

Student Policies

Activities Calendar

Each campus maintains a calendar listing the time and location of approved activities. Students must make arrangements for scheduling an event and reserving a location for a co-curricular activity with the appropriate Student Government Activities Advisor before the event can be placed on the activities calendar.

ADA Americans with Disabilities Act

HCC complies with, and fully supports, the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in the services, programs and activities provided and operated by the College. HCC also complies with, and fully supports, other federal, state and local laws that protect the rights of disabled persons, such as the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Florida Educational Equity Act.

Unless the result will cause an undue hardship to the College or fundamentally alter a program or service provided by the College, HCC will provide reasonable accommodations and auxiliary aids to disabled applicants, employees, students and members of the college community.

AIDS

HCC recognizes that Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), AIDS Related Complex (ARC), or a positive test for HIV antibody represents a significant public health threat. It is HCC's policy to balance the rights of AIDS victims to an education and employment at HCC against the rights of other students and employees to an environment in which they are protected from contracting the disease.

HCC will offer students with AIDS the same opportunities and benefits offered to other students. Generally, HCC will not impose any rules on students with AIDS that may have the effect of limiting their participation in the educational programs or activities at HCC. Students with AIDS will not be isolated by HCC or prevented from participating in college activities unless such participation has been scientifically shown to endanger the wider community. Risk determinations will be made by medical professionals in consultation with an office of services for students with disabilities.

A campus coordinator of services for students with disabilities is responsible for reviewing HCC's procedures and ensuring they are both free of discrimination and pose no danger to the community at large. The coordinator will also meet, as needed, to consider and recommend appropriate action in individual occurrences of the disease.

Any questions, concerns, consultation regarding AIDS, services or accommodations students should be referred to an office of services for students with disabilities.

Bulletin Boards

Each campus has several large community bulletin boards on which students may post announcements such as want ads, for-sale notices, notices of meetings, etc. Prior to posting, all notices from students must have the stamped approval of the appropriate campus dean of student services, the dean's designee, or the organization assigned authority and/or responsibility for the specific bulletin board.

NOTE: Most buildings also have information centers where official HCC notices and announcements are posted.

Campus Disturbances

State law prohibits the disruption of or interference with the administration, function or activities of an educational institution. In addition, the law prohibits individuals from encouraging students to disrupt the educational process or to interfere with the attendance of any student or employee.

Individuals who violate this law will be charged with a second-degree misdemeanor and, upon conviction, be fined up to \$500, imprisoned for up to 60 days, or both. In addition, students who violate this law will be subject to college disciplinary procedures.

Campus Events

All on-campus meetings must be scheduled with the appropriate campus student activity advisor or through the office of the appropriate campus dean of student services.

Children on Campus

For safety reasons, HCC requires that parents and others responsible for the care of minor children under the age of 17 should not bring them on campus while engaged in academic activities such as class, research, lab periods, or study groups. Minor children under the age of 17 should be on campus only when activities specifically allow for their involvement.

Disciplinary Action

The appropriate campus dean of student services, according to HCC administrative procedures, administers disciplinary action resulting from violations of the Student Code of Conduct. The Student Code of Conduct is located in the Student Handbook, which is available on the HCC Website at www.hccfl.edu.

Dress Code

HCC believes that students are mature enough to determine what constitutes appropriate dress. However, state law requires students to wear shirts and shoes while on HCC's campuses.

Drugs & Alcohol

One of HCC's goals is to maintain a drug-free workplace and educational setting. Therefore, the manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of alcohol or controlled substances on HCC property is prohibited. However, upon prior authorization by the President, alcoholic beverages may be served on HCC property and at HCC functions.

Annually, each registered student is provided detailed information about HCC drug policies and the behavioral, social and legal consequences associated with drug use. A copy of this handout is available on the HCC website at www.hccfl.edu.

Students charged with violating this policy will be referred for disciplinary action to the appropriate campus dean of student services. Students who violate the College's drug and alcohol policy will be subject to severe disciplinary sanctions including suspension or expulsion. In addition, the College will refer violators to the appropriate law enforcement agencies for prosecution and will assist law enforcement agencies in investigating students who may be using or trafficking drugs.

For more details regarding HCC's policy on alcohol and illicit drugs, see the HCC Safety Handbook, Student Handbook and Academic Planner or HCC Administrative Rule 6HX-10-2.05. Copies of the policies are in HCC libraries.

The College will also provide prospective students with a review of HCC's alcohol and drug prevention and education programs.

Hazing

Officers, members, and others associated with HCC student organizations are prohibited from engaging in hazing and in participating in activities on or off campus that endanger students' health or safety.

