

## Polk State College Procedure

Subject	Reference	Date	Number
Course Substitution		5/17/2016	5036

**Purpose:** The purpose of this procedure is to establish a mechanism whereby eligible students with disabilities may be provided special considerations for reasonable substitutions of any requirement for admission to the College, admission to a program of study, or graduation. Florida State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.041 authorizes reasonable substitutions for these requirements to any person who has a documented hearing impairment, visual impairment, specific learning disability, orthopedic/physical impairment, speech/language impairment, emotional or behavioral disability, autism spectrum disorder, or other disability except those students who have been documented as having an intellectual disability. Substitutions will only be utilized in cases where the person's failure to meet the requirement does not constitute a fundamental alteration in the nature of the program.

### Definitions and Explanations

Eligible students with disabilities will be defined in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. For the purpose of this procedure, the following disabilities, based on SBE Rule 6A-10.041, will apply:

- Hearing Impairment
- Visual Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Orthopedic/Physical Impairment
- Speech/Language Impairment
- Emotional or Behavioral Disability
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Other: Any disability not identified in paragraphs (1)(a) through (h) of Rule 6A-10.041, except those students who have been documented as having an intellectual disability, deemed by a disability professional to make completion of the requirement impossible.

### Procedure

The Vice President for Student Services is designated as the person to make the determination of substitute admission and graduation requirements. In determining whether to grant a substitution, documentation to substantiate that the disability can be reasonably expected to prevent the individual from meeting requirements for admission to the institution, admission to program of study, or graduation shall be provided by the student as requested by the College.

As required by rule 6A-10.041, the College shall provide the following mechanisms for the implementation of Chapter 86-94, Laws of Florida.

I. A mechanism to identify persons eligible for reasonable substitutions due to vision impairment, hearing impairment, or specific learning disability.

Persons eligible for substitutions will be made known to the College through a process of self-identification. The College catalog (print and web-based) informs persons with disabilities of the availability of substitutions

and directs them to the Office of Disability Services for documentation review to determine eligibility.

II. A mechanism for identifying reasonable substitutions of criteria for admission to the institution, admission to a program of study, entry to upper division, or graduation related to each disability.

A. Reasonable substitutions of criteria for admission to the institution.

No substitution policy is necessary regarding admission to Polk State due to an open door and equal opportunity admission policy. Each student identified with a disability is referred to a Disability Services advisor for an accommodations consultation and appropriate academic advising.

### **Placement test information**

All incoming students must take a placement test, such as the PERT, SAT, or ACT. Scores for any of these tests are valid for only two years from the date the test was last taken. Students may request accommodations for the SAT or ACT through the agencies that govern those tests. The placement test is not a pass/fail test; instead, it is an inventory of skills in mathematics, reading, and writing. Regardless of scores, students are not obligated to take developmental courses unless they so choose. For tests administered by the College, students who require other accommodations or test administration modification must request and make those arrangements with the Coordinator of Testing on the Winter Haven or Lakeland campus prior to taking the test. Students should refer to the *Guide to Polk State* to determine if they are exempt from taking a placement test.

B. Reasonable substitutions of criteria for admission to a program of study.

1. The student shall present appropriate documentation of his/her disability to the Office of Disability Services.
2. The Disability Services advisor shall recommend reasonable substitution(s) of criteria for admission to a program of study to the appropriate Dean or Vice President for Student Services.
3. The respective Dean or Vice President for Student Services shall approve or deny the recommendation for substitution of admission requirements.
4. If the request is denied, the student may file an appeal with the Equity Committee.

C. Reasonable substitutions of criteria for entry to upper division.

1. The student shall present appropriate documentation of his/her disability to a Disability Services advisor.
2. A Disability Services advisor, or designee, shall recommend reasonable substitution(s) of criteria for admission to an upper-division program of study to the Vice President for Student Services.
3. The Vice President for Student Services shall approve or deny the recommendation for substitution of admission requirements.
4. If the request is denied, the student may file an appeal with the Equity Committee.

For a Florida state college or university, other than Polk State College, the student shall file for requests for substitution or requirements for entry to upper division at that school.

D. Reasonable substitutions of criteria for graduation.

1. The student shall present appropriate documentation of his/her disability to a Disability Services advisor.
2. A Disability Services advisor or designee may recommend reasonable substitution(s) of criteria for graduation from the institution to the Vice President for Student Services.
3. The Dean of Student Services, Coordinator of Disability Services, or Coordinator of Student Services shall chair and convene a committee to approve or deny the request.
4. If the request is denied, the student may file an appeal with the Vice President for Student Services.

