

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

AUC STUDENT POLICY

Policy Statement

AUC implements the following policy governing academic accommodations for students with disabilities. All affected University community members are required to abide by the terms of this policy.

Reason for Policy/Purpose

The objective of this policy is to provide and guarantee reasonable accommodations that will enable qualifying students with disabilities to perform with other students.

Institutional Responsibility

The Office of Well-being under the Dean of Students bears responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

Who Approved This Policy

University Provost, Ehab Abdel Rahman

Who Needs to Know This Policy

Enrolled students, full and part-time faculty, full and part-time staff, administrators, parents, other stakeholders

Web Address for this Policy

<http://in.aucegypt.edu/university-policies>

Contacts

Dean of Students, Office of the Dean of Students

If you have any questions on the policy , you may:

1. Call the Assistant Dean of Students, ext 2218 or from off campus (02) 2615-2218
2. Send an e-mail to deanofstudents@aucegypt.edu

Definitions

Terms	Definition as it relates to this policy
Student	All enrolled students, both degree-seeking and non-degree, both Egyptian and non-Egyptian, both undergraduate and graduate, both full- and part-time;
Student Disability Services (SDS)	A unit under the Office of Well-being in the Office of the Dean of Students; (See 1.1. below for its responsibilities.)
Disability	“An individual with a disability is defined as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment;” (Source: www.ada.gov)
Reasonable accommodations	Reasonable accommodations are forms of assistance or changes to environments that will enable a qualifying student to perform with other students despite having a disability (other conditions remaining constant). Once it has admitted a student, AUC is required to provide reasonable accommodations to qualifying students with disabilities.

Policy/Procedures

PROCEDURES GOVERNING ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

1.General Principles

1.1 The Student Disability Services (SDS) unit under the Office of Well-being in the Office of the Dean of Students is responsible for determining the eligibility of a disabled student with the collaboration of the respective department for academic accommodations and with regard to setting the specific academic accommodations that must be provided to eligible students.

1.2 No other university authority, including individual instructors, department chairs, deans, associate provosts, vice provosts or provost may substitute for SDS in the matter of arranging, providing and administering academic accommodations for students with disabilities. The university cannot provide academic accommodations for a student with disabilities who chooses not (or refuses) to work with SDS.

- 1.3** Students with disabilities who seek academic accommodations must identify themselves and their disability to SDS at the beginning of the semester for which they are seeking accommodations. If a disability emerges and/or recognized during the semester and the student requires accommodations, the student needs to immediately contact the SDS to start the procedures for accommodations. No accommodations will be granted retroactively, so early contact with SDS is encouraged.
- 1.4** Upon first contacting SDS, the student must submit a complete dossier of medical and other required documents, including psycho-educational assessments, that are related to the specific academic accommodations that the student's disability requires. If SDS determines that additional documentation is required, this must be obtained at the student's own expense and submitted to SDS. All assessments are done externally. The SDS does not assess students.
- 1.5** The university cannot provide academic accommodations to a student with a disability who does not disclose her/his disability to SDS and present all required supporting documentation. Students' use of the allowed accommodations are voluntary. Any student who refuses to make use of this university service does so with the understanding that he/she will not be receiving any accommodations. In addition, the SDS may deem some students ineligible for academic accommodations because of the nature of the disclosed disability or the results of external assessments.
- 1.6** Once SDS has determined that a student is eligible for disability accommodations, SDS will prepare a set of specific accommodations in memorandum form that the student, and only the student, must present to her/his instructors in hard copy. The Provost and Dean of Students are copied on in the official memorandum.
- 1.7** Instructors who receive formal letters of accommodations written by SDS and delivered by the student must implement the required accommodations. They must sign and return the original to the student by the end of the second class meeting.

2. Process of Admissions to AUC for Students with Stated Disabilities

- 2.1** An application for study at the American University in Cairo (AUC) by a student with a disability will be evaluated without prejudice and without reference to the student's disability. Students who require accommodations during the admission process should identify themselves in order to be provided with the needed support.
- 2.2** The AUC application form includes a section where a student may voluntarily inform AUC that she/he exhibits a disability, either for the purpose of assisting AUC in initiating the process of providing appropriate accommodations if the student is admitted, or for the

purpose of assisting AUC in providing alternative admission requirements (such as tests) that may be required by certain disability cases.