Ombudsman/Student Advocate

The vice president for student services and enrollment management is the college's ombudsman/advocate for students. The vice president's office is located on the third floor of the district administrative offices. Students may appeal decisions related to course access and credits granted toward degrees to the office of the ombudsman.

Religious Observances

HCC will reasonably accommodate the religious observances, practices, and beliefs of students in its admission, class attendance and the examination policies and in work assignments. Students must notify instructors at least one week prior to a religious observance.

Students may file a grievance if they believe they have unreasonably been denied an educational benefit due to their religious beliefs or practices.



Safety and Security

The HCC Office of Security is available to assist all students and employees. The Security Office patrols college property to detect and deter criminal activity, provide protection to those on campus, provide security for college property, and detect and document hazardous, unusual and suspicious behavior and conditions.

The Security Department provides information and assistance on a 24-hour basis. The department utilizes uniformed patrol officers with marked vehicles and officers on foot patrol to observe and detect criminal behavior and suspicious activities; enforce traffic and parking regulations; and assist students and employees.

Students, employees, and members of the community are required to obey all local, state and federal laws, statutes and ordinances. In addition, members of the college community must observe all HCC administrative rules and procedures. The Security Department is responsible for monitoring compliance with these laws and many of the College's rules and procedures.

Responsible students or employees should:

- Inform the Security Department about suspicious conduct, criminal activities and hazardous situations.
- Refrain from leaving doors and windows open when rooms are vacant.
- Walk to cars and classes in groups or with a companion. **(Call 253-7911 for an officer escort to the parking lots or garage.)**
- Walk in well-lighted areas at night, even when in a group.
- Attend to their intuition. **(If students feel they are being followed, they should change direction and walk toward a group of people or to a secure area.)**
- Watch their belongings.
- Avoid strangers that appear suspicious or out of place.
- Freely contact Security to ask for assistance.

Students who notice situations that represent potential or real safety or security problems should notify the local campus security office or call 253-7911. After hours call 220-7032.

Upon request, the College will make available to prospective students its policies, procedures, statistics and other information about campus safety and security. The Safety Handbook is available at the student services webpage at www.hccfl.edu/student/services.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Hillsborough Community College will maintain a workplace and educational setting free from harassment of any kind and from any source including but not be limited to supervisors, co-workers, administrators, students, faculty, consultants and visitors to the College.

Each administrator, faculty member, professional-managerial employee, classified employee and student should pursue assignments and responsibilities at the College with a total commitment to basic ethical principles and professional codes of conduct.

The College believes sexual relationships between teachers and students or superiors and subordinates are ill advised as they might adversely affect the academic or workplace environment or relationships. Such relationships between superiors and subordinates or between teachers and students are unethical because the consent of students or subordinates may not in fact be voluntary given the "power imbalance" in such relationships.

Smoking Policy

HCC complies with the Florida Indoor Clean Air Act. Smoking is not permitted in college buildings or classrooms, enclosed hallways, or adjacent to exit and entrance doors. Smoking is only permitted in outdoor unenclosed areas. Campuses have designated smoking areas.

Student Misconduct

Students must adhere to all published federal and state laws and ordinances and College administrative rules and procedures. Alleged violations of the Student Code of Conduct will be referred to the appropriate campus dean of student services. Following the guidelines in the Student Handbook and Academic Planner for student conduct and discipline, the dean will determine the appropriate College response.

HCC will cooperate with external police and judicial authorities investigating alleged violations of public laws or ordinances.

Telephones

Pay phones are located on each campus for student use. Office telephones are for official use only. If the College receives an emergency call for a student, every effort will be made to locate and inform the student. However, the College will not deliver personal messages of a non-emergency nature.

Textbook Refund Policy

HCC bookstores grant full refunds on textbooks (whether purchased new or used) during the first two weeks of the semester and during the first week of summer term. Books returned after those deadlines will be purchased at used book prices (55 percent of purchase price). In determining the amount to be refunded, the bookstores will follow these guidelines:

- All refund requests must be accompanied by sales receipts.
- If purchased new, books must be unmarked and must not be defaced in any manner. Marked books will be purchased at used book prices. The bookstore staff members are the sole judge of whether a book is in new or used condition.
- Each HCC bookstore will refund textbooks purchased at any other HCC bookstore.
- Books or merchandise that is defective should be exchanged as soon as the defect is discovered. Defective used books must be returned for exchange during the first two weeks of class.
- Students must provide a student ID and a government issued photo ID in order to receive refunds.
- Refunds are not given for merchandise other than textbooks.
- Refunds are not given for special-order books.
- When students' petitions for late drops are approved, the deadline for refunds will be waived.

Buy Back Policy

If a textbook is in good, resalable condition and is a required textbook for the next semester (except when the bookstore's current stock exceeds the anticipated demand), the bookstore may buy the book back at a price determined by the bookstore.

