

# Disability Services Handbook

Austin College | Division of Student Affairs



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## **INTRODUCTION**

Federal legislation, which continues to be revised, has influenced access to educational opportunities for students with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities have responded to these new opportunities by utilizing job training and educational programs offered at colleges and universities. Austin College has been responsive to this special population and remains committed to serving students with disabilities, as is reasonable.

The purpose of this guide is to provide faculty, staff, and students of Austin College with relevant information regarding disabling conditions that many students experience in the academic environment. This guide also provides strategies and resources available to the Austin College community when working with students with disabilities.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Students are eligible for disability services if they have been admitted to Austin College and have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Major life activities include such functions as breathing, seeing, hearing, speaking, walking, learning, working, performing manual tasks, and caring for oneself.

Students with disabilities who desire accommodations or other services are required to register with the College through the Vice President of Student Affairs office. Referral to other areas responsible for providing services will then be made (e.g., Student Life office, Counseling, Academic Skills Center). It is the student's responsibility to provide written documentation, by a qualified professional that includes a diagnosis, the impairments caused by the disabling condition, and recommended accommodations. Determination of eligibility for services and of appropriate accommodations is made on an individual, case-by-case basis

## **DOCUMENTATION**

Written documentation must be provided by a qualified professional with training and experience relevant to the diagnosed disability. Physical disabilities are most often verified by physicians and psychological disabilities by psychologists or psychiatrists. Learning disabilities may be identified and documented by psychologists or educational diagnosticians. (See **Appendix A-E** for specific documentation guidelines)

For disabilities that may change substantially with time, such as learning or psychological disabilities, evaluations should be recent. Although no specific limits have been set for the age of the evaluation, in order to demonstrate the current impact of the disability and to identify appropriate accommodations, learning disability documentation less than three years old is preferred and documentation of psychological disabilities may need to be within six months. The College may request additional information or updated evaluations, at the student's expense, if necessary to make a decision about eligibility or appropriate accommodations. The College may consult with other professionals for assistance in interpreting or evaluating documentation. The College does not conduct disability evaluations, but can refer students to off-campus professionals who will provide the service, at student expense.

Written documentation of the disability should be submitted under the professional's letterhead, dated, and signed. The letter or evaluation should address the following issues:

- Student's name
- Date of evaluation and/or last contact
- Diagnosis and history (e.g., symptoms, age at onset, procedures used to assess or diagnosis the disorder); learning disability documentation, full psycho-educational or neuropsychological evaluation report, preferably less than three years old (for more specific information, see Guidelines for Disability Documentation, **Appendix A-E**)
- Summary of procedure used to assess or diagnose the disorder (including all scores)
- Nature of the impairment(s) of the major life activity
- Level of severity of the impairment(s) (mild, moderate, severe)
- Stability of impairment and recommended interval for re-evaluation
- Duration of treatment and frequency of contact
- Medication and other treatments
- Functional limitations in an academic setting
- Strengths in an academic setting
- Recommended accommodations and rationale to support them
- Any additional relevant information or comments
- Professional's name, address, phone number, and information about his/her licensure or certification, degree, training, etc.

## **ACCOMODATING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The goals of the Academic Skills Center (ASC) are to provide services, which will enable students with disabilities to participate fully in college life and to ensure that a person with a disability will not, on the basis of that disability, be denied full and equal access to academic and co-curricular programs.

The College has the right to set and maintain standards for admitting students and evaluating their progress and is not obligated to waive any requirements that are fundamental or essential to the integrity of the program. Therefore, students with disabilities must meet the academic standards for participation in a program, given appropriate accommodations.

The Director of the Academic Skills Center at Austin College coordinates classroom services for students with disabilities. The Director disseminates information about available services, evaluates documentation to determine the appropriate accommodations and assists students in obtaining those accommodations. To obtain services, students with disabilities requesting classroom accommodation must meet with the Director of the Academic Skills Center at the beginning of each semester. Once eligibility is verified and accommodations are identified, students negotiate with current faculty members to arrange accommodations. Students will be given a letter from the Academic Skills Center verifying their eligibility for particular accommodations (See **Appendices F-H**). Should a student request an accommodation without working with the Director, faculty should direct the student to the Academic Skills Center before the accommodation is provided. The Academic Skills Center is located in the Wright Campus Center, Room 211. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Students requesting accommodations outside the classroom based on other areas of disabilities (e.g., physical or psychological) need to be referred to the Vice President for Student Affairs, so documentation can be filed, evaluated, and if appropriate, followed by requests for accommodation.

## **ACCOMODATIONS**

The goal of accommodations is to provide access to educational programs and co-curricular activities. In some cases, identifying appropriate, effective, and reasonable accommodations is a trial and error process requiring cooperation and feedback from the student with the disability. A student with a disability has a right to request a specific form of accommodation, but the College may offer another effective form instead.

