

Title: #VI-4. Services for Students and Visitors with Disabilities

Date: October 18, 2019 (Replaces version dated December 28, 2016)

I. Introduction

West Virginia University at Parkersburg, as set forth in institutional [Policy A-34, Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination](#), is committed to creating and maintaining a community where all individuals enjoy freedom from discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of disability. WVU at Parkersburg does not discriminate against qualified persons with disabilities in its admission policies or procedures or its educational programs, services and activities. WVU at Parkersburg is committed to providing reasonable and effective accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities. These procedures for accommodating students and visitors with disabilities are provided in accordance with [Policy A-43, Disability Accommodations](#).

II. Accessible Parking

All WVUP parking lots provide accessible parking spaces as required by the U.S. Department of Justice and identified by the International Symbol of Accessibility. A disability placard or license plate issued by the individual's home state is required in order to park in one of the designated parking spaces. West Virginia residents may obtain an application from the West Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, (DMV) which must be completed and signed by a physician for temporary or permanent placards or plates. Ohio residents may obtain an application from the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles, which must include a signed prescription from their healthcare provider for temporary or permanent placards or plates. Application forms from the WV DMV and the OH BMV are also available in the Center for Student Support Services.

III. Service Animals

Students and visitors with disabilities who require the use of a service animal are not required to register with the Disability Services office. They are, however, encouraged to contact the Disability Services office for assistance when needed. For additional information, see [Answer Book #VIII-8, Guidelines for the Use of a Service Animal](#).

IV. Academic Accommodations

Admission to WVU Parkersburg or to a specific program of study is based upon meeting the institution's admission requirements. WVUP encourages all academically qualified students to take advantage of its academic programs.

A. Moving From High School to College

Students having received academic disability related accommodations in secondary schools will find important differences as they continue in higher education. Being aware of these differences can make the transition easier. Among the differences are:

1. Once a student reaches the age of 18, they will need to give written consent to the Disability Services office for any kind of parental involvement. Even if parents are assuming the financial responsibility for a student's education, this release is still necessary.
 2. Secondary schools may have provided for the financial cost of securing necessary documentation of a disability. In higher education, that cost is the responsibility of the student.
 3. The length of time documentation is valid is substantially different in higher education.
 4. Some types of accommodations, such as study guides or a reduction in the number of test questions, that are often used in secondary education are not available at the college or university level.
 5. The amount and type of documentation that will be needed may be different between secondary and higher education. More detailed information about differences may be found at: www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html
- B. Admissions and program advisers may not ask questions or make comments related to a disability when advising applicants for admission to the college or to a program. They may describe the requirements of the academic program, including practicum or internship requirements, and may ask applicants how they would fulfill these requirements. Individuals who request accommodations in the application process should be referred to Disability Services.
- C. Students with disabilities are entitled to privacy with respect to their disabilities. Instructors should not question students about a disability or possible disability, and may not request medical documentation from students. Instructors should not attempt to diagnose students whom they teach or advise, even when an instructor is professionally qualified to do so. An instructor may ask a student who is evidencing problems, in general terms, whether measures could be taken to assist the student; the student may be referred to Disability Services on a confidential basis.
- D. When a student self discloses the need for an academic adjustment or auxiliary aid, the instructor, or division will refer the student to Disability Services. The student's request may be a direct request for an academic adjustment or auxiliary aid, or may be an indirect request, such as making a statement to the instructor that they are having difficulty in the class due to a disability or possible disabling condition, or other statements that give notice to the instructor that a referral to Disability Services is appropriate.

- E. In order to receive academic adjustments or auxiliary aids, any incoming, current or transfer student must first register with the Disability Services office located at:

WVUP Center for Student Support Services, Room 1019
300 Campus Drive
Parkersburg, West Virginia 26104
Telephone: 304-424-8378
Fax: 304-424-8372
Email: DisabilityServices@wvup.edu

The Center for Student Support Services is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday; with the exception of official college holidays and closings, as well as other specified times throughout the year.

