

Housatonic Community College  
900 Lafayette Boulevard  
Bridgeport, CT 06604-4704

# **Guide For Students With Disabilities**

Compiled by the Academic Support Center at  
Housatonic Community College

With special thanks to Naugatuck Valley Community Technical College  
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## **I. Introduction**

Housatonic Community College is committed to providing equal education opportunity and full participation for qualified students with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Sections 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Equality of access, accommodations, auxiliary aids and services will be provided as determined to be appropriate to address those functional limitations of the disability which adversely affect educational opportunity.

## **II. Policy**

The Board of Trustees of Community Colleges and all of the Colleges under its jurisdiction are committed to the goal of achieving equal educational opportunity and full participation for people with disabilities in the Community Colleges. To that end, this statement of policy is put forth to reaffirm our commitment to ensure that no qualified person be excluded from participation in or be denied access to the programs or activities on the Community College campuses or in the central office of the Board of Trustees.

The Board recognizes that a physical or functional impairment is a disability only to the extent that it contributes to cutting the person off from some valued experience, activity, or role. Higher education is, therefore, especially important to people with disabilities, since it aims to increase every student's access to valued experiences, activities, and roles. Improving access for students and employees means removing existing barriers that are physical, programmatic, and attitudinal. It also means taking care not to erect new barriers along the way.

The efforts of the Community Colleges to accommodate people with disabilities should be measured against the goals of full participation and integration of people with disabilities when they complement and support, but do not duplicate, the regular services and programs of the college.

Achieving the goal of full participation and integration of people with disabilities requires cooperative efforts within and among higher education's institutions. The Board of Trustees will work with the Board of Governors to achieve a higher level of services and appropriate delivery methods at a Connecticut Community College.

This Statement is intended to reaffirm the Board's commitment to affirmative action and equal opportunity for all people and in no way to replace the opportunity policy statement.

### **III. Glossary**

A. **DISABLED**—having a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of a person's major life functions.

B. **QUALIFIED DISABLED STUDENT**—a person with a disability who meets the academic and technical standards for admission to and participation in an academic program or activity.

C. **ACCOMODATIONS**—modifications to the course, program, or educational requirements as necessary and appropriate to prevent discrimination or have the effect of discrimination on the basis of disability. Academic requirements that are essential to a course or program will not be regarded as discriminatory with in the meanings of this section. The College is not required to alter or modify a course or program to the extent that it changes the fundamental nature of that course or program. Potential accommodations included, but are not limited to, changes in the length and time permitted for a degree, extended time on an exam, isolated testing, and other appropriate accommodations which do not fundamentally alter the essential nature of the course or academic program. The College reserves the right to determine the nature and extent of the appropriate individual accommodations.

D. **AUXILIARY AIDS AND SERVICES**—may include, but are not limited to, note-takers, readers, scribes, large print materials, and sign language interpreters. Devices or services of a personal nature such as: personal attendants, individually prescribed devices, or readers for personal use or study are not provided by this College.

### **IV. Student Eligibility**

A. **DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**--student with disabilities seeking accommodations must contact the Coordinator of Disabilities Support Services. After disclosing the nature of their disability and providing appropriate documentation, students are urged to discuss their needs with individual instructors. Discussions with faculty should occur at the

beginning of each semester and each time an accommodation is sought. Instructors, in conjunction with appropriate college officials, will provide assistance and/or accommodations only to those students who have completed the disclosure and accommodations process. Students are responsible for giving instructors their accommodation she from the Disabilities Support Office.

B. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY—it is the responsibility of each student to voluntarily contact the Coordinator of Disabilities Support Services to disclose their disability and complete the required forms. Disclosure will also include providing appropriate documentation validating the nature of the stated disability. Students will be encouraged to self-advocate for their individual needs and will be required to identify their necessary academic accommodations in a timely manner, prior to the beginning of each semester, test, or assignment. It is the student's responsibility to discuss his/her needs with the Coordinator of Disabilities Support Services and also to discuss any agreement with the instructor. Failure to do this may result in a delay or denial in providing the requested accommodations.

C. DOCUMENTATION—eligibility for accommodations must be supported by the appropriate documentation validating the need for these services based on the individual's current level of academic functioning in an educational setting. Therefore, it is in the student's best interest to provide recent and appropriate documentation relevant to the student's learning environment. Because the College reserves the right to determine the nature and extent of appropriate accommodations, the Coordinator of Disabilities Support Services may request additional professional documentation to be necessary. Accommodations start after documentation is reviewed.

***Documentation must include:***

1. Clear statement of disability and/or diagnosis by a qualified professional with supportive testing of qualitative information.
2. Academic area(s) of impact or limitations
3. Additional observations or recommendations which may assist in identifying appropriate and reasonable accommodations.
4. Name, title, address, and phone number of certifying professional, as well as the date of diagnosis and/or evaluations.

## **V. Faculty Guidelines**

If needed, the faculty member may, and is encouraged to, contact the Coordinator to verify that documentation has been presented. Also, faculty may request a listing of suggested accommodations or meet with the Coordinator to discuss appropriate accommodations.

The Coordinator of Disabilities Support Services, in conjunction with the student, will discuss the appropriate academic accommodation(s) to be provided; also, he/she will complete the accommodation validation form. Both the Coordinator and student are required to sign this form indicating their agreement.

If the student feels that the accommodations are not appropriate, he/she should speak with the Coordinator of Disabilities Support Services.

## **VI. Conflict Resolution Center**

This process is designed to proceed as quickly as possible. The Coordinator of Disabilities Support Services will encourage the student to return to the faculty member to further discuss the requested accommodations. If the conflict remains unresolved, the Coordinator will meet with the faculty member. At the discretion of the Coordinator, this meeting may include the student and/or Division Director. If a resolution can not be reached, the student will be referred to the grievance procedures as described in the student handbook.

## **VII. Grievance Procedure**

If the conflict resolution process (as detailed in the Guide for Students with Disabilities) doesn't resolve the conflict, a student may submit a written grievance within 15 days to the Dean of Students stating the nature of the complaint, procedures already taken, and remedy sought. These reports are confidential and will not be disclosed to unauthorized persons. The Dean will seek a resolution to the grievance by having a hearing with all the parties involved, including The Coordinator of Disabilities Support Services. If a resolution is not reached, the student may appeal to the President of the college who shall make the final decision.