The services available through the Academic Skills Center include, but are not limited to:

- Notification of faculty to arrange for special testing conditions or other academic accommodations
- Assistance with accessibility issues
- Facilitation of communication between students and faculty or staff members
- Referral to other support services on campus or in the community

Accommodations that require the hiring of an auxiliary aide, such as an interpreter, will be coordinated by the Director of the Academic Skills Center and Austin College will negotiate the costs with the student and other agencies involved.

## **Testing Procedures**

Both the student and the faculty member are responsible for coordinating testing accommodations.

### **Student Responsibilities**

Students eligible for testing accommodations are responsible for the following:

1. Discuss with professor where and when test will be given.
2. If test is given in the ASC, the student must schedule the test with the ASC one week prior to test date. (See **Appendix I** for sample email communication)
3. Remind professor to submit Testing Instruction Form to the ASC

### **Faculty Responsibilities:**

Providing accommodations such as extended test time or altered test formats is the responsibility of the faculty member. The Director of the Academic Skills Center may provide suggestions or assistance when necessary to implement the accommodation. Faculty may independently provide test accommodations or seek assistance at the Academic Skills Center.

If the Academic Skills Center is used to provide test accommodations, the ASC Staff should be provided with the following by the professor:

1. Information regarding the standard allotment of time for completion of exam;
2. Information regarding the use of computers or specialized software during testing;
3. Information regarding specialized instructions or items allowed in the testing room;
4. Adequate notice from students in order to reserve rooms and equipment.

Testing instructions can be relayed to the ASC staff by telephone or through the electronic Exam Accommodation Instruction Form located on the Academic Skills Center website <http://www.austincollege.edu/campus-life/academic-skills-center/exam-accommodation-instruction/>

## **Grievance Policy**

When a student believes he or she has been discriminated against or denied accommodation on the basis of a disability, the student should first discuss the issue with the instructor in an attempt to resolve the difference. If no resolution is reached after such interaction and consultation with the Director of the Academic Skills Center, the student may file an appeal with the Academic Standing Committee within 7 days of the alleged incident of discrimination. The Academic Standing Committee will issue a determination and suggested resolution. If necessary, the student may make a final written appeal to the Vice President of Academic Affairs within 7 days of the official determination by the Academic Standing Committee. The findings of the Vice President of Academic Affairs shall be considered final.

## **Degree Modification**

Students may request modification of degree or program requirements on the basis of a disability by submitting appropriate diagnostic documentation and a written request for degree modification to the Director of the Academic Skills Center. The Academic Standing Committee will review the supporting documentation and any additional information appropriate to the request before making a determination. If necessary, a final written appeal may be filed with the Vice President of Academic Affairs within 7 days of the official determination by the Academic Standing Committee. The decision of the Vice President of Academic Affairs shall be considered final.

## **Housing**

Housing accommodations (e.g., requesting a single room because of a disability or requesting an assistance or emotional support animal) involve an exception to standard policy; therefore, requests will be reviewed by the Vice President of Student Affairs and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. (See **Appendix H** for Service Dog and Emotional Support Animal Policies)

## **EARLY NOTIFICATION**

It is helpful if students with disabilities seek their accommodations early in the semester. Faculty members are encouraged to include this information on their syllabus. The following is a suitable example:

Austin College seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all individuals with documented disabilities. However, written notification that you are registered for Access Services through the Academic Skills Center (ASC) is required. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation and would like to request it for my course, please discuss this with me and allow one week advance notice to complete your request. If you have not already registered please contact the Director of the Academic Skills Center at 903-813-2454 or visit the ASC at WCC 211.

On the accommodation request form, it states that students are to notify the faculty members at least **one week in advance** prior to needing the accommodations. This policy was established to allow faculty ample time to accommodate the student's needs. Although students are encouraged to seek accommodations at the beginning of each semester, they may do so at any point in the academic year with the understanding that the accommodations go in effect the following week, unless the faculty member chooses to waive the timing requirement (e.g., if a student has a test and seeks extended time but does not request the accommodation until the day before the test, the faculty may elect not to grant the accommodation but provide the extended time on the next test).

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The documentation materials and other information gathered in the process of determining eligibility for services is confidential and **will be shared with appropriate college personnel solely on a need to know basis.**

An accommodation letter will be given to the student and it is up to the student to decide in which courses the accommodation is needed and to share the letter with those faculty members. The student need not notify a faculty member of a disability if he/she is not requesting an accommodation in that faculty member's class.

## **SUGGESTIONS REGARDING THE DIFFERENT DISABILITIES**

### **Autistic Spectrum Disorder**

What was formerly classified as Asperger Syndrome (AS), now is termed Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The symptoms of ASD vary by degrees from person to person. ASD is a neurological disorder that is characterized by significant impairments affecting social interaction and communication.