The buy-back period is the first two weeks and last week of each semester and on every Tuesday and Wednesday during the semester.

On each campus, bookstore hours are posted each term.

Threats of Violence

Threats by HCC students, staff or visitors to do bodily harm, damage property or disrupt the operation of the college are inimical with the goals of the College and will not be tolerated. Students or employees who make such threats, whether verbal or written, expressed or implied, will be disciplined according to the appropriate administrative procedures.

Records Policies

Confidentiality of Student Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) governs the confidentiality of student records. (Records are defined as all records, files and data directly related to students that are created, maintained, and used by HCC.)

HCC students have the right to:

- Inspect and review their educational reports and records.
- Have privacy of their educational reports and records maintained.
- Require the college to obtain written consent prior to disclosing personally identifiable information except in those instances specifically noted in the statute.
- Challenge and request a hearing on requiring the college to amend any portion of the students' records that are inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the students' privacy.

Right of Access

Students and parents or guardians of dependent (per Section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code) students are entitled to these rights and to access to students' records. Parents or guardians of students will not be given access to the students' records without the written consent of the student or documentation that the student is dependent.

Students and eligible parents or guardians may request a list of the types of student records maintained by HCC. These records include but are not limited to:

- Academic records, i.e., application, transcripts, enrollment verifications, course records, grades, etc. (Direct requests to the appropriate campus admissions, registration and records office.)
- Disciplinary records. (Direct requests to the appropriate campus dean of student services.)
- Financial aid records. (Direct requests to the appropriate campus financial aid office.)
- Student account and fee records. (Direct requests to the College financial services department.)

Eligible individuals may inspect or review student records and reports and receive copies for the cost of producing such copies. College employees may review student records when the reason for their review serves a legitimate educational or administrative purpose. Unless conducting approved research, faculty members may review the records only of students currently enrolled in their classes.

Right of Waiver of Access to Confidential Letters or Statements

A student, eligible parent, or guardian may waive the right of access to evaluations, confidential letters, or letters of recommendation. When requested, HCC will provide the names of individuals who have submitted such letters and evaluations. Moreover, HCC will endeavor to ensure the recommendations and evaluations are used only for the purpose(s) intended.

Corrections

HCC maintains student records electronically, on paper, on microfilm and on microfiche. In order to provide students the opportunity to correct errors and appeal discrepancies, the College will maintain the original documents on which the records are based for one year. After one year, the source documents may no longer be available and documenting errors will become the students' responsibility.

Right to Challenge and Hearing

Students and eligible parents or guardians have the right to challenge the content and request amendment of records and reports they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. To present such a challenge, students, eligible parents or guardians should contact the appropriate campus admissions, registration and records office.

Challenges may be settled informally by a written agreement. If challenges cannot be settled informally, either party may request, within a reasonable period of time, that a formal hearing be held to settle the dispute. If a request is made, the appropriate campus president will appoint an administrator, without an interest in the outcome, to serve as the hearing officer. Students, eligible parents or guardians, and college employees whose testimony is relevant to the issue may present evidence. After reviewing all available evidence and testimony the hearing officer will make a written recommendation to the appointing president. The campus president will issue a written decision.

Students and eligible parents or guardians have the right to appeal decisions of campus presidents' rulings on FERPA challenges to the vice president for student services and enrollment management.

Right to Privacy

Students have the right to privacy with respect to the educational records maintained by the College. Personally identifiable student records or reports are confidential and will not be released without the written consent of students, eligible parents or

guardians. However, there are exceptions. HCC will release directory information on students unless students submit written requests to the appropriate campus admissions, registration & records office requesting that directory information be withheld. Directory information includes students':

- Names, addresses and listed telephone numbers;
- Date of birth.
- Majors.
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports.
- Weight and height (of members of athletic teams).
- Dates of attendance.
- Degrees and awards received.
- Most recent previous educational institution.
- Enrollment status.

Complaints

Individuals who believe their privacy rights have been violated may petition the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Acts Office at the Department of Health & Welfare in Washington, D.C. or file suit in Circuit Court to request enforcement of the rights they believe to have been violated.

Rule and Procedure

Students may obtain a copy of the administrative rule and procedure on student records, including the requirements of the federal and state laws, from their campus dean of student services or at the campus libraries.

Release of Information

Upon request, HCC will prepare and certify statements relating to students' degrees earned, GPA, enrollment dates, etc. If students do not provide forms on which to report the information, it will be reported in a letter signed by a College official. Since the federal government requires educational institutions to take precautions to prevent the misuse of student data, HCC will release student information only upon receipt of a signed, written request by the student or other authorized requestor.

Parties requesting information should submit their requests, and any accompanying forms, to the campus admissions, registration and records office. The College will try to process requests for information within 10 working days.