable qualified students with a disability an equal opportunity to access college programs and services.
- B. **“Student”** is any person enrolled at the college, or a person seeking admission or accepted to the college for admission.
- C. **“Qualified student”** is one who, with or without academic adjustment and auxiliary aids and services, meets the academic and technical standards required for admission to, participation in, and/or fulfilling the essential requirements of college programs or activities. A **“qualified student with a disability”** is the same as above, who has self-identified and provided appropriate documentation of his/her disability to the office of Access Services at Highline Community College.
- D. **“Student with a disability”** is a student who (1.) has a physical, mental or sensory impairment that substantially limits one or more of his/her major life activities; (2.) has a record of such an impairment; (3.) is perceived to have such an impairment; or (4.) has an abnormal condition that is medically diagnosable.
- E. **“Undue burden”** is defined as **“significant difficulty or expense.”**
- F. **“Fundamental alteration”** is a modification that is so significant that it alters the essential nature of the facilities, privileges, advantages or programs and services offered.
- G. **“Program accessibility”** means that all programs, when viewed in their entirety, are accessible to persons with a disability.
- H. **“Core Services”** are those services listed in the Washington state Core Services Act (RCW 28B.10.912) that are necessary to ensure students with disabilities are accommodated at college.

College Responsibilities

Highline Community College will:

- A. Comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; Section 202 of the ADA of 1990, as amended; and the Washington state Core Services Act (RCW 28B.10.910-916).
- B. Notify students of the college's policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of disability and of steps the student may take if he/she believes discrimination has taken place. This notice shall include the phone numbers of the United States Department of Education, U.S. Office of Civil Rights, and the Washington state Human Rights Commission.
- C. Make available to all students information on the services available to students with disabilities and location of the program designated by the college to coordinate such services. At Highline Community College, this program is Access Services.
- D. Work with the student, faculty and staff on an individual basis to determine the appropriate accommodation for each qualified student with a disability.
- E. Protect the confidentiality of information regarding the nature and extent of the student's documented disability.
- F. Maintain the academic integrity of its programs.
- G. Not make pre-admission inquiry as to whether the applicant has a disability, except as provided by law.
- H. Require specific documentation from the student's physician and/or other qualified professionals to verify the disability and to identify specific academic accommodations which may be necessary, based on the nature of the disability.

Student Responsibilities

To ensure that needed accommodations/academic adjustments are provided in a timely manner, the student will:

- A. Self-identify with the office of Access Services and participate in an initial intake process with Access Services.
- B. Provide documentation on the nature and extent of the disability as the college may require to determine appropriate accommodation. Such documentation may include - but is not limited to - medical reports, identification of tests administered, test results, description of the covered disability and recommended accommodations.
- C. Sign a "Release of Information" form to the office of Access Services, which allows for the communication and exchange of information between staff and other schools and agencies involved in the student's development and provision of accommodation.
- D. Provide timely request for needed accommodations to Access Services. Certain accommodations, such as interpreters or taped books, may require considerable time to arrange. Requests for accommodation, whenever possible, should be received by the college

six (6) weeks prior to the beginning of the quarter for which the request is made. Lack of advance notice may delay the availability of an accommodation.

- E. Follow the procedures and guidelines established by Access Services.
- F. Present the "Letter of Accommodation" to every instructor at the first class session or as soon as possible and discuss with the instructor(s) the accommodation(s) that will be used. Accommodations are in effect when the letter is presented to the instructor.
- G. Promptly notify Access Services of any problems encountered in receiving the agreed-upon accommodations.

Access Services Responsibilities

The office of Access Services is responsible for the coordination of services to qualified students with disabilities, who may require academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services.

- A. Access Services is committed to a reasonable approach in the identification of students with disabilities, which includes listing of location and information about Access Services in all major college publications.
- B. Access Services will keep a separate private file on each student who provides documentation on his/her disability. This file may contain an intake form, contact notes, "Release of Information" form, medical/psychological information, academic records, achievement test results, the "Letter of Accommodation" and other pertinent information. This file will be kept as long as the student is enrolled at Highline Community College, and for eight (8) years thereafter.
- C. Access Services will assist and advise each qualified student with a disability, who requests accommodation under this policy, in developing a plan which identifies academic adjustments, auxiliary aids and services appropriate for the student, and will ensure that the agreed-upon accommodations are provided.