Most people have an innate ability to understand nonverbal social cues, to naturally pay attention to what most consider relevant information from our surroundings, and to process this information without much conscious thought. In contrast, people with ASD do not automatically know what to expect or what is expected of them in social situations. A person with ASD has difficulty in understanding and expressing nonverbal aspects of communication, including facial expressions, gestures, body language and tone of voice. The disorder affects the area of the brain that normally handles these aspects of communication. Many, if not most, persons with ASD have very high IQs, but still struggle with social interactions and communication.

As part of the social deficits associated with difficulty in correctly interpreting or expressing nonverbal communications, a student with ASD often exhibits several of the following characteristics:

1. a stiff, pedantic conversational style;
2. lack of eye contact or unusual facial expression;
3. difficulty making friends;
4. inflexibility;
5. an unusual gait;
6. fine or gross motor deficits;

7. an overly literal interpretation of words;
8. social naïveté; and
9. one or more intense, consuming interests that may change over time.

Students with ASD are also prone to becoming overstimulated. While most students can attend to multiple sensory inputs without discomfort, students with ASD may become overwhelmed by such environments. Sometimes students will need to identify a quiet place to retreat when they begin to feel overstimulated. Some classroom accommodations which are typical include a distraction reduced environment for testing, and a seat near the door for stress or sensory breaks.

## **Hearing Impairment**

The hearing impaired category includes individuals with partial or total loss of hearing. Most are considered hard of hearing; total hearing loss is rare. Not all students with hearing impairment benefit from a hearing aid which only amplifies sound. Some hearing disorders cause sound to be distorted so amplification is not helpful.

Some students may also have a speech and language impairment, especially if they had hearing problems from early childhood when language skills are usually learned. Speech for such persons may be difficult.

Most hearing impaired students communicate with sign language. Sign language is somewhat abbreviated so the student may not have mastered the subtleties of written language. Their written material may appear similar to a person whose native language is not English. Some hearing impaired students are able to read lips; however, most cannot. For students who can read lips, the face of the instructor must be directly visible. Speak clearly and distinctly without exaggerated lip movement. It may be helpful to restate other students' questions for the hearing impaired student. Remember, when lecturing not to turn away or cover your mouth with your hand; use facial expressions whenever possible.

Some students may use an interpreter in class. When an interpreter or "signer" is used, it is important not to talk rapidly as sign language is not as rapid as spoken language. Although it will be natural to talk to the interpreter rather than the student, it is accepted practice to talk to the student; the interpreter will understand and expect this.

At first, an interpreter may be distracting, but the class quickly accepts his or her presence. Refer any requests for this service to the Director of the Academic Skills Center.

## **Learning Disability**

Learning Disabilities involve various difficulties which make an otherwise non-disabled person experience difficulties in understanding or using spoken or written language. This condition usually results in the student experiencing difficulty in speaking, writing, reading, spelling, and/or performing mathematical calculations. Typically, students with learning disabilities are of average or above average intelligence. Learning disabilities are a relatively recent diagnosis, and it is possible that a student with one may not be aware of it.



Because of the wide variety of learning disabilities, there is no specific "best way" of teaching the learning disabled student. Aids and services for students with learning disabilities are similar to those for students who have difficulty understanding the written or spoken word. Services may include note takers, readers, tape recorders, oral test administration, extra time for completion, etc.

Because this disability is not visible, it is understandable that you may doubt its authenticity. If you do, please contact the Director of the Academic Skills Center.

## **Manual Impairment**

Manual impairments can result from disabilities such as cerebral palsy, polio, and spinal cord injury. The manual impairment may vary from mild to severe, and spasticity, if present, varies greatly as well.

Students with limited use of their hands may have difficulty writing or holding a pen or pencil. Students may want to use an auxiliary aid such as tape recorder. In some instances another student may serve as a note taker for such students. You are encouraged to let the manually impaired students obtain copies of other students' notes, if needed.

Test administration with manually impaired students may require some individualized attention if writing is a difficulty. Should the faculty member be unable to execute the request, the Director of the Academic Skills Center may be able to provide assistance. Early notification of such needs will be appreciated.

## **Mobility Impairment**

This category of disability includes students using wheelchairs, crutches, braces, walkers, or canes to move about. Not all students with mobility impairments require mobility aids.

Classrooms and course equipment must be accessible to these students. If the course requires travel to off campus locations, these locations must also be accessible. There are some general considerations for students with wheelchairs and other mobility difficulties.

1. If the classroom is inaccessible to the student with disabilities, such as a room on a second floor in a building with no elevator, the class should be moved to another location.
2. If distances between the classes are long, the student may be late because of physical difficulties. Be reasonably lenient in this respect.
3. If a field trip off campus is going to be required, ask the student to aid in the planning of that function (choice of site, proper mode of transportation, etc.).
4. Classes taught in a laboratory setting may require some modification of the workstations. Wheelchair access under a tabletop may be a problem as may aisle widths and reaching distances at the workstation.
5. Some students may not be able to participate in laboratory without an aide. The student can give all the instructions to an aide and learn as much as other students, except of course, the actual manipulation of the objects involved.
6. Students with mobility difficulties are often not confined to wheelchairs. Some students can walk short distances and move easily from the wheelchair to a stationary chair. These students may at times still need some accommodations.

