

Ability Services Contacts

Central College Ability Services

1300B Holman, LHSB 106
Houston, TX 77004
Phone: 713/718-6164
Fax: 713/718-6179

Coleman College Ability Services

1900 Pressler St., Room 101
Houston, TX 77030
Phone: 713/718-7082
Fax: 713/718-7664

Northeast College Ability Services

555 Community College Drive
Houston, TX 77013
Phone: 713/718-8322
Fax: 713/718-8101

Northwest College Ability Services

Katy Campus

1550 Foxlake Drive
Houston, TX 77084
Phone: 713/718-5408
Fax: 713/718-5822

Spring Branch Campus

1010 W. Sam Houston Pkwy. North
Houston, TX 77043
Phone: 713/718-5422
Fax: 713/718-5430

Southeast College Ability Services

6815 Rustic St.
Houston, TX 77087
Phone: 713/718-8397
Fax: 713/718-7223

Southwest College Ability Services

West Loop Campus

5601 West Loop South
Houston, TX 77081
Phone: 713/718-7910
Fax: 713/718-7781

Stafford Campus

10041 Cash Road
Stafford, TX 77477
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Houston Community College System

Students with Disabilities

Faculty Handbook



This Faculty Handbook is intended to assist Houston Community College System, (HCCS) Faculty to provide education that complies with both Federal and State Laws including the Americans with Disabilities Act, (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, (504) and to understand the process whereby HCCS Students who have disabilities seek and receive Accommodations which enable them to have access to programs and services at HCCS. It's important to first understand that the ADA is Civil Rights Legislation that protects people with disabilities from being denied access to programs and services to which they are otherwise qualified. Therefore, it would be unlawful for a person with a disability who meets the enrollment requirements of HCCS to be told that he/she could not participate in our programs and services because they have a disability. It is also against HCCS Nondiscrimination Policy to deny access to someone who has a disability but who is otherwise qualified. Compliance with Federal and State Law, and HCCS Policy is the responsibility of every HCCS employee. It is our hope, therefore, that this Handbook will provide the information necessary to assist you in complying with the Law and HCCS Policy and to offer contact information to those professionals who can help you understand your role as Faculty in this important process.

Mission Statement

Houston Community College is committed to creating an accessible learning community where individuals with disabilities have an equal opportunity to pursue their educational goals, limited only by their abilities, not their disabilities. Ability Services strives to empower

students, foster independence, and promote achievement of the student's career and educational goals.

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and under the Americans with Disabilities Act, Ability Services at each College within the Houston Community College System is responsible for arranging reasonable accommodations for all qualified students with a documented disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) to ensure equal access to all programs and activities at the College. Students who need to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact Ability Services at the College(s) (Central, Coleman, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, Southwest) the student plans to attend. Due to the high demand for services and the nature of certain disabilities, it is recommended that students meet with an ADA Counselor at least 60 days prior to the beginning of each term. Every effort will be made to arrange accommodations, however, failure to provide sufficient advance notice may impede service delivery.

The process for obtaining reasonable accommodations is an interactive one that begins with the student's disclosure of his/her disability. The student has the responsibility of providing Ability Services with the appropriate documentation from a qualified Physician or Clinician who has diagnosed his/her disability. Students with disabilities should contact Ability Services directly. The contact must be made by the student and not a representative of the student, however parents/family are encouraged to participate in the process.



Why Do HCCS Employees Need To Know About Disability Law?

HCCS is experiencing an increased enrollment of students with disabilities for a variety of reasons. Both the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act place obligations on institutions of higher education to provide accommodations that enable students with disabilities to have access to all college programs. Access means more than just the removal of architectural barriers. Colleges and universities must not discriminate in the recruitment, admission, education or treatment of students. Students with documented disabilities may request accommodations that will enable them to participate in and benefit from all post-secondary educational programs and activities. HCCS, like other institutions of higher learning must ensure that their programs and activities are accessible to all students who meet enrollment requirements so that they can then succeed in

becoming educated, gainfully employed and live productive lives that reduce or eliminate their dependence on public assistance.

What Is the Americans With Disabilities Act?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), (Public Law 101-336) passed in 1990, protects the civil rights of people who have disabilities. **Under ADA, a disability is defined as a physical or mental disability, which substantially limits a major life activity.** The law is intended to enable individuals with disabilities to attend college on an **equal** basis with all other students. Colleges and universities cannot refuse to accept an otherwise qualified person simply because of a disability. If the person with a disability meets established entry criteria, then the college must ensure the student has an equal opportunity to attend and participate in "all" college courses and programs for which he/she qualifies. This means providing "reasonable accommodations" on a case-by-case basis.

