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Date: February 15, 2018

To: Chief Academic Affairs Officers  
From: Vita Rabinowitz, Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost  
Re: Math Waiver and Substitution Based on Disability Policy

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I write to inform you about an important policy change regarding CUNY's requirement that all students demonstrate college readiness in math. Attached please find the final version of CUNY's Math Waiver Policy for students whose disabilities impact their ability to meet CUNY math requirements.

As you are aware, some students are unable to fulfill the math requirements because of factors related to a disability. In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, students who cannot meet the CUNY math requirement, even with accommodations, may now request a waiver of the requirement to demonstrate college readiness in math by passing elementary algebra (or an equivalent alternative). They may also request a substitution for the Pathways quantitative reasoning requirement.

In accordance with the principles of Pathways, a math waiver will transfer with the student, either from a community college to a senior college or from one college to another. This math waiver will be recorded in CUNYFirst as an accommodation and will be visible to CUNY disability coordinators on each campus. Before graduating, or transferring to another CUNY college, the student is advised to ensure this action has been recorded in CUNYFirst.

There is an exception to this policy: a college will not consider a math waiver or course substitution in majors or programs in which math is an essential requirement.

For more information on any aspect of this Math Waiver Policy, please contact Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Christopher Rosa at [christopher.rosa@cuny.edu](mailto:christopher.rosa@cuny.edu).

My thanks to the Council on Student Disability Issues (COSDI), the Office of the General Counsel, the Office of Assessment, the Office of Student Affairs, and the University Faculty Senate for their guidance in the development of this policy.

Cc: Chancellor James B. Milliken  
Chief Student Affairs Officers  
University Dean for Undergraduate Studies, Lucinda Zoe  
Senior Associate General Counsel, Katherine Raymond  
University Registrar, Vivek Upadhyay  
University Executive Director for Enrollment Strategy and Management, Laura Bruno

## **Math Waivers and Substitutions Based on Disability**

All students attending CUNY must demonstrate college readiness in math based on either SAT, ACT, or New York State Regents test scores. Students who do not demonstrate college readiness in math based on one of those measures are required to take the CUNY Assessment Test in Math. Students who do not achieve passing scores are required to complete developmental education courses or other similar interventions. Completing this math requirement is a prerequisite to taking courses to meet the Pathways quantitative reasoning requirement.

Some students are unable to fulfill the aforementioned requirements because of a disability. CUNY provides accommodations, including academic adjustments, to students with disabilities in order to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Students who wish to seek such accommodations must register with the college's office of disability services. Accommodations for the CUNY math assessment test and for coursework, including remedial math coursework, often include extended time, assistive technology support, and/or services of appropriate support personnel such as readers, scribes, and sign language interpreters.

Students who cannot meet the CUNY requirement, even with accommodations, may request a waiver of the requirement to demonstrate college readiness in math by passing elementary algebra (or an equivalent alternative). They may also request a substitution for the Pathways quantitative reasoning requirement.

In order to maximize their educational options, students must take the CUNY Assessment Test in Math at least once and must make at least one attempt to successfully complete one math or quantitative reasoning course, unless documentation indicates an inability to take and pass a math or quantitative reasoning course even with accommodations and support services. The student must meet the attendance requirements of the course or intervention, as determined by the instructor and college policy.

The procedure for requesting a waiver of the requirement to demonstrate college readiness in math and/or substitution for the quantitative reasoning requirement is as follows:

1. The student submits a request form to the school's office of disability services, accompanied by documentation from an appropriately credentialed professional, certifying that the student has a disability that significantly impairs his/her ability to take and pass a math course. The request form must be signed by the student and contain an affirmation that the student understands that a math waiver or substitution may preclude the student from enrolling in certain majors or programs for which math is an essential requirement.
2. The office of disability services will review the student's request form and documentation. If the office determines that a math waiver or substitution is supported, the office will send the request to the College's Chief Academic Officer or Provost. Following an appropriate academic review, the Chief Academic Officer or Provost will make the final determination with respect to the waiver or substitution request and will notify the office of disability services of the decision. The offices of disability services will have the responsibility of communicating the decision to the student.
3. Under Pathways, all students are required to complete coursework to fulfill the quantitative reasoning requirement. Students receiving a substitution for the Pathways quantitative reasoning coursework should be given the opportunity to engage in a strong quantitative



learning experience to fulfill this requirement. One option is substitution of another course, outside of the designated Pathways QR courses, that has a sufficient quantitative component. Another option is to have the student complete, under the design and supervision of faculty, an appropriate college-level independent study that provides a quantitative experience for the student. Such experiences can include several writings or projects about quantitative people, practices, or ideas. CUNY colleges already provide a wide range of existing independent study topics meeting this general guideline, examples of which are presented in the Appendix below.

4. The school's office of disability services will enter the appropriate CUNY code into the student's CUNYFirst record, which will only be accessible by that office, showing that a math waiver has been granted CUNY-wide. Students whose record contains this waiver code will be able to register for courses to meet the Pathways quantitative reasoning requirement and the requirement fulfilled.

Because a college will not consider a math waiver or course substitution in majors or programs in which math is an essential requirement, students who are seeking a math waiver or course substitution are strongly advised to meet with counselors or academic advisors to discuss the impact of a waiver/substitution on their college major and career plans.

#### APPENDIX

Below is a sample rubric for an independent study, which includes possible areas of study. The faculty member makes all decisions relating to an independent study to fulfill the quantitative reasoning requirement.

Goals of the independent study: The student will explore quantitative topics in order to develop an understanding of the role of mathematics and quantitative ideas in various settings. This exploration could include topics chosen from historical figures, topics in mathematics and quantitative disciplines, the role that mathematics plays in other disciplines, areas of mathematics not related to algebra, and the role of mathematical and quantitative ideas in various cultures.

Working under the supervision of a faculty member, a student can explore topics such as

- a. Women in Mathematics
- b. Mathematics of the Rubik's cube
- c. The Navajo Code Talkers
- d. Geometry in different cultures
- e. Different calendars or number systems (for example Aztec, Mayan, or Roman)
- f. Mathematics and games
- g. Preferential Voting methods
- h. Fibonacci Sequences and nature
- i. Music and Mathematics
- j. Cryptography and the Internet
- k. The history and calculation of the number pi
- l. The Ishango bone: the oldest mathematical artifact
- m. The Platonic Solids
- n. History of the number zero

At the beginning of the study, faculty should share with the student a detailed explanation of the number, timing, and submission format of all assignments and methods of evaluation.