7. Most students with mobility impairments will ask for assistance if they desire it. Offer assistance if you wish, but accept a, "No, thank you" graciously, if given.

## **Psychological Disorders**

Disabilities that are classified as psychological/psychiatric disorders include conditions like bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety and many others. Such conditions are persistent psychological, emotional or behavioral disorders which result in significant impairment of educational, social or vocational functioning.

Some concerns for students with psychological disabilities in the academic setting include side effects of medication, mood swings, class absence due to treatment or medication adjustments, fluctuations in energy and focus, panic attacks, social isolation, and anxiety. Therefore, it is important to encourage the use of appropriate compensatory techniques in order to successfully manage in an academic setting. For example, students should understand their cognitive strengths and weaknesses for the purpose of individualizing learning strategies. In addition employing proper advocacy skills along with organizational and time management skills is vital to establishing self-management and reducing stress.

Accommodations that are common for students with cognitive disabilities are also appropriate for students with psychological disorders. Notetakers, tape recording of lectures, and the use of a laptop for notetaking can address the fluctuations in energy and focus caused by medication adjustments. Other common strategies include extended time for testing, separate testing rooms, reduced course loads, or preferential seating.

Here are some considerations for working with students with psychological disabilities:

1. expect behavior that is consistent with the student code of conduct
2. provide clear direction regarding expectations and be consistent with all students
3. don't attempt a therapeutic relationship
4. express acceptance and reassurance

## **Speech Impediment**

Speech impediments may range from problems with word formation or voice strength to being totally non-verbal. The impediment may include stuttering, accompanied by distorted facial expressions, chronic hoarseness, difficulty with finding a proper word, etc.

Understandably, students with a speech impediment may be hesitant to participate in verbal activities, and pressure to do so may not be useful. It is important to give the student time for expressing thoughts and to avoid supplying words or finishing sentences. When speaking to the speech impaired, continue to talk naturally. The instructor can set the tone that encourages self-expression.

## **Visual Impairment**

Students with visual impairment may use one or several methods of dealing with visual information. These methods include readers, large print books, magnifying devices, and recorded materials. Visual impairments vary from total blindness to limits on peripheral vision.

Students with partial vision should be encouraged to sit near the front of the classroom to take maximum advantage of visual and auditory cues. Instructors should make every attempt to verbalize material written on the blackboard. Whenever it is possible, it is suggested that visually impaired students be allowed to touch materials that other students would be "looking at." An overhead projector that would enlarge printed materials may be very useful for some visually impaired students.

Each student will have a favorite method of reproducing lectures. Some will use a note taker, Braille writer, or a tape recorder. A Braille writer may be distracting at first, but other students will quickly get used to the noise.

Some students may use guide dogs. These dogs are highly trained and will not create any problems in the classroom. It is suggested that you do not touch or pet the dog while it is in harness.

Students with visual impairments may need to have tests administered orally. If it is difficult for the faculty member to execute this request, assistance may be provided by the Director of the ASC. Please give two or three days notice, if possible.

Please remember that blindness should not limit participation in most classroom activities. Encourage your visually limited students to participate as fully as they possibly can.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FROM FACULTY**

### **How can I recognize learning disabilities?**

Learning disabilities may be indicated when a student's performance is significantly lower in some area(s) than would be expected given his or her intelligence and ability in other areas. Some symptoms include pronounced difficulty in:

- Keeping letters and words in order when reading or writing
- Dropping endings off words or omitting small "function" words (e.g., "if," "but," "so," "to") when reading or writing
- Sequencing ideas in logical fashion
- Written expression (oral expression of ideas is significantly better than written expression)
- Comprehending what one has heard or read
- Efficiently retrieving information from memory
- Organization, time management skills
- Understanding time and number concepts
- Visual-spatial awareness, sense of direction
- Maintaining consistent levels of performance
- Accurately perceiving verbal and non-verbal social cues

Sometimes students with learning disabilities display poor attitudes towards learning and demonstrate self-defeating behaviors such as lateness to class, frequent absences, lack of participation in class, and a tendency to avoid rather than seek out help from professors. These behaviors are usually not the root of the problem in a student with a learning disability, but rather are maladaptive responses to the problem.

### **Who should I talk to if I have a concern about a student with a disability in my class?**

Talk to the professional staff at the Academic Skills Center and the student's mentor. Together we can discuss strategies that may address the needs of your student in a particular situation.