The Law and College Students: Who Is Protected Under ADA and 504?

The law protects any person with a physical or mental disability that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Included under the Act are the following:

- ◆ Persons with mobility disabilities, such as those who suffer from paralysis or use wheelchairs, crutches, or walkers
- ◆ Persons who have lost one or more limbs
- ◆ Persons who are deaf or have limited hearing
- ◆ Persons who are blind or have vision disabilities
- ◆ Persons who have mental or psychological disabilities, including mental retardation, emotional and mental illness, and learning disabilities
- ◆ Persons with serious contagious and non-contagious disfigurements, such as burn victims
- ◆ Protected groups include individuals with a record of a disability (i.e., a history of a disability), such as individuals who have undergone psychiatric counseling, someone who has a history of cancer that is in remission, or someone who has a history of drug or alcohol abuse and who is **not** currently using drugs or alcohol.

This handbook provides answers to some of the more commonly asked questions about the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The handbook also includes information about:

- ◆ How to refer students for assistance
- ◆ What to do if you suspect a student has a qualifying disability but has not requested services
- ◆ Assisting students with disabilities
- ◆ Proven instructional techniques for specific learning disabilities

In a very real sense, higher education has moved into an entirely new era with the implementation of Section 504 and ADA.

An excellent introduction to working with students with disabilities is provided in the video "The Americans with Disabilities Act." Information on this video is considered essential for all college personnel who come in contact with students who are protected under the ADA and Section 504. This video is available to you and can be borrowed from Ability Services at your college.

Students who meet these qualifications should consider registering with an ADA counselor. The ADA counselor will conduct an intake interview to determine eligibility and to discuss strategies to promote success in college. Students, who do not have a disability, but know someone who

does, can refer the person to a liaison counselor, and this may make a significant difference in the success of the student in college.

Reasonable accommodations are designed to minimize the impact of the disability by enabling the student to compete on an equal basis. Accommodations are not intended to lower academic standards or provide anyone with an advantage over other students. Students with disabilities present appropriate documentation of their disability to the ADA Counselor. Students are required to present their reasonable accommodation letter to their current instructors for each semester. It is the responsibility for each faculty member to provide the reasonable accommodations requested in the letter. If faculty have questions or concerns about accommodations, they should call Ability Services at their college (see page 3). Letters are reissued each semester, upon request from the student. **Faculty members should require letters before providing accommodation.** If a student identifies as having a disability, requests services, and is unable to provide the accommodation letter from the counselor, the student should be referred to the disability counselor for another copy of the letter.

Differences between ADA and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

We realize that a fair number of our faculty have had prior experience teaching in the K-12 education system that is regulated by the IDEA, formerly known as PL94-142 which mandates that children who have

disabilities are entitled to free public education through the 12th grade or to the age of 23, whichever comes first. Under IDEA the education system is required to identify those students who have disabilities and provide modifications that enable students to succeed. Such "modifications" could include an adjustment of the requirements for success. In essence, the IDEA is a "success" law.

On the other hand, the ADA requires institutions of higher education to make their programs and services accessible to people who have identified as having a disability, who meet our admission requirements and who have presented professional/medical documentation that verifies their actually having a disability. Therefore, the ADA is an "access" law that requires accommodations be available so that people with disabilities are able to participate in our programs and activities along with their fellow students who may not have disabilities on an equal basis. In essence these are adult students who are entitled to access. Their success then depends upon how well they learn and progress through our programs just as it does with students who do not have disabilities.

Validating Disability Documentation

Faculty are not required to validate the students disability documentation. Although we value our entire faculty for their expertise in their given area of specialty, we realize that this does not likely include the necessary professional level of understanding of the many disabling conditions our students may present that would be required for

one to read and understand medical/professional documentation. That's why we employ ADA Counselors at each campus who meet the professional qualifications we require to perform this service on behalf of HCCS. In fact, we caution you against accepting medical documentation that a student might bring to you as this is private information that is protected by State and Federal confidentiality law. However, your role in this process is critical as you may be approached by a student who has a disability and who wishes to be accommodated.

How Faculty can Assist in the Student Self-Identification Process

In order to assist students with disabilities who have not self-identified to Ability Services, or who do not know about services available to them, it is recommended that the following statement should be included in all course syllabi:

Houston Community College is dedicated to providing an inclusive learning environment by removing barriers and opening access for qualified students with documented disabilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Ability Services is the designated office responsible for approving and coordinating reasonable accommodations and services in order to assist students with disabilities in reaching their full academic potential. In order to receive reasonable accommodations or evacuation assistance in an emergency, the student must be registered with Ability Services.

