

Polk State College Procedure

Procedure Number	Procedure Title	Effective Date
5008	Accommodation for Students with Disabilities	4/23/25

I. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to establish and implement District Board of Trustees (DBOT) Rule 1.05: *Goals of the Board* and Rule 4.23: *Educational Opportunity for Students with Disabilities* as these relate to Polk State College's services for students.

II. Definitions and Eligibility

- A. To be eligible for disability-related services, a student must have a documented disability as defined by the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990* (ADA) and Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*. Under the ADA and Section 504, a person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities (i.e., walking, breathing, seeing, hearing, sitting, learning, speaking, or taking care of oneself). This definition includes, but is not limited to:
- Persons with mobility impairments
 - Persons with learning disabilities
 - Persons who are deaf or hearing impaired
 - Persons who are blind or visually impaired
 - Persons with psychological disorders
 - Persons with a serious contagious or non-contagious disease (e.g., AIDS, epilepsy, cancer, tuberculosis)
- B. Per *State Board of Education (SBE) Rule 6A-10.041*, a *hearing impairment* is defined as "a hearing loss of thirty (30) decibels or greater, pure tone average of 500, 1000, 2000 Hz, ANSI, unaided, in the better ear." Examples include, but are not limited to, conductive hearing impairment or deafness, a sensorineural hearing impairment or deafness, high- or low-tone hearing loss or deafness, and an acoustic-trauma hearing loss or deafness.
- C. Per *SBE Rule 6A-10.041*, a *visual impairment* is defined as a disorder in the structure and function of the eye as manifested by at least one of the following: visual acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eye after the best possible correction, a peripheral field so constricted that it affects one's ability to function in an educational setting, or a progressive loss of vision which may affect one's ability to function in an educational setting. Examples include, but are not limited to, cataracts, glaucoma, nystagmus, retinal detachment, retinitis pigmentosa, and strabismus.
- D. Per *SBE Rule 6A-10.041*, a *specific learning disability* is defined as a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological or neurological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language. Disorders may be manifested in listening, thinking, reading, writing, spelling, or performing arithmetic calculations. Examples include dyslexia, dysgraphia, dysphasia, dyscalculia, and other specific learning disabilities in

the basic psychological or neurological processes. Such disorders do not include learning problems that are due primarily to a visual, hearing, or physical disability; to an intellectual disability; to emotional disturbance; or to environmental deprivation.

- E. A student seeking accommodations due to a disability is required to submit documentation of the disability and the need for accommodations as soon as possible. The cost of obtaining documentation is the responsibility of the student. The qualification of the professional providing documentation needs to be clearly indicated, and the language by which the disability is described must be consistent with standard practices within the profession. A formal written diagnosis is required.

III. Documentation of Need for Accommodations

- A. The Director of Disability and Counseling Services (or his or her designee) is responsible for determining if the specific diagnosis and verification of the disability by a professionally trained educational diagnostician, psychologist, or psychiatrist (or the verification of a disability by Vocational Rehabilitation, the Division of Blind Services, or other recognized agency, as appropriate), is acceptable. The professional who provides the documentation must be identified by name, title, place of employment, and the state or province in which the individual practices. This information must be clearly stated with the documentation. Documentation must include a description of the need for specific accommodations and must address the specific disability.
- B. Documentation of a learning disability should follow the latest version of the Association on Higher Education and Disability's *Guidelines for Documentation of a Learning Disability*. Documentation presented must be based upon assessment of the impact of the student's disability on his or her performance at the given time in the student's life. The student must provide recent (i.e., within the last five years) and appropriate documentation. All evaluations supporting the request for accommodations must be completed after high school graduation or the awarding of a General Education Diploma (GED). Current documentation must validate the need for services based on the individual's present level of functioning in the educational setting.
- C. The appropriate clinical documentation should substantiate the disability and present evidence to establish a rationale supporting the need for accommodations. If the recommended accommodations are not clearly identified in the diagnostic report, the Director of Disability and Counseling Services (or a designee) is required to seek clarification and, if necessary, more information.
- D. For conditions that are subject to change over time (e.g., health-related disorders, learning disabilities, psychological disabilities), the student may be asked to provide updated documentation for his or her file on an ongoing basis for accommodations to be continued.
- E. Polk State College reserves the right to request updated documentation to justify the need for future accommodations. The cost of obtaining documentation is the responsibility of the student.

IV. Procedure for Acquiring Services

- A. To apply for services, a student with a documented disability must contact the Director of

Disability and Counseling Services (or his or her designee) to complete an *Identification and Disclosure Form*. This must be done as soon as the student registers for the term, preferably at least two weeks before classes begin. It is the student's responsibility to collect and provide all necessary supporting documentation required by the College.

Polk State is required to provide accommodations any time during the term once the student has registered and all documentation has been received.