- 2.3** No student is required to complete the space on the application form that asks about disability, and a disabled student who chooses not to complete the section will be fully eligible to apply for academic accommodations at a later time (see below) if s/he is admitted to AUC. Any information provided in the section on the application will be immediately transferred to SDS, but will not be employed in the admission decision itself.
- 2.4** In certain cases, a student's disability may justify an accommodation (such as a special administrative committee including instructors, staff, and specialized professionals) in AUC admission requirements that would then become part of the admission decision. Any student who seeks such an accommodation must fill out the disability section of the admission form and request a specific accommodation, which the Admissions Office will evaluate in order to determine the appropriate response. In exceedingly rare cases of this type, the Admissions Office may determine that the disability in question is so severe that the university is not capable of providing any reasonable accommodation, whether in the admissions process *per se* or after. In such cases the Admissions Office denies admission but only after consulting with the student, his/her family, AUC's medical staff, and the student's physicians to consider additional arrangements or identify an alternative university that is able to accommodate the student's needs. In such cases, a conditional acceptance letter will be delivered to the student that includes academic conditions for the first year or so, on a case by case basis.

3. Disabilities and Accommodations

- 3.1** AUC is obligated both by law and preference to provide every disabled student who has been formally admitted to the university with the reasonable accommodations that will permit her/him to pursue study toward a degree at AUC. In order to ensure that students are given these accommodations, students are required to submit valid documentation to SDS. If official documentation is lacking, students must obtain and submit relevant assessments, diagnosis and recommendations concerning the academic accommodation required from clinical licensed professionals.
- 3.2** No university instructors nor staff should provide academic accommodations to a student who has not formally applied for, received, and agreed to accommodations through SDS.
- 3.3** An instructor is responsible for providing approved academic accommodations only from the moment that a student provides her/him with an SDS-approved accommodation memorandum. The instructor is therefore not obligated to adjust or make up any academic assessment of the student in question that occurred before the instructor received the formal SDS-approved accommodation memorandum.

3.4 A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a course, program, service, job, activity, or facility that enables a qualified individual with a disability to have an equal opportunity to attain the same level of performance or to enjoy equal benefits and privileges as are available to an individual without a disability. Some common academic accommodations include extended time on tests, use of note-takers, use of computers with a spell-checker, and provision of sign language interpreters. AUC will make every effort possible to ensure that students with disabilities who have been determined by SDS as eligible for accommodations will receive the accommodations that they require and deserve.

3.5 In very rare circumstances, SDS may determine that a student's disability is such that it cannot be supported by any reasonable accommodations. For this purpose, an unreasonable accommodation is defined as one that would create an undue financial or administrative burden for AUC; that would fundamentally alter AUC's academic program or threaten AUC's academic standards; or that is of a personal nature (for example, assistance with eating or help with toileting). AUC is not obliged to provide accommodations that may result in undue burden on it.

In such cases, the University will revoke the student's admission and refund all tuition and fees, but only after consulting with the student, his/her family, SDS, and AUC's medical staff to identify an alternative university that is able to accommodate the student's needs or identify alternative solutions, such as the parents' providing a personal assistant for the student. (NOTE: the definition of an "unreasonable accommodation" comes from <http://www.disabilityrightsca.org/pubs/530901.pdf>)

3.6 The principal types of disabilities for which AUC is prepared to offer accommodations are as follows:

- (a) Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), which can be related to academic difficulties with regard to time management and organization, attention to detail, distractibility in the classroom, exam anxiety, sustaining attention when reading, writing and solving math problems, visual disabilities, and goal confusion;
- (b) Chronic illness, which can be related to such conditions as diabetes, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, renal disease/failure, and cancer;
- (c) Learning disabilities, that can be related to difficulty with reading and comprehension, difficulty solving mathematical problems, written and oral expression, listening skills, spelling, punctuation, grammar, visual and auditory processing, comprehension, and abstract reasoning;
- (d) Visual impairment that can result in difficulty in reading and writing, note-taking responding to visual aids, and mobility around campus;
- (e) Hearing impairment, that can hinder listening to and understanding the content of lectures, taking notes in class, working effectively in group activities, and participating in class discussions;
- (f) Physical disabilities that can inhibit mobility around campus and in the classroom,

taking notes in class, and finding appropriate seating in classrooms;

(g) Psychological disorders, which can include but are not limited to depression, anxiety, and schizophrenia, which might impair the cognitive functions and can negatively affect the overall level of a student's performance;

(h) Other Disabilities, such as cardiac conditions and severe allergies/respiratory conditions.