If you have a documented disability (e.g. learning, hearing, vision, physical, mental health, or a chronic health condition), that may require accommodations, please contact the appropriate Ability Services Office below. Please note that classroom accommodations cannot be provided prior to your Instructor's receipt of an accommodation letter and accommodations are not retroactive.

Accommodations can be requested at any time during the semester, however if an accommodation letter is provided to the Instructor after the first day of class, sufficient time (1 week) must be allotted for the Instructor to implement the accommodations.

Receiving accommodations is a 4 Step process:

1. Student schedules an appointment and meets with an ADA Counselor in Ability Services in order to provide documentation of the disability and to complete intake forms.
2. Student requests an accommodation letter each semester. Please note that an accommodation letter is only valid for the College location in which it was obtained through Ability Services (except for Distance Education). Students taking courses at multiple College locations will need to contact Ability Services at all College locations in which courses are being taken.
3. Ability Services provides an accommodation letter via HCC email to each student that qualifies for accommodations. ***It is the student's responsibility to email his/her accommodation letter to each Instructor for both on-campus (HCC Email) and online courses (Eagle Online Email). In addition, the student should also verbally inform the Instructor that the accommodation letter has been emailed. For documentation purposes, the student needs to CC Ability Services when forwarding the accommodation letter to the Instructor and save a copy of the email as proof that the accommodation letter has been submitted.***
4. Student is strongly encouraged to schedule an appointment with the Instructor or to meet with the Instructor during designated office hours to discuss the accommodation letter.

Ability Services

Central College:	(713) 718-6164	ce.abilityservices@hccs.edu
Coleman College:	(713) 718-7082	hope.pamplin@hccs.edu
Northeast College:	(713) 718-8322	tamara.petty@hccs.edu
Northwest Katy:	(713) 718-5408	laronda.ashford@hccs.edu
Northwest Spring Branch:	(713) 718-5422	dssso.nw@hccs.edu
Southeast College:	(713) 718-8397	john.reno@hccs.edu
Southwest College:	(713) 718-7910	sw.ability@hccs.edu

The faculty is encouraged to also announce the above information on the first day of class. This will ensure that all students receive the information, as well as delegating the responsibility to the student to communicate accommodation needs to Ability Services.

When a Student Self-Identifies as Having a Disability

Like any professional need, it's necessary for one to be referred to the person who is qualified and responsible to provide the service being requested. If a student identifies as having a disability and requests accommodations, please refer them to the ADA Counselor at your respective campus.

Referral to ADA Counselor is Made

Once the ADA Counselor is contacted by the student, they inform him/her about the steps to receiving accommodations under the ADA, including the need for Professional/Medical Documentation that's required by law to verify the existence of a disability. In most cases an appointment is made so that the student will meet with the ADA Counselor who will orient the student on the benefits and limitations of the Law as it applies to their education at HCC. This orientation includes how the law governing their education has changed from High School, (IDEA) to College, (ADA); what is required of them under the ADA and what to do in the event that they are still denied access. During this meeting required forms are completed by the student and ADA Counselor that enables them to work cooperatively within the guidelines of HCC Policies and

Procedures and, if necessary, to communicate appropriately with faculty and staff on behalf of the student. In many cases the ADA Counselor will identify additional needs the student might have and then refer him/her to service providers in the community that will ultimately aid in their success on campus. The ultimate goal of this meeting is to synthesize the data provided and prepare an Accommodation Letter that will enable equal access under law for that student. The Accommodation Letter includes instructions to the professor on how to accommodate the student in class. The student is then responsible to provide that Accommodation Letter to his/her respective professors at the beginning of each semester. However, in some cases the student may not have self-identified until after the semester has begun. You are only required to provide accommodations to a student after the Accommodation Letter has been presented to you by the student. There is no requirement to provide accommodations before the letter has been received.

What Are Reasonable Accommodations?

College students with a wide range of disabilities are eligible for support services based on their individual needs. Reasonable accommodations are modifications or adaptations that are determined by the liaison counselor and the student. Accommodations are designed to minimize the impact of a disability and maximize the classroom learning for the student. Accommodations are not intended to lower academic standards or provide anyone with an advantage over others.

Accommodations for the Students With Disabilities

Accommodations are arranged on a case-by-case basis and are based on the documented disability. The student should only receive accommodations needed to address a specific identifiable area of weakness. Students should not be given accommodations that are not requested in their accommodation letter or are not necessary to accommodate the student's disability.