III. A mechanism for making the designated substitutions known to affected persons.

Sample: A statement regarding these procedures and other services for students with disabilities shall be placed in the College catalog (print and web-based) and other college publications.

IV. A mechanism for making substitution decisions on an individual basis.

Procedures outlined in section (II), A, B, C, and D allow for student requests for substitution of admissions, program, and graduation requirements to be considered on an individual basis that guarantees the student's rights are not denied. If an individual with a disability feels he/she cannot participate in or complete a particular course or program requirement, he/she may obtain a Course Substitution Request Form from a Disability Services advisor. The completed request form with appropriate documentation is forwarded to the Vice President for Student Services for review and final determination.

The Disability Services advisor will:

1. Review the request to determine if the diagnostic evaluation has been provided by a qualified professional and clearly indicates how the disability specifically interferes with successful completion of a course or program requirement.
2. Meet with the student if additional documentation is necessary to advise as to possible options and resources.
3. In the case of course substitutions, consult with the appropriate Dean to determine reasonable options and whether the substitution will fundamentally alter the nature of the program.
4. In the case of waivers for program requirements, consult with the appropriate Department Chair, Academic Dean, or designee to determine if the student has completed any required remediation and re-testing.
5. Review with the Dean all recommendations. The Dean or designee will inform the student in writing of the final determination, designated substitute requirements, and possible future transfer problems, such as admission to limited-access programs. If necessary, consultation will be made with the Registrar and the receiving institution.

If a request for a course substitution is granted in a subject area that has college preparatory requirements, the student would be eligible for an exemption from those college preparatory courses in accordance with state rule 6A-10.041, provided successful completion of that coursework is not considered an essential part of the curriculum in the student's academic program.

Decisions for special considerations (i.e. waiver(s), for exit-test requirements) will also be made on an individual basis as provided by Florida Statutes 1008.29 and 1004.91. Waiver(s) for tests or subtests granted by other state institutions would be accepted by Polk State as provided by Florida Statute 1008.28

Should a student with a disability be denied a substitute requirement and/or special consideration, he/she may appeal the decision in accordance with the College's student appeals policy, Rule 4.26, Student Appeal/Complaint Policy.

- V. A mechanism for a student to appeal a denial of a substitution or to appeal a determination of eligibility.
  - A. The student shall file a written appeal to the Equity Committee.
  - B. The appeal shall be presented to the Equity Committee for an appeal hearing. The Committee will forward its recommendations to the Vice President for Student Services whose decision is final.

VI. Substitutions provided by other institutions.

- A. In accordance with State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.041 (3), F.A.C., the College will accept all substitutions previously granted by a state post-secondary institution. The student must notify the Office of Disability Services and the Registrar of the previously granted substitution. The student will supply dated, official documentation of the substitution from the granting institution.
- B. The Office of Disabilities will initiate a substitution form and forward it to the Vice President for Student Services for approval. The Vice President for Student Services will forward the approved form to the Registrar for input into the database. Once the substitution is included in the database, the Registrar will notify the Office of Disability Services, and the Office of Disability Services will notify the student. A record of the granting of substitute requirements will be kept with the Office of Disability Services and with the Registrar. In compliance with state statute, the Registrar and the Office of Disability Services will maintain records of the number of students with disabilities granted special consideration and/or substitutions by type of disability, number of requests for substitutions, requirements for which substitutions were granted, number of students granted substitutions, and number of requests for substitutions or special considerations which were denied.

VII. Recognition by other institutions of substitutions provided by the College.

When granting substitutions, the College shall consider whether the substitutions provided will be accepted by the receiving institutions and advise its students accordingly. If it has been determined that the student will transfer to a particular state university or senior college, contact with that college is made to inquire as to whether the substitution(s) will be accepted. The student is apprised of the results of this inquiry prior to granting the course substitution(s).

VIII. Appeals

Students with disabilities who feel the College has not met their needs appropriately, other than issues of substitutions, may appeal to the Equity Committee for an appeal hearing. The decision of the Equity Committee is final. Appeals relative to substitutions may be appealed through the office of the Vice President for Student Services. The decision of the Vice President for Student Services is final.

<i>Reginal T. Wehl</i>	<i>5/17/16</i>	<i>Reginal T. Wehl</i>	<i>5/17/16</i>
Executive Responsible for Procedure	Date	President's Staff Member's Approval	Date
<i>Eileen Holden</i>			<i>6/3/16</i>
President's Approval			Date