### **What should I do when a student requests accommodations in my class?**

Ask the student for an Accommodation Request Form (Appendix E) from the Academic Skills Center that recommends reasonable accommodations for your class. You are encouraged to refrain from granting requests for accommodation by students who cannot present you with this official form, as you will not have any way of knowing whether or not the student actually needs such accommodation. It is the student's responsibility to obtain this form from the Academic Skills Center after providing acceptable documentation of disability. It is also the student's responsibility to deliver this form to his/her professors. Take the time to engage the student in a discussion of his/her learning difficulties and to encourage him/her to seek your assistance if encountering difficulty with the class material.

### **What should I tell students who do not have an accommodation request form from the Academic Skills Center?**

Simply refer them to the Director of the Academic Skills Center, in the WCC 211 (903-813-2454). If the student has provided the ASC with acceptable documentation, the Director will prepare an Accommodation Request Form for the student to deliver to the appropriate faculty.

### **Do reasonable accommodations mean lower standards for students with disabilities?**

No. By allowing reasonable accommodations, students with disabilities are afforded equal opportunity to access information and achieve the same high standards expected of all our students. Appropriate modifications to academic requirements simply remove discriminatory barriers, and allow the student to be evaluated in terms of ability rather than disability. Although it is the responsibility of the ASC to determine what accommodations are needed to ensure access and minimize the impact of the disability, it is important that faculty members ensure that the proposed accommodations do not dilute the standards of the course. Faculty members with concerns about accommodations should not hesitate to discuss their concerns with the Director of the ASC. Frequently, successful provision of accommodation is the outcome of negotiation between student, professor, and the ASC.

### **What are some accommodations I might be asked to provide in my class?**

Typical accommodations include:

- Extended (but not unlimited) time on tests
- Distraction-reduced test environment
- Audio-taping of lectures
- Peer note takers
- Readers for exams
- Textbooks in alternate formats (ASC will provide)

### **How do I arrange for distraction – reduced test site?**

You may choose to give the exam to the student in a room that is separate from the rest of your class. If you want the student to test in the ASC, indicate directions for administering your test by filling out the Exam Accommodation Instruction Form found on the ASC webpage

(<http://www.austincollege.edu/campus-life/academic-skills-center>). Keep in mind it is the student's responsibility to request this service at least **one week** in advance of the test date so that you can decide where you will test the student. If the student will use the ASC as a testing site, the student should notify the Director of the ASC at least one week in advance so that a room will be assured.

### **What if I disagree with the accommodation described in the accommodation request form?**

Making reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is mandated by federal law. However, the manner in which a student's needs are accommodated is negotiable. If you have a pedagogical disagreement with the appropriateness of an accommodation, call the Director of the Academic Skills Center to discuss your concern. Again, successful provision of accommodation is often the outcome of negotiation between student, professor, and the ASC.

### **How can I make students with disabilities more comfortable in my class?**

Include an accommodation statement in your course syllabus directing the student to the Director of the ASC to file an official request for accommodations. Remember to protect the student's right to confidentiality by speaking to the student about his or her disability in your office rather than in the class or hallway.



### **GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTING ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER**

For the purpose of determining eligibility for services, documentation must be submitted describing the current impact of the disability as it relates to the accommodation request. Such documentation will consist of an evaluation conducted by a licensed or certified psychologist, psychiatrist, or other relevant professional with comprehensive training and experience in diagnosing AD/HD in adolescent and adult populations. Documentation should substantiate the need for services based on the student's current level of functioning and reflect evidence of a substantial limitation to learning or other major life activity in order for eligibility to be determined. We prefer that the evaluation be less than three years old in order to demonstrate the current impact of the disorder. Evaluations conducted by family members are not accepted. To identify appropriate accommodations, the evaluation should include a diagnostic interview that documents the following:

- **Alternative Causes Ruled Out:**  
The evaluator must demonstrate that alternative psychological, medical, or non-cognitive (e.g., educational, cultural) explanations for hyperactivity or attentional problems have been ruled out.
- **Statement of Presenting Problem:**  
A history of the individual's present attentional symptoms should consist of more than self-report, as information from third party sources is critical in the diagnosis of ADHD. The diagnostic interview should address the following:
  - History of presenting attentional symptoms, including evidence of ongoing impulsive/hyperactive or inattentive behavior that has significantly impaired functioning over time
  - Developmental history
  - Family history for presence of ADHD and other educational, learning, physical, or psychological difficulties deemed relevant by the examiner
  - Relevant medical and medication history
  - Relevant psychosocial history and any relevant interventions
  - A thorough academic history of elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education
  - A review of prior psychoeducational test reports to determine whether a pattern of strengths or weaknesses is supportive of attention or learning problems
  - Description of current functional limitations in an educational setting that are a direct result of problems with attention
  - Severity of the disorder
  - Relevant history of prior therapy

The diagnostic report should be on letterhead, dated and signed, indicating the certification or licensure of the evaluator. The report should include a summary of the diagnostic interview, the tests administered with subtest and standard scores, a description of the nature and severity of the substantial limitation to learning (or other major life activity) and the specific diagnosis, a description of the student's history, test behaviors, and score patterns that support the diagnosis, and recommended academic accommodations with a rationale to support them.



