

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF PHILADELPHIA
COURSE SUBSTITUTION AND WAIVER POLICY
FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

BACKGROUND

Federal legislation, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 1990, mandate that postsecondary institutions provide qualified students with disabilities with accommodations and adjustments that allow them to access the institution's full array of programs, services and activities. However, the accommodation mandate does not require the College to alter its essential academic requirements or integrity. Hence, the College as "a public entity shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the public entity can demonstrate that making the modification would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity." (ADA, 1990)

Typically, the accommodations and services provided by colleges and universities do serve to allow students with disabilities to satisfy essential course and/or curricular requirements. However, some students are not able to meet these requirements even with the provision of reasonable accommodations. When these situations arise, requests for accommodations may often be elevated to the level of waiver or substitution of the requirement in question. The issue for the institution then becomes whether or not a waiver or substitution would alter the fundamental nature of the course/curriculum/or degree being pursued.

POLICY STATEMENT

Essential Course Requirements

It is the general policy and practice of Community College of Philadelphia not to grant waivers or substitutions for developmental/remedial coursework or for courses that are essential for completion of an associate degree or specific program of instruction. Each qualified student with a disability shall receive appropriate accommodations to ensure equal access to the educational opportunities offered at the College so that they may participate in the most integrated and least restrictive setting. This policy is consistent with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans With Disabilities Act, 1990.

The College will ensure that academic requirements do not discriminate against qualified applicants or currently enrolled students with disabilities. The Center On Disability will engage in a deliberative process of evaluation with the student to determine the accommodations and adjustments that are necessary to meet the student's needs and to ascertain that these accommodations do not alter or compromise essential requirements or standards set forth by the College.

The areas of knowledge needed by our graduates are inherent in the goals set forth in the College's Mission Statement.

Essential course requirements are defined as follows:

General Education and Requirements Common to All Degrees

The College has adopted a policy that articulates that a graduate with an associate degree or certificate in a program of study should demonstrate the core competencies found in the required General Education courses that are referenced in the College Catalog.

In addition to the College's General Education requirements, the College has adopted a policy that articulates that a graduate with an associate degree or a certificate in a program of study meet all of the essential course and/or practicum requirements specified by the degree or certificate program in which they are enrolled.

Non-Essential Course Requirements

Although the College maintains a "no waiver" policy, a course substitution may be considered for courses that are deemed by the College to be non-essential. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis and involve input and recommendation from both the Center On Disability and the Academic Department within which the course and curriculum reside. The process and procedure for petitioning for a course substitution is stated in the Center On Disability Handbook and the College's Student Handbook.