

Policy Title	Academic Accommodations for AUC Students with Disabilities
Responsible University Officer:	Senior Director, Center for Student Wellbeing
Policy Owner:	Office of the Dean of Students
Pertinent Dates:	Origination Date: Spring 2018 Last Review Date: December, 2023

I. SCOPE OF POLICY

This Academic Accommodations for AUC Students with Disabilities Policy (“Policy”) governs academic accommodations for students with disabilities. All American University in Cairo (“AUC”) community members must abide by this Policy.

II. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Disability	A person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Such impairments may include physical, sensory, and cognitive or intellectual impairments. Mental health conditions (psychiatric or psychosocial disability), and various types of chronic health conditions leading to an impairment may also be considered qualifying disabilities. A disability may occur during a person’s lifetime, or may be present from birth. Disability can be permanent or short-term.
Reasonable accommodations	Any reasonable adjustment required for a student to have equal access to the AUC’s programs and activities.
Student	All admitted students, regardless of whether they are degree-seeking or non-degree seeking,

	undergraduate and graduate, full- or part-time student.
Student Accessibility Services (“SAS”)	A unit under the Center for Student Well-being in the Office of the Dean of Students.

III. POLICY STATEMENT

AUC is committed to create an inclusive culture that celebrates Disability as an area of diversity while providing equitable experiences for all students. Student Accessibility Services (SAS) proactively removes barriers, raises awareness of equitable practices, and fosters an appreciation of Disability as an area of diversity while utilizing a wide range of approaches from universal design to individualized accommodations.

IV. POLICY STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

1. Requesting Accommodations

AUC is committed to providing students with disabilities equal access to the educational opportunities and programs available at AUC. AUC provides students with reasonable accommodations in a timely manner when such accommodations are necessary to access AUC programs or activities. Activities can include, but are not limited to, assistance setting up class field trips, joining AUC clubs, or attending on-campus events (Students can approach SAS to request individualized support with accessibility needs).

Admitted, but not enrolled, students are eligible to request support services from SAS by emailing SAS after receiving their official AUC acceptance letter. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Students should submit all accommodation requests to SAS through ACCESS. SAS uses an interactive process of consulting with the student, and meets with each student to determine whether and what accommodations can be made to allow students with disabilities to participate in AUC programs and activities, and to continue to participate in and benefit from AUC programs and activities while receiving treatment for health conditions. In some cases, an outside consultant is engaged to review the student’s documentation as well. SAS communicates with the student about its decisions throughout the process.

AUC can only provide reasonable accommodations under this Policy when a student establishes their disability, or has a record of a qualifying Disability and the need for such accommodations. Therefore, retroactive requests for adjusting past performance/grade as a result of an undisclosed Disability will not be considered. AUC cannot provide accommodations for a student who is not registered with SAS.

Students requesting academic accommodations must register with SAS; participate in an intake interview; and submit current documentation as required. SAS staff utilize an interactive review process to determine necessary accommodations. Students are required to follow SAS’s procedures for requesting and maintaining accommodations as outlined below.

- a) Contact SAS to schedule an appointment, and complete the necessary Forms;

- b) Submit/Upload documentation;
- c) Meet with SAS staff for an intake interview; where a decision of an accommodation letter will be concluded;
- d) Sign Acceptance of Services/Consent Form for approved accommodations so the letters could be sent to faculty members;
- e) Complete a Semester Renewal Request *each semester* via [ACCESS](#).

Note*: *Academic accommodations due to a disability cannot be given by faculty members, or any other party without prior written approval from SAS and receiving the accommodation letters.*

A. Contact SAS and Complete Forms

Students requesting accommodations must contact SAS by emailing sds@aucegypt.edu and complete the [Accommodation Request Form](#) (and the [Disability Eligibility Form](#) if needed) in order to identify the Disability and requested accommodations.

B. Submit Documentation

Students must submit documentation that establish the presence of a disability, identify the functional impact, and explain the link between the functional impact and the need for the requested accommodations.

C. Intake Interview

Students must meet with an SAS coordinator or staff member to provide information on their academic experience and any other pertinent information. Approved accommodations will be finalized after this meeting.

D. Sign Acceptance of Services/Consent Form

SAS will request that the student signs an “Acceptance of Services/Consent” Form to document the accommodations and will, thereafter, authorize the accommodations to be sent to faculty to be implemented.