- F. The process of providing disability related accommodations at WVUP follows guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and current case law and is designed to assure that academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids are provided to all qualified students in a timely manner.
- G. Students who register with the Disability Services office may be required to submit medical or psychological documentation as necessary to substantiate the need for the academic adjustment or auxiliary aid. This documentation will be kept confidential in accordance with Section VI below.
- H. Diagnostic evaluation reports submitted as documentation must:
1. Appear on official letterhead and be typed, signed, and dated by a licensed professional who is qualified to diagnose the condition for which the accommodation is being requested.
 2. Provide a specific, definite diagnosis, including symptoms and fluctuating conditions related to the student's disability or condition. When appropriate, a history of diagnosis, including duration, stability, and/or progression of the condition, should be included.
 3. Provide recent objective findings, test scores, and/or clinical observations used to determine the diagnosis of the student's disability, the student's functional limitations, and the student's current need for accommodation(s).
 4. Identify current medications the student is taking, as well as any side effects currently experienced by the student.
- I. The following information/documentation is **not** adequate for determining accommodations:
1. A brief note from a physician or health professional requesting an accommodation or providing a diagnosis without offering supporting documentation. This includes information or notes written on a prescription pad, as well as aftercare instructions issued to the patient.

2. Evaluation reports of a learning difficulty that are not comprehensive or that identify “problems or challenges” but do not specifically diagnose a learning disability.
- J. Student participation in the accommodation process is essential and necessary at the college level. The student will be asked to schedule an initial interview with the Student Accessibility Counselor to complete the application process and discuss the accommodations needed for each class. Disability accommodations are requested and authorized on a **semester-by-semester** basis.
- K. At the intake meeting, the Student Accessibility Counselor will review pertinent documentation and discuss with the student his or her accommodation needs. After this review, the Student Accessibility Counselor will issue an Accommodation Memorandum addressed to affected members of the faculty or staff that outlines the academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids that are recommended and authorized. An academic adjustment and/or auxiliary aid that is recommended could be the one requested by the student or an alternative that will effectively permit the student’s full participation in the course.
- L. Authorized accommodations are not implemented automatically for the courses the student has enrolled in. The student will need to determine which accommodations he or she needs for each class and discuss those needs with each instructor. Authorized accommodations may take **at least one week** for the instructor to arrange; so it is important for the student to meet with instructors as soon as possible. The student should arrange to meet with each instructor privately to discuss the student’s needs and the best ways to implement the authorized accommodations.
- M. An instructor should contact the Student Accessibility Counselor for consultation whenever there is a question or concern, and particularly if the instructor believes that a recommended academic adjustment or auxiliary aid:
- would fundamentally alter the nature or purpose of the course, assignment, test or other essential academic requirements
 - would substantially alter the method in which the course is taught or service is provided, or
 - would pose a direct threat to the health and safety of the student or others.
- N. If, after consulting with the Student Accessibility Counselor, the instructor or staff member continues to disagree, the instructor may consult with the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, but an instructor or staff member may not unilaterally deny a requested academic adjustment or auxiliary aid recommended in writing by the Student Accessibility Counselor.
- O. If at any time the student feels that he or she needs additional accommodations to those listed in the Accommodation Memorandum, the student should immediately make an appointment with the Student Accessibility Counselor.

- P. **Each semester** students must seek authorization for accommodations from the Student Accessibility Counselor and communicate with faculty to discuss the implementation of accommodations according to the nature of the course requirements and their needs.
- Q. Whenever possible, an academic adjustment will provide an educational experience that is comparable to that of the rest of the class. Students who require extended time on examinations should be provided with the same examination as their classmates, unless it can be established that a make-up examination or exercise is of the same degree of difficulty, form, and scope as the examination or exercise provided to the students' classmates. A different examination should only be administered in situations where:
1. the student requires a different form of test or examination as an academic adjustment, and this will not fundamentally alter the nature or purpose of the test or examination, and/or
 2. a scheduling conflict precludes the possibility that the student can take the examination or test at the same time as other students in the class, and the instructor is concerned about test security.
- R. Students who are performing work in clinical settings are entitled to reasonable accommodations, as necessary, to perform the essential duties of the clinical site. In the event that a student requires accommodations at a clinical site, the student should notify the Student Accessibility Counselor for assistance with engaging in the interactive process with the clinical site.
- S. Students must provide timely notice of the need for an academic adjustment or auxiliary aid, as faculty may not be able to honor last minute requests. Instructors should consider disability-related emergencies in the same manner as any other emergency situation that would impact a student's ability to take an examination or otherwise complete course assignments.
- T. Disagreements or other conflicts concerning the provision or denial of academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids should be brought to the attention of the Student Accessibility Counselor. A student who has been denied an academic adjustment and/or auxiliary aid may appeal the decision to the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator in accordance with the institution's procedures for filing discrimination complaints.