Academic Adjustments, Auxiliary Aids and Services

The process of selecting academic adjustments, auxiliary aids and services (also called accommodations) for each qualified student with a disability shall be made on an individual basis, appropriate to the nature and extent of the student's disability. Access Services will determine the type and manner in which accommodations will be provided. Accommodations are made available after assessing the needs of a student and determining those factors of disability which might cause interference with a student's academic progress.

Services are determined based upon individual need and may consist of one or more of the following examples:

Sign language interpreting
Extended time for testing
Use of assistive technology
Reader for testing
Classroom access

Scribe for testing
Note-taking assistance
Materials in Braille
Early access registration
Large print materials

Text in alternate format
Orientation to campus
Disability parking

Access Services will give primary consideration to the services requested by the student and provide the services requested, unless the college can provide other services that are equally effective. To individually tailor accommodations, further assessment by a qualified specialist may be requested. In these situations, Access Services will consider the results and recommendations of the assessment in determining appropriate services.

When students request services, each request will be considered individually. Access Services will decide what services are appropriate for the nature and extent of each student's disability.

Access Services does not coordinate or fund the use of personal aides or attendants. Aides or attendants provide direct personal assistance or care. For students with disabilities on campus and in the classroom, this might include - but may not be limited to - assisting with personal care, hygiene and safety; administering medications; assisting with mobility; providing transportation; monitoring medical equipment; or etc.

Accessible Room Reassignment Policy & Procedure

Policy:

Highline Community College is committed to providing access to education for all who seek it. The college will assist in finding a section in a classroom that is accessible, or will move the class to a classroom that is accessible if a student determines one or both of the following circumstances:

- A. One of their classes is being held in a classroom that is not accessible, or;
- B. A consecutive class is not accessible due to the distance between classrooms that must be traversed during the break time.

Procedure:

- A. The student will need to contact Access Services for assistance if they determine that an assigned classroom is not accessible or that the second of two consecutive classes is not accessible due to the distance from the first class. If the student has not self-disclosed to Access Services prior to this need for accommodation, they may need to first complete the intake process.
- B. Access Services will review the college schedule with the student to determine whether a different section of the course will work for them. If another section is not available or appropriate, Access Services will contact the Scheduling office.
- C. The Scheduling office will attempt to find an available classroom that is accessible. If an accessible classroom is available, the class will be reassigned to that room.
- D. If an accessible classroom is not available, the Scheduling office will identify an accessible classroom and swap room assignments. If the quarter hasn't started, the change is handled like any other room change. If the quarter has started, Scheduling will notify the division chairs, department coordinators and instructors affected by the change, informing them that the classes are being moved for cause. The Registration office will contact Access Services who will notify the student that the change has been made.

Service Animals on Campus

According to Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 132Q-94-125, pets and other animals are prohibited in college buildings and grounds. For reasons of health, sanitation and safety, no person shall be permitted to bring or leave any dog, cat or any other pet or animal in any college building, nor leave such pet or animal unattended on college property. This section of the WAC does not apply to persons with a disability who require the services and assistance of a guide dog and/or trained service animal as defined by law. In accordance with the Americans with Disability Act, service animals are permitted on campus and in facilities. Access Services reviews requests for service animals on campus and authorizes written permission on the "Letter of Accommodation" form.

Definitions

- A. **Owner/Handler:** A person with a service animal.
- B. **Service Animal:** As defined by the ADA, means any guide dog, signal dog or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, including - but not limited to - guiding persons with impaired vision; alerting persons with hearing loss to intruders or sounds; providing minimal protection or rescue work; pulling a wheelchair, fetching dropped items; or aiding persons with impaired mobility or a seizure

disorder. Service animals are usually dogs, but in some instances other animals have been trained to perform as service animals.

An animal will be considered a service animal if it is visually identified as a service animal by the presence of an apparel item, apparatus or other visual evidence. If an animal is without visual evidence that it is a service animal the owner must be prepared to reasonably establish that the animal does in fact perform a function or task of assistance that the owner cannot perform because of disability. An animal participating "in training to become a service animal by a recognized trainer" may be given permission by Access Services to be on college property.