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**GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTING A LEARNING DISABILITY**

For the purpose of determining eligibility for services, documentation must be submitted describing the current impact of the disability as it relates to the accommodation request. Such documentation will consist of a psycho-educational or neuropsychological evaluation conducted by a licensed or certified psychologist, educational diagnostician, or other relevant professional with training and experience in identifying and diagnosing learning disabilities. Objective evidence of a substantial limitation in learning or other cognitive functions should be provided. We prefer that the evaluation be less than three years old in order to demonstrate the current impact of the disability. Evaluations conducted by family members are not accepted. To identify appropriate accommodations, the evaluation should include a diagnostic interview that measures the following:

- **Aptitude:**  
A comprehensive intellectual assessment should be administered. The age-appropriate Wechsler intelligence scale is strongly preferred. All subtest and standard scores should be reported.
- **Academic Achievement:**  
A complete achievement battery to measure current academic functioning is needed, including, at least, measures of reading (decoding and comprehension), oral and written language, and mathematics. The *Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery-Revised: Test of Achievement*, the *Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT)*, and the *Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK)* are among those which are acceptable.
- **Information Processing:**  
Short and long-term memory, sequential memory, auditory and visual perception/processing, speed of processing, executive functioning, and motor abilities should be addressed. Analysis of performance on some of the aptitude and achievement tests may provide relevant information, but additional assessment techniques may be needed.

The diagnostic report should be on letterhead, dated and signed, indicating the certification or licensure of the evaluator. The report should include a summary of the diagnostic interview, the tests administered with subtest and standard scores, a description of the nature and severity of the substantial limitation to learning (or other major life activity) and the specific diagnosis, a description of the student's history, test behaviors, and score patterns that support the diagnosis, and recommended academic accommodations with rationale to support them.

## Appendix C



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### **GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTING PHYSICAL DISABILITIES**

To the professional:

To assist Austin College in determining a student's eligibility for accommodations for a disability, please provide the following information about his/her disability on your professional letterhead.

- Student's name
- Date of evaluation and/or last contact
- Diagnosis and history (e.g., symptoms, age at onset, procedures used to assess or diagnose the disorder)
- Summary of procedures used to assess or diagnose the disorder, including all scores
- Alternative causes should be ruled out (e.g., psychological, medical, or non-cognitive explanations for hyperactivity, impulsivity, or attentional problems)
- Nature of impairment(s) on major life activities (must include evidence of current impairment and limitations in the academic setting)
- Level of severity of the impairment(s) (mild, moderate, or severe)
- Stability of impairment and recommended interval for re-evaluation
- Duration of treatment and frequency of contact
- Medication(s) and other treatments
- Strengths in an academic setting
- Recommended accommodations and rationale to support them
- Additional comments or relevant information
- Your name, address, phone number, and information about your licensure or certification, degree, training, area(s) of specialization, etc.

Please send the above information to:

Laura Márquez Ramsey  
Director, Academic Skills Center  
Austin College  
900 North Grand, Ste. 61544  
Sherman, TX 75090  
Fax (903) 813-3188



## Appendix D



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### **GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTING PSYCHOLOGICAL DISABILITIES**

For the purpose of determining eligibility for services, documentation must be submitted describing the current impact of the disability as it relates to the accommodation request. Such documentation will consist of an evaluation conducted by a licensed or certified professional with comprehensive training and relevant expertise in differential diagnosis of psychiatric disorders. Psychoeducational or neuropsychological testing may help to support the need for accommodations based on the potential for psychiatric disorders to interfere with cognitive performance. Documentation should substantiate the need for services based on the student's current level of functioning and reflect evidence of a substantial limitation to learning or other major life activity in order for eligibility to be determined.

To identify appropriate accommodations the documentation should include a comprehensive diagnostic/clinical evaluation that meets the criteria listed below. If there is no prior history of accommodations for psychological disability, the evaluator must include a detailed explanation of why accommodations were not needed in the past, and why they are currently requested.

- **Alternative Causes Ruled Out:**

*The evaluator must demonstrate that alternative medical, neurological, or non-cognitive (e.g., educational, cultural) explanations for psychological, emotional, and/or behavioral disorder have been ruled out.*

- **Currency of Documentation:**

Due to the changing nature of psychological, emotional, and behavioral disorders and syndromes, it is essential that a student provide recent and appropriate documentation from a qualified evaluator. If the diagnostic report is more than six months old, the student must submit updated information. Typically, the professional who produced the previous diagnostic report will provide this updated information. The letter will include an update of the diagnosis, a description of the student's current level of functioning during the preceding six months, and a rationale for the requested accommodations. Continuation of services will be based on updated information from the evaluator and any other current and relevant provider of health care.