- B. The Director of Disability and Counseling Services verifies the written documentation and is responsible for creating and maintaining a confidential data file on each student served. Each file should contain the following information (as appropriate):
 - *The Identification and Disclosure Form*
 - Documentation of the disability
 - A copy of the *Student Accommodation Letter* provided during each term
- C. The Director of Disability and Counseling Services (or his or her designee) is responsible for making the final determination about whether accommodations are appropriate, as well as which accommodations are appropriate, reasonable, and can be provided to the individual.
- D. The Director of Disability and Counseling Services (or his or her designee) is responsible for notifying in writing all appropriate faculty members and service units as to the accommodations approved for each student. The Director of Disability and Counseling Services (or the designee) prepares an accommodation letter for each faculty member describing the accommodations that the student should receive. The accommodation letter is emailed to the individual faculty member on or before the first day of class.
- E. The Director of Disability and Counseling Services serves as a liaison between the College and such agencies as Vocational Rehabilitation and the Division of Blind Services, ensuring that all necessary paperwork is completed no later than the last day for fee payment in any given term.
- F. If an accommodation is not being provided, is not effective, or an additional accommodation is needed, the student should consult with the Director of Disability and Counseling Services (or his or her designee) immediately.

V. Services Available

- A. The College provides printed information on programs and assistance for students and persons with disabilities. Additionally, information is available within the *Polk State College Catalog/Student Handbook* and on the College website.
- B. In the fall and spring of each year, a special inquiry workshop is held for special-needs students who are interested in attending Polk State College. Invitations to the workshop are provided through the Exceptional Education Department of the Polk County School Board and other local agencies.
- C. A special orientation is held during each term for students declaring a disability. This orientation includes information on services available; additionally, the session provides an opportunity to answer questions and develop a plan to provide appropriate services.

- D. No services are provided until and unless an appropriate disability is documented by the Director of Disability and Counseling Services.
- E. Accommodations and services provided by Polk State College to students with disabilities may include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Interpreting Services: The College offers interpreting services based on medical documentation provided by the student. To achieve maximum efficiency in the use of interpreters, the College works collaboratively with the student requiring these services to ensure all needs are met.
 - 2. Note-taking Assistance
 - 3. Services for Students with Visual Disabilities: The College provides services to students with visual disabilities. Various types of equipment are available to facilitate the student's classwork. Reader and scribe services may be provided for a student with a visual disability (or other disabilities); these may include, but are not limited to, books in alternative format, or oral reading of tests.
 - 4. Services for Students with Physical Impairments: College facilities are accessible for those with physical impairments affecting mobility. If there are barriers, accommodations are granted (or appropriate assistance is provided). Disabled parking is available for vehicles bearing the disabled parking permit issued by the State of Florida. The Director of Disability and Counseling Services assists in arranging other needed services for special situations (e.g., standing in lines).
 - 5. Testing Accommodations: Individualized testing and extended testing time are accommodations that may be provided if the College determines that either is required and appropriate to address the needs of the individual student.
 - 6. Tutoring: Free tutoring services are provided in conjunction with the Teaching/Learning Computing Centers (TLCCs).
 - 7. Books in Alternative Format
 - 8. Library Assistance
 - 9. Priority Classroom Seating
 - 10. Adjustable-Height Table or Desk
 - 11. Tape Recorder Use in Class
 - 12. Classroom Computer Accommodations
 - 13. Visual Aids (e.g., Large-Print Tests)
 - 14. A Calculator: Whether a calculator is offered as an academic accommodation is determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on the medical documentation provided by the student and the learning outcomes of the specified course.

VI. Request for Substitution for Requirements

- A. Polk State College is committed to high educational standards and appropriate support services to facilitate learning; therefore, requests for course substitutions for students with disabilities are considered on a case-by-case basis.
- B. A substitution for a requirement is considered only if the appropriate disability documentation has been provided to the Director of Disability and Counseling Services (or his or her designee).
- C. Each request for a substitution to an admission, program, or graduation requirement is screened by the Director of Disability and Counseling Services. A student is required to submit documentation to substantiate that the disability can reasonably be expected to

prevent the individual from meeting the specific requirement.

- D. Each request for a substitution or waiver is reviewed by the Substitution/Waiver Committee, which recommends action on a case-by-case basis to the Senior Vice President for Student Services and Campus Operations (or his or her designee). The Committee is constituted and operates under the provisions of *Florida Statute 1007.25*. Action by the Senior Vice President for Student Services and Campus Operations (or his or her designee) is final.

[Note: *The Committee's operating policies are defined in Polk State College Procedure 6066: Substitution and Waivers Committee.*]

- E. The student is notified in writing of the action recommended by the Committee when approved by the Senior Vice President for Student Services and Campus Operations.

- F. The Dean of Student Services is responsible for maintaining all requests and records related to substitutions.

VII. **Appeals**

Any student with a disability who feels that the College has not met his or her needs appropriately (i.e., other than issues with substitutions), may appeal this concern to the Equity Committee. The decision of the Equity Committee is final.

History

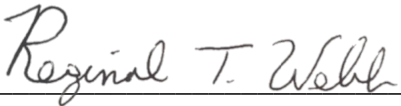

Adopted: January 18, 1974

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SBE Rule: SBE 6A-10.041

Related Rule(s): DBOT Rule 1.05; DBOT Rule 4.23

Date of Last Review: April 15, 2025

 Signature Reginal T. Webb Name	 Signature Angela M. Garcia Falconetti Name	April 23, 2025
Responsible Administrator	President	Date