

Guidelines for Course Substitution on the Basis of Disability

Portland Community College – Revised Fall 2014

In accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, colleges must be willing to modify academic requirements to prevent discrimination against eligible students with disabilities. Therefore, qualified students with disabilities may request that appropriate course substitutions be considered as a programmatic accommodation.

DS staff, in conjunction with departmental leadership and the Office of Student Records, will review such requests on a case-by-case basis to determine eligibility and to reasonably accommodate qualified students with alternative course work that will fulfill the appropriate degree/certificate requirement.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS CONSIDERING COURSE SUBSTITUTIONS

- **Essential Coursework:** A course substitution may have the effect of fundamentally altering the nature of the degree/certificate. If a course is deemed essential to the degree/certificate, it may not be appropriate for substitution.
- Course Substitution is consistent with the DS mission to ensure students who experience disability have an equal opportunity to participate in educational and co-curricular offerings. It is our mission to identify adjustments and accommodations that enable students to participate as fully as possible and successfully complete their course of study.
- Courses proposed as substitutions must be relevant and consistent for the purposes of the degree/certificate requirements and must be approved by the appropriate administrators.

CRITERIA FOR CONSIDERATION OF COURSE SUBSTITUTION

1. Documentation of Disability
 - Prepared by a qualified professional
 - Identifies diagnosis, level of severity, and functional limitations based on professional assessment
 - Complies with DS guidelines for disability documentation
 - Demonstrates a clear and direct connection between functional limitations experienced by the student and the course requirements or activities
 - Indicates a significant impediment to successful completion of the required course
2. Student Letter of Self-Advocacy
 - Addresses reason for requesting course substitution
 - Describes academic goals
3. Verification of DS Support
 - DS Practitioner conducts peer review of criteria
 - DS Practitioners consult with the Director as appropriate
4. Verification that substitution will not fundamentally alter degree or certificate
 - DS Practitioner consults with appropriate Faculty Department Chairs and Deans

PROCESS FOR PETITIONING COURSE SUBSTITUTION

1. Student works with DS Practitioner to request consideration for course substitution.
2. DS Practitioner reviews General Information and Criteria with student.
3. DS Practitioner and student participate in gathering documentation and reviewing GRAD Plan.
4. Student writes letter of self-advocacy, signs Guidelines, and submits them to DS Practitioner.
5. DS Practitioner requests internal peer review to verify request is reasonable and appropriate
6. DS Practitioner writes letter of support, verifies packet is complete, and submits to the DS Director to bring to the next committee review session.
7. A committee review session will be scheduled once per term to review pending requests. The committee will include a Dean of Instruction, Disability Services Director and Practitioners, a subject area committee representative from any subjects which are named in the Required or Substituted course fields on the pending requests, and the CTE Faculty Department Chair if substitution is within a CTE degree/certificate.
8. If a request is denied on the basis of Fundamental Alteration, a written copy of the rationale, including how the course substitution would fundamentally alter the curriculum, must be provided by the Dean of Instruction.
9. If a request is denied, the student may appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs.
10. Whether approved or denied, all papers are scanned into the student's DS Confidential File.
11. If a request is approved, the **Petition only** is turned in to Student Records.

CHECKLIST OF PAPERS

- DS Guidelines for Course Substitution, signed by Student & DS Practitioners
- Letter of Self-Advocacy, written by Student
- Letter of Support, written by DS Practitioner
- Request for Course Substitution on Basis of Verified Disability Form (to be reviewed by committee of DOI, DS, CTE, and SAC Representatives)

I, _____, have reviewed this document with Disability Services and understand the process for requesting a Course Substitution on the basis of a verified disability at Portland Community College.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

DS Peer Reviewer Signature _____ Date _____

DS Primary Practitioner Signature _____ Date _____