

Introduction: Eventually every program director will have to deal with an applicant who has a disability. Each situation is different and will have to be dealt with independently and fairly. The following information is from the Kentucky Community and Technical College system. This information should be used only as a guide. When dealing with a person with a disability the director should immediately contact their facilities disabilities resource person. Following notification the director should involve their admission committee and could use the following as a guideline to see if the person has the ability to function as a Surgical Technologist:

Surgical Technology involves the provision of direct care for individuals and is characterized by the application of verified knowledge in the skillful performance of surgical technology technical functions. Therefore, all applicants should possess:

1. sufficient visual acuity, such as is needed in the surgical environment and for the observation necessary for patient assessment and care;
2. sufficient auditory perception to receive verbal communication from patients and members of the health team and to assess health needs of people through the use of monitoring devices (e.g., cardiac monitors, biomedical equipment, fire alarms, etc.);
3. sufficient gross and fine motor coordination to respond promptly and to implement the skills, including the manipulation of equipment, positioning and lifting patients required in meeting health needs related to surgical technology;
4. sufficient verbal and non-verbal communication skills (speech, reading, and writing), such as are needed in classroom and clinical settings to interact with patients and professional personnel; and
5. sufficient intellectual and emotional functions to plan and implement care for individuals.

Admission to the Program

Selection of students for the program will be made by the president of the college or the president's designee after considering the recommendation of the Admissions Committee. Membership on the Admissions Committee may be:

Surgical Technology Program Coordinator
General Education (teaching prerequisites courses for Surgical Technology) and/or
Surgical Technology Faculty Member
Appropriate Department-Division Chair and/or Dean of Academic Affairs Admissions
Officer and/or Counselor

The following are informational question and answer sections that may prove useful:

How Does Disability Law Impact Institutions of Higher Education?

There are two major pieces of legislation that impact the provision of services and accommodations to students with disabilities in the university setting. They are the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Of direct importance is Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act that states:

No otherwise qualified person with a disability in the United States...shall, solely on the basis of a disability, be denied access to, or the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity provided by any institution receiving federal financial assistance.

What is a Disability?

To be considered a person with a disability, an individual must have a physical or mental impairment (i.e., specific learning disability, cerebral palsy, Tourette's Syndrome) that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Major life activities are functions including caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, breathing, learning, and working. An individual is considered a person with disability if he or she has a record of such an impairment or is regarded as having an impairment

With the passage of the ADA, this mandate from the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was expanded to include any public or private institution. Subpart E of the Rehabilitation Act requires an institution to be prepared to make reasonable academic adjustments and accommodations to allow students with disabilities full participation in the same programs and activities available to students without disabilities. The ADA further reinforces these statutes. With relation to a postsecondary setting, a qualified person with a disability is one who meets the academic and technical standards required for admission or participation in the institution's educational programs or activities.

The following requirements of the laws are of major importance in the college setting:

Institutions must ensure accessibility of programs and activities to students with disabilities. Architectural barriers must be removed where the program is not accessible by other means. Students with disabilities should have the same options available to others when selecting courses and majors.

Students with a disability must be provided with auxiliary aids and services in their academic activities (i.e., interpreters, taped texts and readers in libraries; adapted classroom equipment). Institutions need not provide personal attendants, individually prescribed devices, readers for personal use or study, or other devices or services of a personal nature.

Reasonable modifications must be made where necessary in nonessential academic requirements to ensure full educational opportunity for students with disabilities (i.e., extended time for degree requirements, course substitutions for non-essential degree requirements, adapted presentation for specific courses, taped lectures, guide dogs).

From "Laws Impacting Postsecondary Education," by Office for Disability Services, Pennsylvania State University (2000) [On-line]. Available:
<http://www.lions.psu.edu/ods/text/..\ODS\NewFiles\Rehab1973.htm>

Why Do I Have to Provide Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations are guaranteed under [federal law](#). The [ADA](#) extended the protection given to individuals with disabilities under [Section 504](#) of the Rehabilitation Act. Reasonable modifications are mandated for nonessential academic requirements to ensure full educational opportunity for students with disabilities. This includes the extension of time for completing degree requirements, course substitutions for non-essential degree requirements, permission to tape record lectures, and the use of service animals on campus.

Aren't Accommodations Just Special Privileges?

Accommodations are intended to allow a student with disabilities to have equal access to academic programs. Think of it as "leveling the playing field". Students with disabilities, like other students, should pass or fail courses according to whether or not they have mastered the learning objectives. Although you may modify your teaching and testing methods to accommodate students, you should not alter your grading standards.

Disability Rights Laws: Overview

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s inspired the subsequent Disability Rights Movement that greatly influenced the legislation of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. These disability rights laws prohibited discrimination against people with disabilities and provided access to education, public accommodations, telecommunications, and transportation.

The Rehabilitation Act

The Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs conducted by federal agencies, in programs receiving federal financial assistance, in federal employment, and in the employment practices of federal contractors. The standards for determining employment discrimination under the Rehabilitation Act are the same as those used in [Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#) .

Americans with Disabilities Act ([ADA](#))

The Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law as P.L. 101-336 in 1990 and carries forward the initial framework of Section 504 of the [Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#). It prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities and provides access to education, public accommodations, telecommunications, and transportation.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ([IDEA](#))

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires public schools in K-12 education settings to make available to all eligible children with disabilities a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. Since many students with disabilities in postsecondary settings received services in K-12 education settings, it is important that postsecondary personnel understand the IDEA so that they can help secondary students transition to postsecondary education settings.