

Institutional Reasonable Accommodation Policy (Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended)

Institutional Policy Mission

Create and maintain an accessible university community that fosters and guarantees an environment of equal opportunities for all people with disabilities, thus achieving their full inclusion in the university community.

Vision

The Pontifical Catholic University will become the center of university studies:

1. More accessible in Puerto Rico for people with disabilities.
2. To be the first choice in terms of offering the best academic and professional opportunities, thus having the potential to graduate the greatest number of people with disabilities.

Introduction

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-113) provides persons with disabilities with the same rights and opportunities as other citizens. It establishes that all public and private entities that receive federal funds may not discriminate on the basis of the impediment of persons to limit or exclude their participation in any program or activity that such entities carry out.

In 1990, the U.S. Congress passed Public Law 101-336:

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The purpose of the ADA is to eliminate discrimination against people with disabilities, ensure equal employment opportunity, access to public services, and encourage full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for people with disabilities.

This law strengthens the mandates of section 504 and extends them to all institutions of higher education, regardless of whether or not they receive federal funding. It is understood that each institution of higher education is unique in its environment and that this law facilitates individual

responses to the needs of university students and staff (ADA Compliance Guide for Colleges and Universities 1995).

In addition, this legislation requires university institutions to establish grievance, appeal, and reconsideration procedures. In addition, it recommends that persons who are not satisfied with the results of the above-mentioned procedures submit their cases to the Office of the Procurator for People with Disabilities (Act No. 2 of 27 September 1985).

To comply with the requirements of the law, the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico establishes the Office of Services for People with Disabilities (OSPI) for the entire university community. This office is located on the first floor of the Student Center - GP 113. The Venues shall be governed by this Policy. Documents and service forms can be adjusted according to the particularity of the Venue.

The OSPI Director is responsible for planning, organizing, and evaluating all services for persons with disabilities as requested by them and qualified by law. In coordination with the Advisory Committee on Issues for Students with Disabilities, it will ensure that this Policy is followed. This Committee (CAAEI) will be composed of the Registrar, a Counselor, a Supervisor and/or Director (1) of the Interdisciplinary Community Services Clinic, the Resident Attorney and the Director of OSPI. At the same time, a professor from the school of the student whose case is being evaluated will participate as an alternate member.

ARTICLE I: Available Services

To. The following services can be requested from the Office of People with Disabilities Services.

Offsides (OSPI):

1. Reasonable Accommodation
2. Technology Assistance
3. Access Permissions
4. Orientation and training
5. Referrals to other services

6. Address any student complaint for alleged violations of Law 504, the ADA and Institutional Policy.
7. Others in accordance to the people's needs.

B. Library Services

The Encarnación Valdés Library has a room with auxiliary equipment for people with visual, motor and other disabilities. Any other services may be requested from the Director.

C. Medical Services

The Medical Dispensary is located on the first floor of the Student Center- GP 108. It has a nursing service for primary intervention.

D. Parking Lots and Access Permits for Persons with Disabilities

The Department of Safety designates spaces throughout the campus for the parking of vehicles for people with disabilities who have a current PUCPR Access Permit and the removable car sign. Medically certified individuals with disabilities or temporary conditions may submit their situation to the Office of Disability Services for evaluation and temporary accommodation.

Other persons who park without proper authorization in spaces designated for persons with disabilities will be fined. The university guard may remove or immobilize any vehicle parked in places specifically designated for persons with disabilities.

Students are not allowed to park in areas designated for the faculty. Each student parking area has designated spaces for people with disabilities.

E. Individual and group tutoring

The Institutional Tutoring Center, provides individual and group tutoring services to all students at the University. Particular services such as readers, Academic Assistants or others, are requested through the Office of Services to People with Disabilities.

F. Cafeteria Services

The cafeteria, located on the first floor of the Student Center, has the necessary accessibility that allows its use by people with disabilities. Anyone requiring special service will contact the Cafeteria Director.

G. Physical Plant

A map of the location of facilities on campus will be provided for the disabled population. These include restrooms, water fountains, ramps, telephones, parking areas, and others.

H. Other Services

Any other services may be requested through the Office of Services for People with Disabilities.

ARTICLE II: Reasonable Accommodation

A. Procedures for Requesting Reasonable Accommodation

The person with a disability may request reasonable accommodation services through the Request for Reasonable Accommodation available from OSPI. To complete this process, you will need to:

1. File the application form
2. Accompany the application with a medical certification specifying the required accommodation, by a physician or specialist.

