RECTOR’S DIRECTIVE

**No. 8/2018**

Minimum standards for counselling and study support provided to study applicants with special educational needs at the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague

Clause 1

**Introductory provisions**

1. In compliance with valid legal regulations, the purpose of this Directive is to declare and define rights and obligations of special educational needs students who constitute an integral part of the university’s academic community. By issuing this document, the Czech University of Life Sciences (hereinafter as the “CULS”) sets strategies to ensure on a systemic basic that university education is made available to handicapped students, while the creation of conditions for study is understood as openness and accessibility as a part of the overall educational services in the sense of inclusive university education.
2. Everyone has a right to freedom of choice of occupation and preparation therefor. People with special needs have the equal right to complete university education as their healthy counterparts. Accordingly, the CULS is obliged to provide everyone who has special educational needs with such services, support or modifications of the study or environment that would compensate for consequences of handicaps that are present in academic life.
3. Before the commencement and during the study, this initiative intends - on a continuous basis and as currently practicable - to remove architectonic, communication, educational and information barriers, and guarantees the following to the CULS students:
	1. comparable conditions for taking examinations, entrance, partial and final examinations;
	2. accessibility to lecture rooms, barrier-free access to instructions and related activities (seminars, practicals, laboratories, excursions, practical training);
	3. comprehensible instructions provided by means interpreting in line with individual specific needs, and availability of study-relevant information (study materials and other information sources);
	4. independence, attainable to the maximum extent, as the choice of meals and accommodation and suitability of the same with respect to the student’s handicap and according to his/her special needs,
	5. informed and human dignity respecting approach of all members of the academic staff and employees of the CULS.
4. The services provided and study modifications rendered with the aim of achieving accessibility of all areas of the academic life must not reduce study requirements, in other words, every student of the CULS must demonstrate the same continuous and output results to complete the qualification pursued by him/her.

1. The CULS shall endeavour to ensure a fully-fledged participation of handicapped and disadvantaged students in all areas of the academic and social lives.
2. The CULS guarantees protection of handicapped students’ personal data; the CULS treats health-related data as sensitive and confidential.

(7) Moreover, the CULS pays great attention to social needs of members of the academic community and other employees who are long-term or severely handicapped, and in all of its activities as well as in activities of academic self-governing bodies, the CULS introduces suitable measures to ensure equality in employment of such persons.

Clause 2

**Special educational needs**

1. For the purposes of inclusive university education, provision of counselling services and other supporting measures, including special educational measures, a study applicant or a student with special educational needs is understood as a person whose health condition requires the modification of admission procedures, study conditions, removal of physical barriers, or, as the case may be, special modifications of the CULS premises in a way that make it possible for such applicant/student to enter the premises and to study.
2. Methodical guidelines for funding the extra costs of study of special needs students define the categories of students as follows:
	1. Students able to use eyesight (A1)

Students suffering from a visual disorder which, however, still enables them to use their eyesight (also for work with texts), with common document formats, including visual formats. The modification of documents consists in enlarging or other optical changes, without having to use screen readers.

* 1. Students able to use touch / voice (A2)

Students with severe sight impairment who work either with tactile documents or screen readers (in combination with a braille display or voice outputs) and therefore require an editable format of text documents or documents adapted content- and form-wise.

* 1. Students able to use a spoken language (B1)

Students with hearing impairment who prefer a spoken language in interpersonal communication (i.e. the Czech language most often) in the spoken or written form.

* 1. Students able to use a sign language (B2)

Students with severe hearing impairment who prefer a sign language in interpersonal communication (i.e. the Czech sign language most often).

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1. Students with impairment of lower extremities (C1)

Students with restricted ability to move who - with respect to their movement impairment - need and use other personal equipment, whether supporting sticks or mechanical or electrical wheelchairs, in order to be able to move independently.