- **Statement of Presenting Problem:**

A history of the individual's present symptoms should be indicated in a comprehensive diagnostic report that includes the following information:

- A specific diagnosis
- Developmental history
- Family history and other educational, learning, physical, or psychological difficulties deemed relevant by the examiner
- Relevant medical and medication history, including the student's current medication regimen compliance, side effects, and response to medication
- Relevant psychosocial history and any relevant interventions
- Description of an active treatment plan
- Description of current functional limitations in different academic related settings that are a direct result of the diagnosed disability
- Relevant history prior to therapy
- Duration and severity of the disorder
- A description of the expected progression or stability of the condition over time

The diagnostic report should be on letterhead, dated and signed, indicating the certification or licensure of the evaluator. The report should include a summary of the diagnostic interview, any tests administered with subtest and standard scores, a description of the nature and severity of the substantial limitation to learning (or other major life activity), the specific diagnosis, a description of the student's history and recommended academic accommodations and rationale to support them. Further documentation may be requested in order to designate the most appropriate and reasonable form of accommodation.

Appendix E



AUSTIN COLLEGE

Academic Skills Center

Verification/Request Form for Emotional Support Animal (ESA)

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed ESA Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Type of Animal: \_\_\_\_\_ Age of Animal: \_\_\_\_\_

I authorize Austin College to receive information from my provider named herein \_\_\_\_\_  
I authorize my provider to discuss my condition(s) with appropriate and qualified Austin College personnel on an as-needed basis.  
Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*The above named student indicated that you are the licensed professional who has suggested that having an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) in campus housing will be helpful in alleviating one or more of the identified symptoms or effects of the student's disability. So that we may better evaluate the request for this accommodation, please complete this form.*

How long have you treated or counseled student? \_\_\_\_\_

Date of initial contact with student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of last office visit with student: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Specific disability/disorder (DSM-V), including when student was first diagnosed, severity, and current symptoms:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Identify the specific limitations/impairment caused by the disability and how this substantially limits one or more major life activities for this student:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Explain how the accommodation of an ESA is necessary for the individual to use and enjoy campus housing:<sup>1</sup>

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Identify any other accommodations that may be equally effective in allowing use and enjoyment of housing. If applicable, indicate any mitigating measures that have been tried, or are currently being used, and how they alleviate or eliminate limitations:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Have you discussed the responsibilities associated with properly caring for an animal while engaged in typical college activities and residing in campus housing? Do you believe those responsibilities might exacerbate the student's symptoms in any way?

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---

**Name of Treating Professional:** \_\_\_\_\_

**License #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Treating Professional:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Return Form to:**

Director, Academic Skills Center  
Austin College  
900 N. Grand Avenue, Suite # 61544  
Sherman, TX 75090  
Office: (903) 813-2454  
Fax: (903) 813-2038

**\*\* ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:**

- Students requesting a Service Dog or an Emotional Support Animal must also read, adhere to, and sign the Austin College Policy located on the Austin College website at: <http://www.austincollege.edu/campus-life/academic-skills-center/access-services/>

Appendix F



AUSTIN COLLEGE

Academic Skills Center

STUDENT ACCOMMODATION REQUEST FORM
ACADEMIC SKILLS CENTER
WCC 211 / 903-813-2454

The purpose of this form is to enable the institution to comply with federal laws in providing reasonable academic accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Verification of this student's disability and need for accommodation is located in the Academic Skills Center.

Students are encouraged to register for disability services at the beginning of each semester but it may not be possible to determine in advance whether a particular course will require accommodations. If/when this student determines accommodations are needed, the student must meet with the professor at least one (1) week in advance of the requested accommodation.

Student's Name Student's Phone Number ID #
Mentor Semester 20

COURSES FOR WHICH ACCOMMODATIONS ARE REQUESTED:

1. Course/Professor 2. Course/Professor 3. Course/Professor
4. Course/Professor 5. Course/Professor

- Student is eligible for the following classroom accommodation(s):
Note-sharing Allow use of computer for note-taking
Allow audio recording of class lecture
Extra time for in-class writing & reading assignments
Do not penalize for misspellings on in-class writing assignments
Advance and/or additional access to audio/visual materials
Interpreter Front-row seating
Textbooks in audio format (qualified students will arrange this w/ASC but will need books in advance)
Other
Student is eligible for the following classroom accommodation(s):
(exams must be arranged 1 wk in advanced)
1 1/2 or double time for exams (quizzes, midterms, & finals)
Semi-private, distraction-reduced room
Use of Computer for exams Use of Assistive Technology for exams
Other

COMMENTS:
Student Signature Date
ASC Director Signature Date

## Appendix G



AUSTIN  
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Academic Skills Center

### Contract of Agreement for Testing Procedures

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to the following terms and conditions for exam scheduling /administration through the Academic Skills Center.