For more information, please contact OSPI staff. It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to request such accommodation in advance for the Case Manager to evaluate their request and prepare a service plan. Each case will be evaluated individually.

B. Reasonable Accommodation: Admission and Tuition

Persons who, due to their disability, are unable to carry out the admission or enrolment processes, may authorize in writing another person (duly identified) to carry out these processes.

C. Reasonable Accommodation: Course Requirements

If any academic requirement represents a risk to the student due to his/her disability, he/she may request that the requirement be waived or replaced. The request will be heard by the Advisory Committee on Issues for Students with Disabilities, which must be attended by the assigned representative of the College to which the applicant is designated. The Committee's recommendation is forwarded to the Dean and the Academic Director so that they can immediately notify them of any curricular

impediments with that accommodation. If there is none, they will proceed to provide it as notified by OSPI.

ARTICLE III: Rights and Responsibilities

To. From the student

1. Rights

Students with disabilities shall have the right to:

1. Equal access to courses, programs, services, employment, activities, and facilities available at the University.
2. Appropriate and reasonable accommodations, such as:
 1. Changing classrooms (if there is no elevator or accessibility)
3. Academic adjustments, such as:
 1. Test/Exam Administration
 2. Extra Time to Take an Exam
 3. Exam format (oral, enlarged print, braille, other)
4. Use of auxiliary equipment (student-owned) in the classroom such as:
 1. Recorders or other equipment
 2. Guide Dogs
 3. Computer
5. Determine in relation to your impairment:
 1. the information that may be disclosed, and,
 2. To whom it may be disclosed

2. Responsibilities

1. Meet academic and institutional requirements.
2. If reasonable accommodation is required, the person must request it, through the OSPI, at the beginning of the semester and/or (2) weeks later. Failure to do so has the right for the student to request the accommodation, but there is no guarantee that the accommodation will be provided effectively.

3. Accompany the Request for Reasonable Accommodation with documentation from the appropriate professional resource (physician, occupational therapist, psychologist, as applicable) indicating the nature of the impairment, functional limitations, and the need for specific accommodation with their recommendations.
4. Comply with institutional procedures to obtain reasonable accommodation and/or technical assistance.
5. The Office of Disability Services (OSPI) will prepare an official document specifying the appropriate reasonable accommodations for the student.

B. From the University

1. Rights and Responsibilities:

1. Maintain the academic standards of the Institution.
2. Require applicants to provide up-to-date documentation of their condition to the appropriate professional resource (physician, occupational therapist, psychologist, psychiatrist, as applicable) to verify their need for reasonable accommodation and/or technological assistance.
3. If necessary, consult the applicant's need with the appropriate professional resource (physician, occupational therapist, psychologist, psychiatrist) as established in the Confidentiality Waiver.
4. Select the most appropriate reasonable accommodation based on the applicant's impairment, which does not involve an excessive or unreasonable financial investment for the Institution.
5. Deny requests for reasonable accommodation and/or technological assistance if the documentation:
 - Don't identifies an impediment.
 - If you fail to document the needs of the required service.
 - If documents are not provided on time.
 - If the student does not complete the process with the reasonable accommodation document provided by OSPI.

6. Failing to provide reasonable accommodations and/or technological assistance that is deemed inappropriate or unreasonable, due to the fact that:
 1. Poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or the applicant.
 2. It constitutes a substantial change or alteration to a course or program.
 3. It presents an onerous cost for the Institution.
 4. It is not suggested in the ADA.

ARTICLE IV: Complaint Procedure.

1. Address any student complaints that reported accommodations are not being provided. The OSPI will be the unit assigned to deal with these complaints.
2. If the complaint is against OSPI, the student should appeal to the Vice Presidency for Student Affairs.

ARTICLE V: Disclosure and Training Procedure

The Office of Services for Persons with Disabilities will keep the university community informed about this Policy and its implications for the practice and delivery of services through extracurricular activities and/or workshops.

This Policy, which applies to the entire university community, will be available in Pioneer Access under Institutional Policies.

References

ADA Compliance Guide: Colleges and Universities. Thompson Publishing Group. Inc. October 1995.

A Primer of Disability Service within TRIO Programs Association on Higher Education and Disability, 1988.

Higher Education and Disability Manual. Salome M., Heyward and Associates Compliance Consultants, Cambridge, Mass. 1998.

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Year 2000". Office of the Ombudsman for Persons with Disabilities. Office of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Under Federal Law. U.S. Department of Education. Office of Civil Rights. Washington, D.C., January 1987.

The Disabled Student in the Classroom: building a Partnership in equal access to learning. Disabled Student Development Center. Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana. 1992.

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