

# **A GUIDE FOR DISABILITY SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF**

## **DISABILITY SUPPORT AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY**

American University is committed to ensuring accessibility for all qualified students with disabilities to university programs and activities. In order to promote full participation on campus, one of two offices may be of assistance. The Academic Support Center (ASC) works with students with learning disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorder. Disability Support Services (DSS) works with students with physical and psychological disabilities.

Students with disabilities in the Washington College of Law receive assistance through the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. Faculty and staff who are seeking accommodation for a disability should contact Human Resources.

## **SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENTS**

**The Academic Support Center** helps to arrange accommodations for students with appropriate documentation of a learning disability or Attention Deficit Disorder, in addition to providing academic support to all students on campus. The Learning Services Program offers additional support to interested freshmen with learning disabilities; application to this program must be made at the time students apply to the university.

**Disability Support Services** ensures that students with physical, medical, or psychological disabilities have equal access to university programs and services. DSS provides or coordinates a range of services and accommodations that meet the individual needs of a student based on the impact of the specific disability.

The **Counseling Center** provides services and consultation for students with concerns about mental health or other personal issues. Individual and group counseling, psychiatric services, workshops, and self-help resources are available. In areas where on-campus services are limited, counselors can help students connect with local resources for private care.

All three offices provide consultation and in-service training for faculty, staff, and students to help establish a campus environment that is welcoming to all.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Any qualified student with a disability enrolled in a course or participating in an AU program or activity may request reasonable accommodations once documentation of a disability is verified by the ASC or DSS. Timely notification assists in reviewing documentation and determining appropriate accommodations, which are made a case-by-case basis.

## **DOCUMENTATION**

The ASC and DSS are responsible for reviewing professionally prepared documentation of a disability, determining effective and reasonable modifications based on the impact of a disability, verifying a disability for faculty and other qualified personnel, and recommending course and learning accommodations on behalf of the university.

Students should provide relevant, current documentation from a qualified professional, which will assist in determining reasonable accommodations at the university. The ASC and DSS reserve the right to request additional documentation, if needed.

All documentation should include

- The presenting problem and relevant history
- test scores and discussion of results, if relevant
- a diagnosis with rationale
- a description of disability
- substantial medication side effects, if any
- information on substantial disability-based limitations and how they relate to the educational environment
- suggested accommodations with rationale for recommendations

Documentation of a learning disability should be presented in a psychoeducational or neuropsychological report, including test scores and discussion of results. For entering freshmen, the evaluation would generally be administered during high school. For adults and nontraditional students, documentation guidelines may vary.

For more detailed information on documentation guidelines, please refer to [www.american.edu/asc](http://www.american.edu/asc) and [www.american.edu/disabilitysupport](http://www.american.edu/disabilitysupport).

## **SERVICES AND ACCOMMODATIONS**

Services are available to assist the entire AU community in relation to disability issues. Such services include:

- professor notification letters
- proctor services for testing accommodations
- academic support for students with disabilities
- referral to appropriate campus and community resources
- consultation for students, staff, and faculty
- information and training on disability issues

Specific accommodations can be arranged for students based on the impact of their disability in a particular course. These may include:

- testing accommodations
- note taker and scribe services during classes or exams
- recorded material and reader services
- a designated section of Finite Mathematics for students with math disabilities
- access to adaptive equipment and materials
- assistive listening devices such as FM or infrared listening systems
- physical access to classrooms and events
- supplemental orientation to acquaint students with physical disabilities to the campus environment
- Braille transcription services and large print materials
- typing services for accessing university technology
- sign language and oral interpreters

Please note that personal care services and medical devices, such as hearing aids and wheelchairs, are not available through the university. However, DSS can provide information about related community resources.

## ACCOMMODATION PROCEDURES

### **Professor notification of a disability**

A faculty member's first notification of a student's need for accommodation normally comes in the form of a letter from either the ASC or DSS verifying that the student has appropriate documentation of a disability, confirming that the student has registered with the university, and specifying what accommodations the student may need.

If a student requests accommodations directly from a faculty member and no letter of verification has been sent by the ASC or DSS, the faculty member will refer the student to the appropriate office to begin the process of verification of a disability and notification to faculty.

### **Testing accommodations**

Students should first discuss arrangements for testing accommodations with their faculty, based on the student's accommodation letter. If a professor is unable to arrange for the recommended accommodation, the ASC or DSS can provide an alternate test site and a proctor. For such an alternative arrangement in the ASC, the student must complete an online test request form at least one week in advance of the test; the professor will receive the completed form by e-mail and respond to the request online. If a student does not request the accommodation a week in advance, accommodations in the ASC cannot be guaranteed.

Consultation is available in the ASC and DSS to assist faculty and students in determining appropriate accommodations and making accommodation arrangements.

### **Confidentiality**

All disability-related information is treated as confidential and is provided on a need-to-know basis solely to individuals who require such information as part of the accommodation process, or where permitted or required by law or university policy.

## OFFICE OF CAMPUS LIFE DISABILITY RESOURCES

### **Academic Support Center**

American University  
Mary Graydon Center 243  
4400 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington DC 20016-8027  
Phone: (202) 885-3360  
Fax: (202) 885-1042  
[www.american.edu/asc](http://www.american.edu/asc)

### **Disability Support Services**

American University  
Mary Graydon Center 206  
4400 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington DC 20016-8148  
Phone: (202) 885-3315 (Voice/TDD)  
Fax: (202) 885-1160  
E-mail: [dss@american.edu](mailto:dss@american.edu)  
[www.american.edu/disabilitysupport](http://www.american.edu/disabilitysupport)

### **Counseling Center**

American University  
Mary Graydon Center 214  
4400 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington DC 20016-8148  
Phone: (202) 885-3500  
Fax: (202) 885-1397  
[www.american.edu/counseling](http://www.american.edu/counseling)

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Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibit discrimination against qualified persons with disabilities.

This information is not binding on the university. The university reserves the right to amend the information and policies in this publication without notice. Please consult the offices listed for additional information.