Course Work Accommodations

- ◆ Extended time for testing
- ◆ Exams in a distraction reduced environment
- ◆ Alternate format textbooks
- ◆ Oral testing
- ◆ Exams using computer
- ◆ Calculator use in math for exams only (if diagnosed with a specific learning disability in Mathematics)

Adaptive Equipment

- ◆ CCTV - enlarging text
- ◆ Computer or Word Processor with zoom text - enlarge print
- ◆ Comtek - audio loop for hard of hearing
- ◆ CART - Real Time Captioning for deaf or hard of hearing
- ◆ Spell Checker - addresses a learning disability in spelling

- ◆ Adapted chairs and tables - back injuries and students with morbid obesity
- ◆ Kurzweil Reader for blind or visually impaired and students with learning disabilities
- ◆ Left or right handed keyboard - students who have use of only one hand
- ◆ Jaws Screen reader - reads written material out loud for the blind
- ◆ Zoom text screen enlarger
- ◆ Dragon Naturally Speaking - computer voice input device

I Received an Accommodation Letter from a Previous Semester or Another Campus

Students are required to meet with their ADA Counselor at the beginning of each semester and at each campus where they are enrolled to obtain an Accommodation Letter for their professors. If you receive a Letter from another campus or from a previous Semester, please ask the student to meet with the ADA Counselor assigned to your campus as soon as possible so that he/she can provide you a letter that is applicable to that Semester. In many cases, students will take different courses each Semester that will require specific Accommodations that vary from those they had received in previous semesters. Also, one's disability can change thus requiring that they be given different accommodations that will enable equal access to your class. That's why

it's important to make sure the letter is both Semester and Campus-specific.

I Don't Understand what the Accommodation Letter is Requiring of me

Each Accommodation Letter includes the phone number and signature of the ADA Counselor who prepared the Letter. If you require any assistance or explanation please contact the counselor at the number provided on the Accommodation Letter.

I am Following the Accommodations, However, the Student is not Passing my Class

The Accommodation Letter is designed to assure access to higher education and services, not success. However, student success is always a point of concern for all our students. Furthermore, students with disabilities, (like any student) can have problems making it through a class successfully regardless of how accessible the course may be to him or her. When ones success is in question, it's important to refer the student to those campus services that can be helpful such as the tutoring center, the Counseling or Advising Department, or to make an appointment with the student during your office hours for additional help. Occasionally, the student may not be doing as well because there is an additional Accommodation that should be provided. In cases such as these please contact the ADA Counselor to discuss the student's

situation. Your day-to-day observations of the student's functioning in class may add critical information that would be key to assigning the most appropriate and specific Accommodation that otherwise would not have been identified.



An Overview of Disabling Myths

(*Note: We are aware that many faculty members are well versed in the issues addressed in this section. We hope this information will be a positive reinforcement for you and your students.)

Individuals with disabilities have similarities with others that are much more significant than their differences. We are dealing, first and foremost, with students.

The first step in teaching students with disabilities seems obvious. Treat them, simply, as students. After all, they come to college for the same reasons others do, and they bring with them the same range of intelligence and scholastic skills. Understandably, these truisms are more easily said than acted upon. Our best intentions often run into attitudes that can dramatically distort our relations with people who have disabilities.

Such attitudes are frequently natural and innocent, deriving as they often do from fears, guilt, and inexperience with individuals who have disabilities. But as forms of prejudice, they can be devastating to the person with a disability. These attitudes reduce our expectations of the individual's performance. They define the person by the disability, as if it comprises the entirety of his or her being. They can lead us to isolate and segregate people with disabilities, hurt their pride and possibly damage their confidence. Some attitudes can be more disabling than any disability.

Stereotyping prevails no more on campus than it does in the society at large. In college, however, it not only perpetuates the prejudicial treatment encountered by people with disabilities, but it may undermine their scholastic performance, thus becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. Revising our perceptions and attitudes is often the first step to providing appropriate access to students who have a disability.

When You Interact With a Student Who Has A Disability...

1. Offer help but wait until it is accepted before giving it. Offering assistance to someone is polite behavior. Giving help before it is accepted is often perceived as rude. It can sometimes be unsafe, such as when someone grabs a crutch to give assistance and the person loses his/her balance.
2. Treat a student with a disability as a healthy person. Although an individual has a functional limitation, it does not mean the individual is sick. Some people with disabilities have no accompanying health problems.
3. In general, accommodating a student with a disability in the classroom may be more a matter of common sense and less a matter of changes in teaching style and/or curriculum. It is hoped that the instructor will look at each student as an individual when considering the requested accommodations. Determining and providing successful accommodations for the classroom is the responsibility of the student, the faculty member, and Ability.
4. Ability Services provides support and guidance for faculty and students as we all work together to provide accommodations that are appropriate.

5. Please remember we work with Students with Disabilities, there are no "disabled" students at Houston Community College. This is an important difference in our efforts to change the mindsets of students, faculty and staff.