SECTION: J - Students
POLICY TITLE: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
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1. PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY

1.1. The Utah County Academy of Sciences ("UCAS") Board of Trustees ("Board") is committed to providing all students with equitable access to educational opportunities and to maintaining a learning environment free from unlawful discrimination on the basis of disability. The Board recognizes that students with disabilities are entitled to participate in and benefit from UCAS educational programs, services, activities, and facilities consistent with federal and state law. Section 504 is a federal civil rights law that prohibits disability discrimination in programs receiving federal financial assistance and requires schools to provide eligible students with a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

1.2. The Board adopts this policy to:

1.2.1. Ensure compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and other applicable federal and state laws governing students with disabilities.

1.2.2. Promote equitable access to educational programs, services, activities, and facilities for qualified students with disabilities.

1.2.3. Ensure that students who are eligible under Section 504 receive accommodations, aids, and services designed to provide meaningful access to educational opportunities and a free appropriate public education.

1.2.4. Establish a fair, consistent, and legally compliant process for the identification, evaluation, eligibility determination, placement, and periodic reevaluation of students under Section 504.

1.2.5. Encourage collaboration among students, parents/guardians, educators, and school

administrators in developing and implementing individualized accommodations that address disability-related barriers to learning while maintaining the integrity of UCAS's educational programs.

1.2.6. Protect the rights of students and parents through the Notice of Rights provided under Section 504.

1.3. UCAS is committed to educating students with disabilities alongside their nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate and to providing individualized accommodations that remove barriers to participation without fundamentally altering academic standards, course requirements, or the essential nature of school programs. Educational decisions shall be based upon the individual needs of each student and made through a collaborative process consistent with applicable law.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1. Disability: "Disability" means, with respect to an individual, a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment, as defined by applicable law. The determination of whether a student has a disability shall be made in accordance with Section 504 and its implementing regulations.

2.2. Major Life Activities: "Major life activities" include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working. Major life activities also include the operation of major bodily functions, including but not limited to the functions of the immune system, digestive system, neurological system, brain, respiratory system, circulatory system, endocrine system, and reproductive system.

2.3. Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE): "Free Appropriate Public Education" (FAPE) means the provision of regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the individual educational needs of a qualified student with a disability as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met, consistent with Section 504.

2.4. Qualified Student with a Disability: "Qualified student with a disability" means a student who meets the eligibility requirements of Section 504 and is entitled to the protections and services provided under applicable law.

2.5. Section 504 Team: "Section 504 Team" means a group of individuals knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation data, and the available placement or accommodation options who are responsible for making decisions regarding eligibility, accommodations, placement, and reevaluation under Section 504.

2.6. Reasonable Accommodation: "Reasonable accommodation" means an adjustment, aid, service, or other support determined necessary to provide a qualified student with a disability meaningful access to UCAS educational programs, services, activities, or facilities. Accommodations shall be individualized and shall not fundamentally alter the nature of an educational program or lower essential academic standards.

3. NONDISCRIMINATION

3.1. Section 504 is a federal civil rights law prohibiting disability discrimination in programs receiving federal financial assistance. UCAS shall not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission, enrollment, educational programs, services, activities, or any other program or activity operated by the school, as required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and applicable federal and state law.

3.2. UCAS shall provide reasonable accommodations, related aids, services, and modifications determined necessary to provide eligible students with meaningful access to educational programs and activities. Such accommodations shall be individualized and based upon the student's disability-related educational needs as determined through the Section 504 process.

3.3. No qualified student shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination solely on the basis of disability.

3.4. Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted to require UCAS to fundamentally alter the nature of its educational programs, lower essential academic standards, or impose an undue administrative or financial burden, except as otherwise required by law.

4. REFERRAL FOR SECTION 504 EVALUATION

4.1. A referral for consideration under Section 504 may be initiated when there is reason to believe that a student has a disability that may substantially limit one or more major life activities and may require accommodations or related aids or services to access the school's educational programs or activities.

4.2. A referral may be made by a parent/guardian, student, teacher, school administrator, counselor, or other individual with knowledge of the student's educational or disability-related needs.