3.7 The principal, but not the only, types of accommodations that AUC is prepared to offer are as follows:

(a) Quiet areas for exams away from distractions

(b) Breaking assignments and projects into smaller tasks

(c) Extra time to complete exams and assignments

(d) Alternative exam and quiz formats

(e) Special seating arrangements and other adjustments in classroom environments

(f) Visual enhancements, such as magnified materials and textbooks

(g) Audio-taped lectures and Braille or electronic lecture notes and texts

(h) Verbal descriptions of visual aids and tactile models of graphic materials

(i) Braille lab signs and equipment labels, talking thermometers and calculators

(j) Computers with optical character readers, speech output, and braille screen display and equipped with JAWS (Windows screen reading software), Kurzweil 3000 (text to speech learning for Windows or Mac), and Dragon Naturally Speaking (speech to text voice recognition software)

(k) Class assignments made available in electronic format with special input device (voice input, alternative keyboard)

(l) Disability buddies to assist with mobility on campus, providing social support, taking lecture notes, and providing some study skills support. Disability buddies are approved by the Office of Well-being.

4. Applying for and Receiving Disability Accommodations

4.1 To receive academic accommodations for a particular semester, a student must schedule a meeting with SDS staff to request new or renewed academic accommodations no later than the end of drop-and-add for the semester in question. For students with a chronic and stable disability, SDS may set renewal timeframes for greater than one semester.

4.2 The student must first contact SDS — office number 20.2.2615.3918- to schedule an Appointment.

a) Before attending the scheduled appointment, the student must fill out the following two forms, which can be obtained from the SDS unit and are also available online at: (add link to online forms)

- Eligibility Form
- Request for Disabilities Services

- b) The student should bring both of these completed forms to the scheduled meeting and submit them to SDS together with current documentation of the disability from a qualified medical authority, as well as results of an academic evaluation from a qualified professional recommending specific academic accommodations for the disability in question. Failure to submit any of the required forms will relieve the University of the Obligation to provide the student in question with any accommodations.
- c) Upon receipt of the required documents, SDS staff will review the documentation to determine the student's eligibility for accommodations and services. If additional documentation is required, SDS staff will inform the student, who is then responsible at her/his own expense to obtain the information required. A list of trustworthy professional assessment resources with different price ranges can be obtained from the SDS.

4.3 Once SDS has determined that a student is eligible for accommodation and services, the office will contact the student for a follow-up appointment, at which the nature of the accommodations in question will be discussed. At this time, the student will be required to sign a statement agreeing to the proposed accommodations. At any subsequent time, if students object to the accommodations and/or the manner in which they have been delivered, they may petition the Dean of Students according to the procedure specified in Section 8 below.

4.4 The student will be provided with two accommodation letters for each course each semester for non-chronic disabilities, unless SDS may decide otherwise. One letter is kept with the instructor of each course and one letter will be returned to SDS with the instructor's signature. A copy of the letter is sent to the Office of the Provost by the SDS each semester. If the instructor fails to sign the accommodation letter within one week of receipt of the letter, the student in question must inform SDS immediately to contact the instructor. Additionally, if the instructor refuses to sign the accommodation letter, students can submit an official petition to the Dean of Students, according to the procedure specified in Section 8 below.

4.5 Unless SDS may decide otherwise, academic and other accommodations for disabilities must be renewed each semester for non-chronic disabilities, since specific accommodations may be modified depending upon the courses being taken. In order to receive academic accommodations for a particular semester, a student must schedule a meeting with SDS staff to request new academic accommodations.

4.6 It is possible that a student may encounter academic difficulties that are due to an undiagnosed disability. For this reason, it is suggested that instructor after consulting with SDC staff talk with any such student about his or her academic performance. If the

concern seems disability-related, instructors and/or staff may guide students to the different services on campus including the SDS.

5. Confidentiality

5.1 AUC supports the ADA law and section 504; therefore, may not in any way infringe the confidentiality rights of a student with disabilities.

5.2 Except in cases of emergency, no member of the university community is entitled or authorized to be informed of a student's disability unless formally approved by the student herself/himself. Exceptions to this rule are staff members of SDS, AUC Medical Services, the Dean of Students, and the Provost. A disabled student may choose to inform someone of the nature of his disability, but subject to the exceptions indicated above, the university may never require a disabled student to identify publicly the nature of her/his disability.

5.3 An instructor, including a disabled student's course instructor, may not request or demand of either the student or any university officer specific information concerning the nature of a student's disability.