1. Students with impairment of upper extremities (C2)

Students with restricted ability to move their hands who can use their upper extremities only to a limited extent or with the help of special aids or modified procedures - to carry out activities commonly linked with study, such as making handwritten notes or making notes by means of a keyboard, or to use objects or equipment necessary for fulfilment of study obligations (physical books, stationery, instruments, etc.) or everyday need items.

1. Students with specific learning disorders (D)

Students for whom it is objectively impossible to perform study obligations as normally expected, due to dyslexia, dysgraphia, dysorthographia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia or the fairly common combined attention deficit and hyperactivity.

1. Students with autistic spectrum disorder (E)

Students who are objectively prevented from performing study obligations as normally expected, due to neurodevelopmental disorders of autistic spectrum.

1. Students with other disorders (F)

Students who are objectively prevented from performing study obligations as normally expected, due to other psychical disorders or difficulties, including non-autistic neurodevelopmental disorders, i.e. impaired language, speech and other communication skills, or chronic somatic diseases.

Clause 3

**Objective**

1. The objective of the CULS activities is to ensure for all persons, irrespective of the nature and level of their handicaps, an equal accessibility to education, personal development, growth of talents, creative, intellectual and physical skills, meeting their full potential.

Clause 4

**Strategies**

1. Disclosure of information corresponding to the current level of scientific knowledge in the given area to study applicants and students with special needs - an activity connected with fostering the quality communication of the CULS employees engaged in the given area as well as activities directed at an increase in awareness of members of the academic staff and other staff of the CULS in these issues.

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1. Barrier-free access to the CULS premises, creation of special study conditions and purpose-directed adjustment of the interior equipment of lecture rooms, dormitories and the refectory.
2. Organization of educational and discussion events for members of the academic staff and other staff of the CULS and students who are in contact with special needs students, with the aim of ensuring a proper approach to the affected group of students and their specific learning needs at various Faculties and fields of study.
3. Provision of assistance during the study at the CULS in order to compensate for the students’ disadvantages in performing their study obligations and related activities.
4. Technical facilities of the CULS departments intended for the use by all special needs students.
5. Provision of other forms of support within the competence of every Faculty and the Counselling Centre.

Clause 5

**Organization of the support system for special educational needs students**

1. On the university-wide level, the Counselling Centre for support of CULS students with special educational needs works a part of the CULS Institute of Education and Communication (hereinafter as the Counselling Centre). The Counselling Centre is engaged in information, coordination, consultancy, diagnostic, registration, intervention and conceptual activities as well as methodical assistance as regards requirements of study applicants and students with special needs.
2. Activities of the Counselling Centre especially include:
	1. provision of counselling services to handicapped and disadvantaged applicants for study at the CULS and the CULS handicapped and disadvantaged students;
	2. performs diagnostics of special educational needs of students enrolled, maintains a register of these students and recommends special supporting safeguards, in cooperation with members of the Departments for Studies of the individual Faculties and the CULS Institute;
	3. cooperates with contact persons for special needs students at the individual Faculties, with members of the Departments for Studies;
	4. ensures awareness as to study conditions at the CULS in relation to study applicants; ensures that study applicants receive timely information on the admission procedure;
	5. cooperates with similar centres at other universities, Association of University Counsellors and interest groups of handicapped people;
	6. issues and updates information materials on an annual basis, takes care to ensure that such materials are distributed in a purposeful manner;
	7. provides information, educational, enlightenment activities regarding these issues at the CULS;
	8. obtains and provides new information and suggestions as to the most recent methods, technologies and special aids for study of handicapped persons, and initiates the introduction of the same at the CULS;

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* 1. organizes services related to the activities of making study accessible, e.g. text digitalization, assistance and interpreting services and other services;