- C. **Therapy Animal:** Means an animal with good temperament and disposition with reliable, predictable behavior, selected to visit people with disabilities or people who are experiencing the frailties of aging as a therapy tool. The animal may be incorporated as an integral part of a treatment process. A therapy animal does not assist an individual with a disability in the activities of daily living. A therapy animal does not accompany a person with a disability all the time, whereas a service animal is always with its partner. A therapy animal is not covered by the laws protecting and giving rights to service animals.
- D. **Pet:** A domestic animal kept for pleasure or companionship. Pets are not permitted in college facilities. Permission may be granted by an instructor, dean or other college administrator for a pet to be in a campus facility for a specific reason at a specific time. A service animal is not a pet.

Requirements of Service Animals and Owners/Handlers

- A. **Under Control of Owner/Handler:** The owner/handler must be in full control of the animal at all times. The care and supervision of a service animal is solely the responsibility of its owner/handler.
- B. **Leash:** The animal must be on a leash at all times. The City of Des Moines Municipal Code [8.04.020] (13), states: "[a] 'leash' means a cord, rope, thong or chain not more than 8 feet in length by which the animal is controlled by the person accompanying it."
- C. **Licensing and Tags:** The City of Des Moines Municipal Code [8.04.030] (2), states: "Dogs four months old or older shall be vaccinated against rabies;" (9) "all license tags issued shall be securely fastened to a collar or other like harness which shall be worn by the animal at all times when off the premises of the licensed owner."

Responsibilities for Faculty, Staff and Students

- A. Allow a service animal to accompany the owner/handler on campus except where service animals are specifically prohibited.
- B. Do not feed, pet or deliberately startle a service animal.
- C. Do not separate or attempt to separate an owner/handler from his or her animal.

Removal of a Service Animal

- A. **Disruption:** An owner/handler may be asked to remove an unruly or disruptive animal from college facilities. If the improper behavior occurs repeatedly, the owner/handler may be told not to bring the animal into any college facility until the owner/handler has taken significant steps to change the behavior.
- B. **Ill Health:** Ill service animals should not be taken into public areas. An owner/handler with an ill animal may be asked to leave college facilities.

Requests for Substitution of Program/Degree Requirements

Highline Community College recognizes that certain disabilities may preclude a student from successfully completing a specific course requirement for a degree, even with appropriate accommodation. In those cases, the college will consider course substitutions when they do not compromise the integrity of the academic program. Under the ADA, the college is not required to waive or substitute essential requirements of a student's program of instruction. Therefore, every student enrolled in a degree program must meet the essential requirements of that program. In the case of substitution requests, the college understands that any such substitution must not weaken the curriculum, but rather expand the opportunities available. In some cases the college is bound to honor contractual agreements such as the Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA) under the Intercollege Relations Commission (ICRC).

Highline Community College also recognizes that altered methods of course delivery and/or the use of accommodation will enable most students with a disability to successfully complete course requirements, except in unusual circumstances. Therefore, the student is encouraged to attempt successful completion of the required course and/or prerequisites with accommodation.

Course substitution may be requested with the following procedures:

All substitution requests for program/degree requirements shall be submitted to the Graduation Review Board at least two quarters prior to the student's graduation date.

The request must include the following information:

- A. An explanation of the relationship of the student's disability to the lack of success in completing the course;
- B. Current relevant medical or psychological documentation which includes functional impact of the disability and its duration;
- C. A description of the accommodations previously received by the student in the course of relevant subject area, if attempted;
- D. A "Release to Exchange Information" form signed by the student, authorizing the Graduation Review Board to review the student's documentation and to contact the evaluating professional to the extent necessary to consider the student's disability and request for substitutions;

The student's request may also include other relevant information, such as letters from Access Services, instructors and tutors who have first-hand knowledge of the student's attempts in the required subject area;

Program/degree requirement substitutions will be approved only when such requests are consistent with the essential degree requirements.

The chair of the Graduation Review Board shall, within four weeks, respond in writing acknowledging receipt of the student's request. Requests submitted by the 5th week of a quarter will be reviewed by the board by the 5th week of the following quarter. The student will receive written notification of the board's decision. Appeals of the Graduation Review Board's decision may be made to the ADA compliance officer in Human Resources.

