
Rector's Directive No. 23/2017

Standards of support to be provided at Charles University to students and applicants for study with special needs

Date of effect: 1 April 2017

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Article 1 Introduction (Preamble)

Everybody has the right to the free choice of her profession and the training for that profession². Under general legislation and internal regulations of Charles University ("CU"), students and applicants for study with special needs have the same right to attain a university degree as their colleagues without special educational needs. Therefore the University provides to every student and applicant for study with special needs such support and/or modification of their study and environment so that relevant conditions for maximizing the potential of these students and applicants in their academic life may be set. The University heeds the social needs of the members of the academic community. The University also heeds the needs of the members of the academic community with special needs, and in its activities and in the activities of the self-governing academic bodies takes affordable measures to make sure that these members have equal opportunities to assert themselves at the University³.

Article 2 Objective and principles

1. The objective of CU in the field of support of students with special needs is to provide to students and applicants for study, irrespective of the nature and degree of disability, equal access to study and comparable circumstances of study, and to support their lifelong learning in order to develop their personality, talent, and creative, intellectual and physical abilities.
2. The support provided to students with special needs is governed by the following principles:
 - a. The University guarantees fully fledged participation of students with disabilities in all areas of academic and social life.
 - b. The University ensures that the approach of all its employees to students and applicants with special needs should be fully informed and with respect to human dignity⁴.
 - c. In equalizing conditions of study of students with special needs, the University applies general legislation⁵ and internal methodology guidelines⁶.
 - d. Measures whose purpose is to attain accessibility of academic life must not decrease study requirements. Therefore every student must show comparable results at the admissions stage, during the study itself and at its completion in order to obtain the required qualifications⁷.
 - e. Implemented measures are based upon professional assessment of the practical functional impact of a disability upon activities relating to study within a particular programme.
 - f. Responsibilities of the guarantors of programmes of study include the proposing and reviewing of special requirements for health and other pre-requisites of applicants for study that are essential for regular fulfilment of duties and assessment of study.⁸ The University presumes that students and applicants for study are prepared to use the supportive measures provided. Students and applicants must possess minimum relevant competences for this purpose.

1 The synonym "specific" is sometimes used.

2 Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of 16 December 1992, Art. 26.

3 Art. 5 of the Constitution of Charles University.

4 Minimum Standards for Disabled Persons for UNICA Universities

5 Act N. 111/1998 Sb., regulating higher education institutions, as amended; Rules for providing contribution and subsidies to public universities by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Annex N. 3 – Financing increased costs of study of students with special needs.

6 Standards and methodology of key supportive services for students with special needs.

7 Under Act N. 111/1998 Sb., regulating higher education institutions, as amended; and in compliance with the Minimum Standards for Disabled Persons for UNICA Universities.

8 In compliance with section 49 Act N. 111/1998 Sb., regulating higher education institutions, as amended; and Art. 22 (12) of the Constitution of CU.

- g. The University guarantees the protection of information relating to the disability of a student and his or her health condition and considers such information as confidential⁹.

Article 3 Students and applicants for study with special needs

1. Such students or applicants for study are to be considered students or applicants with special needs who, due to their congenital or acquired nature of a health condition, may require that the admissions procedure, study conditions and assessment of study be modified, physical obstacles be removed and/or other special arrangements of the premises be made so that they can successfully pursue their study.

2. Students or applicants with special needs include students with visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical and mobility impairment, with specific learning disorders, autism spectrum disorders, combined disabilities and students with other difficulties (mental disorders, distorted communication abilities, chronic diseases and somatic diseases)¹⁰.

3. A student with special needs who uses during the study instruments of support stipulated in Article 4, is obliged to register, through the Student Registry of the respective faculty, in the Study Information System of CU. A student with special needs is also obliged to attend a meeting with specialists providing the professional assessment of the practical functional impact of the student's disabilities upon activities relating to study within the particular programme.

4. The use of instruments of support listed in Article 4, and the final form thereof, is based upon communication between the student, persons in charge of support enumerated in Article 7 and the representative of the respective faculty or, alternatively, of the programme of study, under conditions described in Article 3 (3).