#### Scheduling Policy for Exams

- I understand that it is my responsibility to discuss testing accommodations with my professors at least one (1) week before the scheduled exam.
- I understand that, if possible, my professor and I may arrange for testing accommodations to be provided within the classroom, office or other location designated by my professor.
- I understand that if any professor is unable to provide appropriate accommodations in her/his office, classroom or other designated location, I may make arrangements with the Academic Skills Center provided I give required notice.
- The following guidelines are the minimum standard to obtain testing accommodations in the Academic Skills Center. (We encourage you to schedule your exams as early as possible).

*Students must make arrangements with the ASC & course professor to reserve a space for testing accommodations one (1) week before each exam.*

- I understand that if I do not meet this deadline with the ASC, it is my responsibility to make individual testing arrangements with my professor. The professor may not be able to provide an accommodation without being provided the required notice per policy.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to notify the Academic Skills Center if tests are cancelled, changed, or if I decide not to use the Academic Skills Center for a particular exam. I will work with both the professor and the ASC to arrange an alternate test time/date.
- I understand it is my responsibility to complete any forms or procedures required to set up my own testing accommodations and I will not ask others, including my professors, to do this for me.

#### Testing Regulations

- I understand that if I arrive more than 20 minutes late for a scheduled exam, the ASC may choose to not administer the exam in order to remain on schedule with room reservations. In this case, I will go to the classroom to take the exam with the other students or I will speak with my professor to discuss the possibility of rescheduling the exam. If I begin my exam late (up to 20 minutes), the number of minutes will be deducted from the time allotted from the exam. I will still need to complete my exam by the originally scheduled completion time.
- I understand that I must abide by the Academic Integrity Policy of Austin College.
- I understand that I will be asked to leave my belongings, including bags, jackets, electronic devices, etc., outside of the testing room.
- I understand that I must ask permission before leaving the ASC testing area once my exam begins.

---

Student Signature

Date

## Appendix H



**AUSTIN  
COLLEGE**

Academic Skills Center

### **ACADEMIC SKILLS CENTER DISABILITY SERVICES**

## **CHECKLIST FOR ACCOMMODATION RECIPIENTS**

### **DISCUSS PURPOSE OF ACCOMMODATION REQUEST FORM**

#### **APPROPRIATE METHODS TO DISCUSS ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS WITH PROFESSORS**

- Meet professors in their office during office hours or by individual appointment.
- You are encouraged to discuss this form with your faculty so that mutual understandings can be made and good working relationships can be gained.
- Ask the professor to clarify any expectations and make sure you understand your responsibilities.

#### **DISCLOSE WHAT FEELS COMFORTABLE ABOUT YOUR DISABILITY**

- Your diagnosis is not indicated on the accommodation request form.
- It is helpful to explain how your learning differences are manifested in the classroom and what compensatory strategies you use to cope.
- Encourage your professor to communicate with you, or the ASC Director, about your individual needs.

### **DISCUSS POLICIES FOR REQUESTING/RECEIVING SERVICES**

#### **EACH SEMESTER**

- Accommodation request forms must be filled out with the Director at the beginning of each semester.
- Be sure to fill out a new accommodation request form for any course you add during the semester.

#### **ONE WEEK NOTICE REQUIRED TO SET UP ACCOMMODATION**

- One-week advance notice allows faculty/staff to make arrangements to accommodate your needs.
- Without adequate notice given by the student, faculty/staff may elect not grant the accommodation (i.e., testing accommodations).

#### **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS**

- Accommodations are aimed at providing access to educational programs.
- You have a right to request a specific form of accommodation, but the College may offer another effective form instead.
- If your instructor is concerned that an academic accommodation may alter or otherwise compromise the integrity of the course requirements, s/he may discuss alternative solutions with you and the Director of the ASC.
- If you are receiving note-taking assistance initial here to indicate receipt of procedures from the ASC Director:

### **DISABILITY SERVICES POLICY HANDBOOK ON ASC WEBSITE**

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

**Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Director Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Appendix H



### SAMPLE EMAIL FOR TESTING ACCOMODATIONS

#### Scheduling Email

*(send at least 1 week prior to test)*

To: {Insert professor Email}

CC: {Laura Ramsey at the Academic Skills Center}

Subject: Test Accommodations

Professor **{insert name}**,

I would like to use my testing accommodations for the exam scheduled for {insert course name / number} on **{insert date}**. I was planning on taking the exam in the Academic Skills Center at **{insert time arranged}**. Please let me know if there are any issues with me taking the exam at that time. The ASC will need the Exam Accommodation Instruction Form, I have included the link for your convenience: <http://www.austincollege.edu/campus-life/academic-skills-center/exam-accommodation-instruction/>

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

{Insert Your Name}