5.4 The accommodation letter will never identify details of the specific disability involved. The SDS and the Office of Well-being may not disclose the diagnosis related to the disability. Governmental mandates, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) all support the protection of privacy.

5.5 The accommodations letter does not identify the student by name in accordance with best Practice.

5.6 A student with a disability is under no obligation or requirement to inform any member of the university community other than SDS staff of the nature of her/his disability. Instructors/staff who force a student with disability to provide such information is in violation of AUC's Code of Conduct and the ADA/section 504 laws. Any student with a disability who is forced to provide such information as well as anyone who observes such an action is encouraged to report the offender to the Office of the Dean of Students.

6. Instructor Obligations and Responsibilities with regard to Academic Accommodations

6.1 An instructor who receives an accommodations letter from SDS requiring that she/he provide the disabled student identified by SID in the letter with a specific type or set of academic accommodations must provide the student with the accommodations required throughout the semester in question. An instructor cannot deny the accommodations to the student or negotiate the accommodations.

- 6.2** If the letter requires that the instructor undergo a specific training exercise in order to enhance her/his ability to assist the student in question, the instructor must undergo the specified training.
- 6.3** If accommodation instructions are unclear, it is the responsibility of the instructor to directly contact the name of the SDS staff member mentioned in the accommodation letter.
- 6.4** An instructor should maintain the same standards, including behavioral expectations, for students with disabilities as are applied to all students.
- 6.5** Instructors should inform all students of procedures for accessing accommodations at the beginning of each semester through a statement in the syllabus.
- 6.6** Ensure instructional materials are available in accessible formats.

7. Retroactive Requests for Academic Accommodation (check links)

According to the ADA and Section 504 federal laws that AUC supports, an institutional obligation to provide reasonable accommodations is a duty that starts at the point a student establishes his or her disability and the need for accommodations. Therefore, no requests for adjusting past performance as a result of a disclosed disability after the semester in question should be requested by the SDS, a student, or the Office of the Dean of Students.

8. Complaint Procedures and Appeals

- 8.1** A student who believes that she/he has received inappropriate or inadequate services from SDS, an instructor or other university personnel may petition the Dean of Students. The petition must be submitted in writing and must include all evidence that supports the student's contention. If the student is unable or prefers/chooses not to write a petition, the student should make an appointment with the Dean of Students.
- 8.2** The Dean of Students will assign the petition to an ad hoc committee depending on the nature of the petition (academic or non-academic). If it is of an academic nature, the ad hoc committee will be composed of the department chair, dean of the school, a senior staff member of SDS, and the director of the Office of Student Well-being. A petition of a non-academic nature will also be directed to the Dean of Students.
- 8.3** The Dean of Students will report the committee's decision to the student in question. The student may appeal the committee's decision to the Provost, in which case the Provost's decision will be final.

9. Temporary Disabilities

9.1 Students with temporary disabilities are not eligible for protection under the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA). A temporary disability is an impairment that is expected to last less than 6 months (e.g. broken arm or leg, recovering from surgery, sudden onset psychiatric manifestations). However, SDS recognizes the need to provide accommodation services to students with temporary disabling conditions so that they can continue to make progress toward their degrees.

9.2 With appropriate documentation from a licensed professional or physician verifying disability, students may qualify for specific temporary services, such as note taking, test accommodations, or cart service. Services are determined on a case-by-case basis.

9.3 In case of acute psychiatric manifestations, a care plan will be provided by the Student Counseling Center at the Office of Student Well-being. The counseling center necessitates specific monitoring arrangements with the student. A strict care plan usually includes:

- (a) Attending counseling sessions every week
- (b) Attending coaching sessions to enhance learning and study skills
- (c) Accepting a peer coach to help his/her to maintain deadlines and mentor him/her with academic life
- (d) Meeting with the Director of the Office of Student Well-being on a biweekly/monthly basis to monitor the progress and assess improvements or detect further psychiatric deterioration

If the student does not abide by the care plan at any time during the semester or is showing incompliance with the plan, SDS will notify the Dean of Students and the Associate Provost for Strategic Enrollment and Management to take the necessary actions.

9.4 In specific acute psychiatric cases, (acute means sudden onset, short duration and not fitting into the criteria of chronic psychiatric disorders, thus falling under a temporary disability), in which documents have been approved by a consultant psychiatrist and SDS, the approved temporary services and accommodations should be strictly implemented, as these cases fall under the same mandates of the regular disability services.

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