Article 4 Instruments of support

The basic instruments to attain the objectives stipulated in Article 2 are as follows:

- a. modifying the admissions procedure for applicants with special needs (see Article 5);
- b. modifying the conditions and assessment of study for students with special needs in regard of their individual study needs (see Article 6);
- c. providing key supportive services that are necessary for regular study of students with special needs and are provided to all students with special needs of all faculties of CU at the same level and in a form comparable to the provision of other supportive services offered, organized and/or ensured by the home faculty of a student, or by another faculty under a respective agreement;
- d. providing access to the physical environment and/or other special arrangements of the premises of CU¹¹;
- e. furnishing the teaching premises and other establishments with relevant technological and teaching aids; arranging for the system of borrowing such aids by students and/or academics and other employees;
- f. increasing the awareness and knowledge of CU employees in the area of education of students with special needs including the relevant methodological support of teaching;
- g. accepting, consulting and potentially implementing suggestions of students, applicants and employees in order to improve the instruments of support;
- h. implementing regular internal and external assessment of the quality of supportive measures carried out;
- i. providing other forms of support falling within the competences of respective faculties.

Article 5 Modification of admissions procedure

1. Every applicant for study must fulfil conditions stipulated by the Code of Admissions Procedure of CU and, if relevant, other requirements for admissions procedure set for the respective programme of study.

2. Where an applicant requests that the admissions procedure be modified in order to respect the practical functional impact of his or her disability the application for admission to study is to be appended with written specification and justification of the requested arrangements. It must include a statement of health condition issued by a medical doctor or another specialist. Formal elements of the documents are set by faculties as part of their admissions procedure requirements. After such application has been received the respective student registry, without undue delay, is to inform the contact person (see Article 7) who is to contact the applicant and ascertain the nature and scope of the special need. Subsequently, in cooperation with the respective vice-dean and the guarantor of the programme of study (see Article 7), the contact person is to propose a modification of the entrance examination.

3. The application for modification is to be decided by the Dean.

4. Modified admissions procedure should differ from the regular course only to the minimum extent necessary. The whole procedure must be in compliance with the Code of Admissions Procedure of CU and relating regulations.

5. Information that the application for admission to study should be appended with the application for modification of admissions procedure is to be published by the respective faculty and included in the requirements for the admission to study for the relevant academic year.

⁹ In compliance with Act No. 101/2000 Sb., regulating the protection of personal data, as amended.

¹⁰ Typology under Rules for providing contribution and subsidies to public universities by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Annex N. 3
– Financing increased costs of study of students with special needs.

¹¹ Under Government Regulation N. 398/2009 Sb., governing the general technical requirements for barrier-free use of structures.

Article 6 Modification of study conditions in the course of study

1. Students with special needs may, in the course of their study and upon their individual recommendations arising from the assessment of the practical functional impact of their disability upon activities relating to study in the respective programme, utilize the arrangements in paragraph 2 free of charge.

2. Arrangements are subdivided into groups according to relevant special needs. An application for the particular arrangement(s) is to be filed with the respective persons in charge of support (see Article 7).

a) Students with visual impairments

1. Access to the content of instruction and relevant literature (editable electronic documents¹², non-editable documents, audio documents);
2. Tactile documents, tactile graphics;
3. Assistance during study;
4. Use of aids;
5. Individual instruction (occasional / temporary / continuing);
6. Time compensation during the fulfilment of study duties and their assessment;
7. Space orientation (intensive / occasional).

b) Students with hearing impairments

1. Access to the content of instruction and relevant literature (editable electronic documents of 2nd degree)¹³;
2. Services of interpreters and transcribers;
3. Services of a recorder;
4. Electronic video documents;
5. Assistance during study;
6. Use of aids;
7. Individual instruction (occasional / temporary / continuing);
8. Time compensation during the fulfilment of study duties and their assessment.

c) Students with physical and mobility impairments

1. Access to the content of instruction and relevant literature;
2. Assistance during study;
3. Use of aids;
4. Individual instruction (occasional / temporary / continuing);
5. Time compensation during the fulfilment of study duties and their assessment;
6. Space orientation.

d) Students with specific learning disorders

1. Access to the content of instruction and relevant literature (audio documents, editable electronic documents of 2nd degree);
2. Assistance during study;
3. Use of aids;
4. Individual instruction (occasional / temporary);
5. Time compensation during the fulfilment of study duties and their assessment;
6. Diagnostics.

e) Students with autism spectrum disorders

1. Access to the content of instruction and relevant literature;
2. Assistance during study;
3. Use of aids;
4. Individual instruction (occasional / temporary);
5. Time compensation during the fulfilment of study duties and their assessment;
6. Space orientation.

f) Students with other difficulties

1. Access to the content of instruction and relevant literature;

¹² EED I – a document that is editable by its user, without marginal technical mistakes and adaptable in a way respecting the technical and sensory potential of students with disability.

¹³ EED II – differs from EED I in such a way that the graphics (visual elements) and tables and charts of the original documents has not been subject to adaptation and/or to other highlighting (including colours) of the structure of the original document.

