

## **PROVIDING ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AT BROWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

This document explains Office of Disability Services Procedures (6/98), in accordance with the *Broward Community College Policy and Procedures Manual*. It focuses on accommodations provided for academic programs, as assured by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). The question and answer format focuses on areas of concern expressed by BCC faculty.

**1. Q. Who is responsible for providing accommodations for a student with documented disabilities?**

- A. Under federal law, all BCC employees who work with the student are responsible for assuring that accommodations are provided. Faculty have the responsibility to assure that requested accommodations do not alter the essential elements of courses (see also Question 7). Disability Services staff have the responsibility of reviewing documentation, assessing need, coordinating requests for accommodations, and assuring that accommodations are reasonable and appropriate to the student's learning needs.

**2. Q. What is meant by the term, *reasonable* accommodation?**

- A. A reasonable accommodation puts the student with a disability on equal footing with students without disabilities. It *does not provide an advantage* over other students, but *allows the instructor to measure what a student learns*, rather than the extent of his/her disability. In addition, a reasonable accommodation is *based on the individual disability and learning needs* of each student, as assessed through medical or psychological reports. What is reasonable for one student may not be reasonable for another.

**3. Q. At what point are accommodations provided?**

- A. By law, once the student has requested accommodations and has produced acceptable documentation of the disability, accommodations are to be provided *immediately*. The Office of Disability Services encourages students to register with campus Disability Service Advisors two weeks prior to the beginning of a term. However, if a student requests accommodations at other times, they need to be provided in a timely manner.

**4. Q. What if reasonable accommodations are provided, but the student is still not succeeding in learning course material?**

A. The instructor and student need to be communicating about what is and what is not working. Also, the student has been advised by the Disability Services Advisor to report any need for changes in requested accommodations as soon as possible. Regular communication between the student, the faculty member, and the Disability Services Advisor is *key* to providing reasonable and successful accommodations.

**5. Q. What can an instructor do if there is a struggling student in the class for whom no accommodation request has been received from a Disability Services Advisor?**

A. The instructor may contact the campus Disability Services office for assistance with a possible referral for services.

**6. Q. Does the instructor need to provide accommodations that are not specified on the student's accommodations request form?**

A. No. It would be helpful to remind the student that they need to discuss additional accommodations with a Disability Services Advisor. For immediate concerns, the instructor may want to phone the campus Disability Services office.

**7. Q. What is the procedure for raising questions pertaining to accommodations requested by a Disability Services Advisor?**

A. When an instructor receives a request for accommodations from a Disability Services Advisor, there is a place on the form for instructor comments or questions, prior to signing and returning one copy. However, if there are serious concerns as to defining an accommodation as *reasonable*, it would be best if the instructor let the student know immediately that (s)he will be speaking with the Disability Services Advisor prior to implementation of the same. In so doing, it is urgent that the instructor, the student, and the Disability Services Advisor negotiate *immediately* so that a *reasonable and effective* accommodation may be arranged before the student loses valuable class and study time.

**8. Q. What is the student's recourse if reasonable accommodations are not provided?**

A. The student may follow the Appeals Process outlined in the Office of Disability Services Procedures document, a process similar to the BCC Grade Appeal Process. This process does not exclude the student's right to pursue a formal grievance as outlined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or the ADA.