4.3. Upon receipt of a referral, UCAS shall review available information and determine whether an evaluation under Section 504 is appropriate in accordance with applicable law. A referral alone does not establish eligibility for protections or services under Section 504.

4.4. UCAS shall ensure that referrals are considered in a timely, equitable, and nondiscriminatory manner consistent with the requirements of Section 504, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and applicable federal and state law.

5. ELIGIBILITY

5.1. A student may be eligible for protections and services under Section 504 if the student is determined to have a disability, as defined by applicable law, that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

5.2. Eligibility shall be determined by a Section 504 Team composed of individuals knowledgeable about the student, the evaluation data, and the available educational placement or accommodation options.

5.3. Eligibility determinations shall be based upon a review of relevant information from a variety of sources, as appropriate to the individual student. No single source of information, including a medical diagnosis, psychological evaluation, or recommendation from an outside provider, shall be used as the sole basis for determining eligibility. Eligibility shall be determined through an individualized evaluation process consistent with applicable law.

5.4. The Section 504 Team shall consider the nature of the student's disability, the impact of the disability on the student's educational access, and the student's individual educational needs when determining eligibility and the need for accommodations or related aids and services.

6. EVALUATION PROCEDURES

6.1. UCAS shall conduct an evaluation prior to determining a student's initial eligibility under Section 504 and prior to any significant change in a student's educational placement.

6.2. Evaluations shall be individualized and designed to identify the nature of the student's disability, the impact of the disability on one or more major life activities, and the student's

need for accommodations, related aids, or services to ensure meaningful access to the school's educational programs and activities.

6.3. Evaluations shall be based upon information from a variety of relevant sources, as appropriate to the individual student. Such information may include educational records, classroom performance, teacher observations, input from parents/guardians, student input when appropriate, medical information, psychological evaluations, and other relevant data.

6.4. Evaluation information shall be considered as a whole. Decisions shall not be based upon assumptions, stereotypes, or any single source of information.

6.5. UCAS shall conduct evaluations and eligibility determinations in a manner that is equitable, nondiscriminatory, and consistent with applicable federal and state law.

7. SECTION 504 TEAM

7.1. UCAS shall establish a Section 504 Team to make decisions regarding the evaluation, eligibility, educational placement, accommodations, related aids and services, and periodic reevaluation of students referred under Section 504.

7.2. The Section 504 Team shall be composed of individuals who are knowledgeable about the student, the evaluation information, and the educational placement or accommodation options available to the student.

7.3. The Section 504 Team shall consider all relevant evaluation information and exercise professional judgment in making individualized educational decisions regarding a student's eligibility and educational needs.

7.4. Parents/guardians shall be provided the opportunity to participate in the Section 504 process and to provide information relevant to the team's decisions.

7.5. When appropriate, the student may be invited to participate in the Section 504 process to provide information regarding the student's educational experiences and disability-related needs.

7.6. The decisions of the Section 504 Team shall be documented and implemented in accordance with applicable law and UCAS administrative procedures.

8. PLACEMENT AND ACCOMMODATION PLANS

8.1. Students determined eligible under Section 504 shall receive accommodations, related aids, or services that are individually designed to provide meaningful access to UCAS educational programs, services, and activities.

8.2. Accommodations shall be based upon the individual educational needs of the student and shall be reasonably designed to reduce or remove disability-related barriers to participation in the educational environment.

8.3. Section 504 accommodation plans are intended to provide qualified students with equal educational access. They are not intended to guarantee academic success, maximize student performance, or provide an unfair academic advantage.

8.4. Accommodations, related aids, and services shall not fundamentally alter the nature of UCAS educational programs, lower essential academic standards, or impose an undue administrative or financial burden except as otherwise required by law.

8.5. Section 504 Plans shall be implemented following a determination of eligibility by the Section 504 Team and the development of an appropriate accommodation plan. Accommodations are prospective in nature and are not retroactive unless otherwise required by law.

9. TRANSFER STUDENTS

9.1. When a student enrolls at UCAS with an existing Section 504 Plan from another educational institution, UCAS shall review the available records and determine whether the existing plan is appropriate for implementation at UCAS.