Grievance Procedure

Any student who believes that he or she has been discriminated against may file a formal discrimination complaint with the ADA compliance officer in the Human Resources office. Highline Community College has adopted an internal grievance procedure providing for the equitable resolution, within a reasonable time, of complaints by students with disabilities alleging violations of their rights under the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Students also have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education and/or seek other legal remedies under state and federal law. The Department of Education requires complaints of discrimination to be filed within 180 days of the last known incident of discrimination. For further information regarding external complaint mechanisms, please refer to RCW 28B.10.910 through RCW 28B.10.916 and the Washington state law against discrimination, RCW 49.60.

Process for Receiving Accommodations

- A. Student must complete an intake interview with Access Services.
- B. Student must sign a release form and provide the office of Access Services with documentation of disability that verifies the need for receiving academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services. This information is private and will be kept in a file by Access Services and is not part of the student's college academic record.
- C. Access Services staff will provide the student with basic information regarding academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services.
- D. Upon completion of initial interview, signing of release forms and collection of documentation, Access Services will develop an accommodation plan with the student. This plan will include the recommended accommodations and will be signed by Access Services. Support services in this plan are determined on an individual need basis and may be re-evaluated each quarter. The student will be given instructions on the process for securing each of the agreed-upon accommodations.
- E. **Documentation of Learning Disability:** Students who are seeking support services from Highline Community College on the basis of a diagnosed learning disability are required to submit documentation to verify eligibility. Documentation of learning disability consists of the provision of professional evaluation with written report, which reflects the individual's present adult level of information processing, as well as present adult achievement level. The cost and responsibility for providing this professional assessment shall be borne by the student. The following guidelines are provided in the interest of assuring that evaluation reports are appropriate to document eligibility.

Procedure for Documentation of Disability:

Students who are seeking support services from Highline Community College on the basis of a diagnosed disability may be required to submit documentation to verify eligibility. Documentation of a disability must originate from a professional diagnostician such as a physician, psychologist, psychiatrist, audiologist, nurse practitioner, etc. This information may be obtained through third-party sources, such as schools, vocational rehabilitation agencies, Veterans Administration, etc. The responsibility and cost for providing professional documentation shall be borne by the student. This information will be kept in a private file in the Access Services office and will only be used to develop appropriate accommodations and in supporting a student's progress at Highline Community College.

Requests for accommodation due to a temporary disability, which causes interference in a student's ability to participate in programs, services and activities for an extended period of time, will be treated individually. The policy for disability documentation will apply the same. However, the information will need to be current in order to support the need for accommodation.

To request accommodation for a learning disability the documentation must:

- A. **Be prepared by a professional qualified to diagnose learning disability.** This might include, but not be limited to, a licensed neuropsychologist, psychologist or school psychologist.
- B. **Be comprehensive.** One test alone is not acceptable for the purpose of diagnosis. The test report shall include a Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV or subsequent edition) notation based on intake interview and testing results. Minimally, areas to be addressed must include, but not be limited to:
 1. **Aptitude.** Testing must have been administered at the adult learning level. The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale - Revised (WAIS-R) with subtest scores is preferred. In lieu of a WAIS-R (or subsequent WAIS), two Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-III or subsequent edition) tests correlated within 15 IQ points of each other may be acceptable.
 2. **Achievement.** Current levels of functioning in reading, mathematics and written language are required. The Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery - Revised is preferred. The Wide Range Achievement Test - Revised (WRAT-R) and the WRAT-III are NOT comprehensive measures of achievement and therefore are not appropriate for documentation purposes.
 3. **Information Processing.** Specific areas of information processing (e.g., short- and long-term memory; auditory and visual perception/processing; processing speed) must be assessed.
- C. **Be current.** Testing must have been administered at the adult learning level. Since assessment constitutes the basis for determining academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services, it is in a student's best interest to provide recent and appropriate documentation to serve as the basis for decision making about a student's needs for accommodation in an academically competitive environment.
- D. **Present clear and specific evidence, which identifies a specific learning disability and reflects the individual's present (adult) level of functioning.** That is, processing and intelligence, as well as achievement in written expression, writing mechanics and vocabulary, grammar and spelling, reading comprehension and rate. Note: Individual "learning styles," "learning differences," or "learning problems" in and of themselves do not constitute a learning disability.
- E. **Include, in the report, the exact instruments used and procedures followed to assess the learning disability.** Report shall include test results (including subtest score data); a written interpretation of the results by the professional doing the evaluation; name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator; and date(s) of testing.
- F. **Provide sufficient data to support the request for the particular academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services.** Requests that are not supported by documentation may not be provided without additional adequate verification.