2. Assistance during study;
3. Use of aids;
4. Occasional individual instruction;
5. Time compensation during the fulfilment of study duties and their assessment;
6. Space orientation.

Article 7 Organization of the system of support of students with special needs

1. The support of students with special needs is provided in cooperation of various persons in charge of support. It is primarily ensured by contact persons for students with special needs at individual faculties, the Office for Students and Employees with special needs of the Centre for Information, Counselling and Social Services of CU ("Office"), special units and counselling centres aimed at the respective groups of students, guarantors of the programmes of study, other specialists, employees of student registries at individual faculties, and also teachers and other students of Charles University.
2. Contact persons are responsible for the situation, implementation and development of support provided to students and applicants for study with special needs at the level of a faculty. The contact person draws the plans of development and provision of services to students and applicants with special needs at the respective faculty, and regularly evaluates their implementation. The contact person performs the duties in close cooperation with students and other persons in charge. The contact person is appointed by the Dean of a respective faculty.
3. The Office, at the University level, arranges for activities regarding coordination, consulting, information, registration and conception of support, as well as methodological guidance in the area of support of students and applicants with special needs; the Office is in charge of administration of certain key services.
4. Special units are established at individual faculties, or the Rectorate; their services are to be used by students of the whole university. Special units usually provide counselling, individual instruction, technological support for the consequences of disabilities, and borrowing books and other study materials.
5. Counselling centres provide special psychological, career-related, social and legal and other types of counselling. Counselling centres may also be instituted at a faculty level.
6. Guarantors of the programmes of study are responsible for the formation and quality of the content of study. They propose modifications of curricula and individualized modifications of the conditions of admissions procedure and study.
7. Specialists assess, upon personal consultation with the respective student or applicant for study, the practical functional impact of a disability upon activities relating to study within a particular programme. They, in cooperation with the respective student or applicant, propose the particular modifications of study conditions as set in Article 6.
8. Student registries of individual faculties are an important information resource and contact place for dealing with individual study matters. Registries maintain the records of students with special needs and provide them information and contacts regarding providers of services and persons in charge.
9. Teachers should be informed, sufficiently in advance, of the fact that a student with special needs is to attend the class; the information should be provided by the student or by the respective person in charge. The teacher is responsible for providing access to the content of teaching to the student whose special needs the teacher has been informed of. The area of providing services to students with special needs and its professional, methodological and organizational issues is continually monitored by the Permanent Working Commission of the Rector of CU. The Commission considers the substantial issues of the development of conception and determines priorities in the area; the Commission submits to the respective persons and entities in charge proposals and initiatives regarding further development or modifications of the services provided.
10. Concrete tasks and powers of individual persons and entities in charge within the system of support of students and applicants with special needs, as well as basic procedures and system of quality control regarding the services provided, are outlined in the document entitled "Standards and methodology of key supportive services for students with special needs".

Article 8 Librarian and information services

1. Libraries of CU are obliged to ensure to all their users equal access to information¹⁴.
2. Libraries are to create suitable physical and technical conditions and measures enabling its users to stay there and move autonomously around the premises.
3. Libraries are to create for their users with special needs protected places for study and equip them with necessary technical aids.

¹⁴ Section 2a of Act N. 257/2001 Sb.

4. Upon application, the user with special needs is entitled to use the librarian services through his or her assistant whose name is included in the application. Users with special needs may enjoy extended loan periods the duration of which is to be decided by the librarian in charge.

5. Librarians should possess basic knowledge and skills necessary for the provision of services to users with special needs. Students may use assistance services provided by librarians.

6. Libraries cooperate with persons and entities in charge of providing services to users with special needs under Article 7.

7. The Central Catalogue of CU contains records entered by individual libraries of digitalized literature for study.

Article 9 Accommodation and catering

1. A student recognized as a person with long-lasting unfavourable health condition or a person with disabilities¹⁵ is to be given preferential treatment when considering his or her application for accommodation¹⁶.

2. The Dormitories and Canteens ("DaC") may, should there be available rooms, make a supplement to the accommodation contract upon which the student is to be provided a multiple-bed room. The student may apply to the Director of the DaC for a discount regarding the free beds in the respective room.

3. A student with special needs may, in catering and relating services, use assistance of employees of the DaC. Assistance services of employees of the DaC are governed by the internal regulation of the DaC.

Article 10 Final provisions

1. Rector's Directive N. 9/2013 is hereby repealed.

2. This directive becomes effective on 1 April 2017.

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¹⁵ Under Act N. 108/2006 Sb., regulating social services, as amended.

¹⁶ The Rules for Accommodation and Catering Services of Charles University of 14 December 2016, Art. 14 (3).