V. **Process for Accommodating Visitors**

- A. The college will make public performances and services to the public accessible for individuals with disabilities.
- B. If an individual requires sign-language translation, interpretation, or similar services, the individual should make necessary and appropriate arrangements with the event coordinator in a timely manner. Event coordinators may consult with the Disability Services office for assistance in serving visitors with disabilities.

- C. The college will ensure that all web-based information and applications are accessible to individuals with disabilities.

VI. Confidentiality

- A. Under the Rehabilitation Act, information obtained in connection with the accommodation process must be kept confidential. Any details of an accommodation request, whether it has been approved, and information about functional limitations, all must remain confidential. This includes all medical information that is obtained in connection with a request for academic adjustments or auxiliary aids, which must be kept by the Student Accessibility Counselor in a file separate from a student's academic record. Whether this information is kept in a paper or digital format, it must be stored so that only the Student Accessibility Counselor or a designee has direct access to it.
- B. Any medical documentation that someone other than the Student Accessibility Counselor receives as part of the accommodation process (for example, a letter from a health care provider to a faculty member), must be forwarded to the Student Accessibility Counselor to become part of the file on this request. Only the Student Accessibility Counselor, and not faculty or others, should retain copies of this documentation.
- C. The Student Accessibility Counselor may share certain information with a student's instructor, advisor or other college staff, as necessary, to make appropriate determinations on a student's request for academic adjustments or auxiliary aids. If at any time it becomes necessary to reveal the name of the individual requesting accommodation, the Student Accessibility Counselor will inform the recipient about these confidentiality requirements.

D. Disclosures, Including Medical Information

In addition to disclosures of information needed to process a request for accommodation, the disclosures that may include medical information are permitted as follows:

1. first aid and safety personnel may be told *if* the disability might require emergency treatment or assistance in evacuation;
2. the college ADA/Section 504 Coordinator and external government officials may be given information necessary to investigate the college's compliance with the Rehabilitation Act;
3. otherwise, in all other instances, medical documentation will not be shared without permission from the student.

VII. **Assistive Technology and Services**

The Disability Services office at WVUP offers an array of assistive technology and services for student use as auxiliary aids:

1. Assistive Technologies

- JAWS is the most powerful screen reader and uses an integrated voice synthesizer and the computer's sound card to output the content of the computer screen to speakers.
- Kurzweil provides both audible and visual accessibility to word documents and web pages. The company is recognized as the leading developer of reading technology for people with learning difficulties and those who are blind or visually impaired.
- ZoomText, the world's leading low-vision solution, is available as a screen magnifier or integrated magnifier/reader. With magnification up to 16x, ZoomText enlarges and enhances everything on the screen, making all applications easy to see and use.
- FM Systems is an electronic amplification/hearing system that works like a small radio transmitter and radio receiver. The instructor wears the FM transmitter and microphone. The receiver picks up the signal from the microphone and routes it to a personal hearing aid, cochlear implant processor or other device.
- UBI Duo is an electronic communication device used by individuals with hearing impairments to enable instant communication.
- Sorenson Video Relay Service® (SVRS®) is a free, 24-hour service that enables users to place and receive calls through a professional American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter via a videophone and a high-speed internet connection. The service is available in the Library (Room 1332). Access after normal business hours is accomplished with the assistance of Campus Security.
- Enlarged key keyboards
- Scanners
- Text in alternative formats

2. Assistive Services:

- American Sign Language interpreters
- Text reader

VIII. **Complaints**

If an authorized accommodation formally requested by the student from the instructor is not implemented properly, the student should first speak with the instructor. If the issue is not resolved, the student should immediately contact the Disability Services office at 304-424-8388.

Any student who feels that they have not been appropriately accommodated and/or who wishes to file a complaint of harassment, discrimination or retaliation, may contact the institution's ADA and Section 504 Coordinator:

Debbie Richards, Room 1010
West Virginia University at Parkersburg
300 Campus Drive

Parkersburg, WV 26104
E-mail: social.justice@wvup.edu
Telephone: (304) 424-8201
FAX: (304) 424-8204

Complaints may also be filed with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights:

Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Education
100 Penn Square East, Suite 515
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3323
Telephone: 215-656-8541
FAX: 215-656-8605; TDD: 800-877-8339
Email: OCR.Philadelphia@ed.gov
Website: www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html

Responsible Administrator: Executive Director, Student Support Services, 304-424-8388