Process for Complaint Resolution

General Disability Discrimination Complaints

If at any time during the process of application through formal admission, for reasons other than academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services, an individual feels that they have been discriminated against because of disability, the individual is encouraged to notify Access Services. To contact the office of Access Services visit Building 99, room 180 or call (206) 878-3710, ext. 3857. Complaints of alleged incidents, which have occurred more than 120 days prior to making the complaint, may or may not be given consideration.

- A. The Access Services manager will gather information concerning the complaint and attempt to resolve the situation.
- B. The Access Services manager may choose to refer the matter to the director of Community & Employment Services for resolution.
- C. If the complaint is referred to the director of Community & Employment Services, the director of Community & Employment Services will review the facts or appoint a fact-finding team to review the complaint and attempt to resolve the situation.
- D. If the complaint is not resolved the individual may elect to file a formal complaint with the vice president for Academic Affairs.

Denial of Academic Adjustments, Auxiliary Aids and Services by Access Services

- A. If the office of Access Services does not provide, or refuses to provide requested accommodations, the student must contact the Access Services manager to try to resolve the situation.
- B. If after consulting with the Access Services manager, a student believes that Access Services has not identified or provided appropriate accommodations, the student may petition for a review by the director of Community & Employment Services. The petition should contain factual statements concerning the nature of the student's disability, requested academic accommodation and documentation supporting the need for the accommodation. The director of Community & Employment Services will review the student's request and the facts, review the complaint and attempt to resolve the situation. The director of Community & Employment Services will respond within five working days, or an extended date mutually agreed upon by both parties.
- C. If resolution is not reached by the student and the director of Community & Employment Services, the student has the option to file an appeal with the vice president for Academic Affairs.

Denial of Academic Adjustments and Auxiliary Aids and Services by a Faculty Member or Staff

- A. If a student believes that the instructor has not provided the recommended accommodations as approved by Access Services, the student may seek review of the instructor's actions with the instructor and Access Services.
- B. If the dispute is not resolved, the student may seek review by the instructor's department coordinator. The department coordinator will review the student's request, and respond within five working days, or extended as mutually agreed upon by both parties.
- C. If resolution is not reached by the student and the department coordinator, the petition may be referred to the division chair. This petition must be in writing. The petition should

contain factual statements concerning the nature of the student's disability, requested accommodation and documentation supporting the need for the accommodation. The division chair will review the student's request and respond within five working days, or extended as mutually agreed upon by both parties.

- D. If resolution is not reached by the student and division chair, the written petition may be referred to the vice president for Academic Affairs. The vice president will review the student's request, and respond within five working days, or extended as mutually agreed upon by both parties.
- E. If not resolved, the student has the option to file an appeal with the ADA compliance officer in Human Resources.

General Instructional Complaints

In addition to the above, Highline Community College provides a separate process through which students can seek resolution of complaints about instructional matters. Typically, these matters include grades and classroom practices.

An attempt should be made to resolve all instructional complaints in an informal manner. The interests of all are best served when complaints are resolved at the lowest possible level of the administrative structure. The Instructional Grievance Process can be found in the college catalog and on the Website at www.highline.edu/home/catalog/appendices/instructional_policies.html#grievance.

Outside Remedies

The right of a person to prompt and equitable resolution of a complaint shall not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies such as the filing of a complaint with the responsible state or federal agencies. Use of this complaint process is not a prerequisite to pursuing other remedies from state and federal agencies.

These agencies are:

Washington State Human Rights Commission
1511 Third Ave., Suite 921
Seattle, WA 98101
(206) 464-6500; TTY (206) 587-5168

U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights Region X
915 Second Ave., Room 3310
Seattle, WA 98174
(206) 220-7900; TTY (877) 521-2172

U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Civil Rights Division
Disability Rights Section - NYA
Washington, D.C. 20530
(800) 514-0301; TTY (800) 514-0383

This process does not provide rights or obligations not provided by applicable laws.

This handbook is available in alternate format through Access Services.

www.flightline.highline.edu/access/handbook.html