9.2. UCAS may implement an existing Section 504 Plan, adopt the plan with appropriate modifications, or conduct an evaluation or reevaluation to determine the student's eligibility and educational needs.

9.3. UCAS shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that eligible transfer students receive appropriate accommodations and services during the transition to UCAS.

10. REEVALUATION

10.1. UCAS shall periodically review the eligibility and educational needs of students receiving accommodations under Section 504 to ensure that accommodations, related aids, and services remain appropriate and effective.

10.2. A reevaluation shall be conducted prior to any significant change in a student's educational placement and at other times when deemed appropriate.

10.3. A reevaluation may be initiated when the Section 504 Team determines that additional information is needed, when there is reason to believe the student's educational needs have changed, or when requested by a parent/guardian, school personnel, or the student, when appropriate.

10.4. Reevaluation decisions shall be made by the Section 504 Team and shall follow the guidelines of an initial evaluation.

11. NOTICE OF RIGHTS

11.1. UCAS shall provide parents/guardians and eligible students with notice of their rights under Section 504.

11.2. Parents/guardians and eligible students shall be afforded the opportunity to participate in decisions regarding the identification, evaluation, eligibility, educational placement, and provision of accommodations under Section 504.

11.3. Parents/guardians and eligible students shall have the right to examine relevant educational records relating to decisions made under Section 504.

11.4. Parents/guardians and eligible students shall have the right to challenge decisions regarding the identification, evaluation, eligibility, educational placement, or provision of accommodations through the procedures established by UCAS and applicable law, including the opportunity for an impartial hearing.

11.5. Nothing in this policy shall limit the rights of parents, guardians, or eligible students under Section 504, the Americans with Disabilities Act, or other applicable federal and state law.

12. DISCIPLINE

12.1. Students eligible under Section 504 are subject to the same behavioral expectations and educational standards applicable to all students as outlined in the UCAS student handbook.

12.2. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to prohibit UCAS from disciplining a student with a disability for violations of school rules as outlined in UCAS policy.

12.3. Prior to any disciplinary action that constitutes a significant change in a student's educational placement, UCAS shall conduct the evaluation required by Section 504 to determine whether the student's conduct was a manifestation of the student's disability.

12.4. If the Section 504 Team determines that the student's conduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, UCAS may apply disciplinary consequences in the same manner as for students without disabilities. If the conduct is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability, UCAS shall take appropriate action.

13. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

13.1. UCAS shall maintain grievance procedures providing for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging discrimination on the basis of disability.

13.2. Individuals who believe they have been subjected to discrimination on the basis of disability may submit a complaint in accordance with UCAS administrative procedures. See UCAS Policy CD.

14. PROHIBITION AGAINST RETALIATION

14.1. UCAS prohibits retaliation, intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination against any individual for exercising rights protected under Section 504, the Americans with Disabilities Act, or other applicable federal and state law.

14.2. Allegations of retaliation shall be addressed in accordance with UCAS Policy CD.

15. DESIGNATION OF THE SECTION 504 COORDINATOR

15.1. UCAS shall designate at least one employee to serve as the Section 504 Coordinator.

15.2. The Section 504 Coordinator shall oversee UCAS's implementation of this policy.

15.3. The responsibilities of the Section 504 Coordinator shall include, but not be limited to:

15.3.1. Coordinating the Section 504 evaluation, eligibility, accommodation, and reevaluation processes;

15.3.2. Monitoring implementation of approved Section 504 Plans;

15.3.3. Ensuring that required notices and Notice of Rights are provided;

15.3.4. Coordinating the school's response to complaints and concerns relating to Section 504 compliance;

15.3.5. Promoting staff awareness of responsibilities under Section 504; and

15.3.6. Maintaining oversight of the school's Section 504 program.

15.4. The name or title and contact information of the Section 504 Coordinator shall be made available on the school’s website.

REFERENCES
SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973, 29 U.S.C § 794 et seq.
THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990, AS AMENDED (ADA), 42 U.S.C § 12101 et seq.
UCAS POLICY CD

FORMS
None

HISTORY
Adopted – October 20, 2026.