* 1. maintains a register of special educational needs students and contributes to the procurement of funding of their study.
1. On the level of the individual Faculties, a system of contact persons or tutors is available to provide help special needs students in solving study-related problems.
2. Contact persons perform the following tasks:
	1. if a study applicant requires in his/her application for study that his/her specific needs should be taken into consideration, the relevant contact person must start to communicate with the study applicant in order to discuss and prepare a modified admission procedure, in cooperation with the Counselling Centre, while in general, any suggested adjustments should deviate from the common procedure as little as possible (information on the given student is provided by the relevant Department for Studies);
	2. to cooperate with the Counselling Centre in maintaining a register of study applicants and students with special needs;
	3. to inform special needs students of the services rendered by the Counselling Centre, to keep the information updated for applicants and students on the website of the respective Faculty;
	4. to develop activities that are directed at an increase in awareness of members of the academic staff and other staff of the Faculties regarding the problems of special educational needs students;
	5. to promote the formation of an academic environment that is friendly to special educational needs students;
	6. to advise graduates from the Faculties of information sources concerning the employment of special needs persons and monitor their entry into the labour market.
3. Every CULS Faculty is competent to set up lecture rooms in a way that satisfies the needs of study applicants and students in general, i.e. including special needs students.

Clause 6

**Admission procedure**

1. To be admitted to study at the CULS, every study applicant must demonstrate the required study prerequisites.
2. Where a study applicant requires that the admission procedure should be modified with the view of his/her type of handicap, the application for study must include a justified request in this sense, accompanied by a functional disability assessment (issued by the CULS Counselling Centre) or a medical report.
3. Based on the above application, the Department for Studies shall immediately inform the contact person of the Faculty that is to examine - in cooperation with the Counselling Centre - the application for modification of entrance examination. The contact person shall communicate with the applicant in person, determining the nature and scope of the specific claim, and, in cooperation with the Counselling Centre - the contact person provides a proposal for modification of entrance examination to the Department for Studies. As a rule, the modification proposed should deviate from the common procedure as little as possible. Furthermore, verification is carried out with respect to the applicant’s preparedness to use standard technologies available to overcome the given specific barriers (compensatory aids, communication technology, knowledge of a sign language or tactile script, etc.).

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Clause 7

**Support provided to special needs students by disadvantage types during the study**

1. Measures valid for all types of handicaps and disadvantages:
	1. modification of admission procedures and other assessment of achievements during the study with respect to students’ individual needs; these activities are arranged by contact persons
	2. provision of information to students as regards the support system offered by the CULS; these activities are arranged by contact persons and the Counselling Centre
	3. receipt and consulting of students’ suggestions for improvement in accessibility to study materials, buildings and other premises of the CULS; these activities are arranged by contact persons in cooperation with the Counselling Centre
	4. the Counselling Centre is in charge of the implementation of suggestions for improvement in accessibility to study
	5. monitoring of the progress of the learning pathway and performance of study obligations of students with special educational needs; these activities are arranged by the Counselling Centre in cooperation with the Department for Studies
	6. organization of assistance support during the study; arranged by the CULS Counselling Centre.
2. Special support forms are valid subject to the type of special educational needs.
3. Study applicants and students with physical or locomotor handicaps, visual impairment, hearing impairment, specific learning disabilities, chronic diseases and difficulties, are included in a personal assistance programme in accordance with their special educational needs: accompanying persons, interpreting, shared housing, tutoring, assistance during study, procurement of special aids and technologies for instruction and learning. The Counselling Centre provides individual counselling services, including information, professional diagnostic and professional intervention services.

Clause 8

**Accommodation and meals**

1. In the evaluation process of applications for accommodation, students who have been recognized as long-term handicapped persons or long-term severally handicapped persons as per Act No. 117/1995 Coll., on State Social Benefits, Section 9(2)(b) and (c) or holders of ZTP [severally handicapped] and ZTP/P [severally handicapped/guide] cards, shall be advantaged by provision of barrier-free accommodation.

Clause 9

**Final provisions**

1. This Directive becomes valid and effective on the day of its publication.

In Prague, on 21 May 2018

prof. Ing. Petr Sklenička, CSc., Rector*, m.p.*

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