E. Complete the Semester Renewal Request

Every student is responsible for completing a semester renewal request at the beginning of every semester. The Semester Request is made through [ACCESS](#) and should be completed as soon as the student has finalized his/her semester courses or by the end of the drop/add period. Students must follow the procedures outlined to allow SAS to review and approve requests so letters could be sent to faculty. Note that for some disabilities, semester renewal is not granted automatically, and the student could be asked to submit updated medical reports or documentation which demonstrate the persistence of the Disability and how it is impairing functioning.

To submit a semester renewal request:

- i. Log into [ACCESS](#) using AUC email credentials.
- ii. On the menu column on the left, click on the “Accommodations” tab and select “Semester Request”
- iii. Click “Add New” and select the semester in question from the drop-down menu.
- iv. Click on “Submit for All Accommodations” to send the request to SAS.

2. Notification of approved academic accommodations to instructors

Upon completion of the Semester Request, SAS will review and approve the letters that are created by Semester Request and send an email to faculty that the accommodation letter is available for them to view and sign on ACCESS. It is important to note that preceptors and TA's will not receive the accommodation notification. Students can view and access their letters on ACCESS and can forward them on a need-to-know basis to course staff who may be implementing accommodations.

3. Arrangements for Academic Accommodations Implementation

The faculty is primarily responsible for providing the academic accommodation(s) in testing situations, as this affords the instructor the opportunity to maintain academic control over the evaluation process. Specific arrangements may be handled by the instructor, preceptor or departmental administration. To ensure smooth implementation of testing accommodations, it is the responsibility of the student to communicate with the course instructors at least *two weeks* in advance to make arrangements for implementation. Timely notification allows instructors the opportunity to secure the appropriate venues to allow for extended test-taking time or a reduced-distraction environment (this does not necessarily mean a private room). Arrangements may also need to be made for the use of a clean laptop, provided by SAS only when the student is taking their exam at the SAS Testing Unit.

Providing appropriate accommodations is an iterative process. It is the student's responsibility to contact SAS to talk about alternate or supplemental accommodations if they feel that the approved accommodations are not effective.

Examples of reasonable accommodations that may be provided by SAS:

- (a) SAS testing unit 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 in electronic format with special input device (voice input, alternative keyboard);

- (l) Buddies to assist with mobility on campus, provide social and study skills support, and take lecture notes;
- (m) Scheduling support.

4. Types of Disabilities

The types of disabilities which may be considered for reasonable accommodation, when there is an impairment of functioning, include:

- (a) Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), which can usually affect academic performance creating difficulties related to time management and organization, attention to detail, distractibility in the classroom, exam anxiety, sustaining attention when reading, writing and solving math problems.
- (b) Chronic health conditions, which may 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 difficulties with reading and comprehension, 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 limit mobility around campus and in the classroom, taking notes in class, and finding appropriate seating in classrooms;
- (g) Psychological disorders, which can include depression, anxiety, and schizophrenia, only when impairing cognitive functions and negatively affecting the overall level of a student's performance;
- (h) Other Disabilities, including but not limited to, speech impairment, autism spectrum disorders, cardiac conditions and severe allergies/respiratory conditions.

5. Temporary Disabilities

A temporary Disability is an impairment that is expected to last less than 6 months (e.g. broken arm or leg, recovering from complications post-surgery, sudden onset psychiatric manifestations, post COVID-19 symptoms). SAS recognizes the need to provide accommodation services to students with temporary disabling conditions so that they can continue to make progress toward their degrees.

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 to facilitate transportation across campus. Services are determined on a case-by-case basis.

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 SAS, the approved temporary services and accommodations must be strictly implemented by instructors, as these cases fall under the same mandates of the regular Disability services.

Services and accommodations offered to students with verified temporary disabilities are subject to renewal timeframes set by SAS, typically at least once per semester.

V. Confidentiality

Individuals choose to self-identify as having a disability. A student seeking accommodations must register with SAS. SAS respects the sensitive nature of the disclosure and works to provide appropriate accommodations for students while maintaining the highest level of confidentiality possible. SAS will not disclose any information related to students with any third-party including faculty without the student's consent.

VI. Review of determinations regarding accommodation: Appeal Process

A student who believes that SAS did not follow its procedures in the determination regarding an accommodation or consider relevant information during the process may request a reconsideration of the decision.

In order to request reconsideration of a decision regarding an accommodation, the student should request a meeting with the head of (SAS) to present additional information and/or documentation and to discuss the nature of the issue or complaint. This meeting must be requested within fifteen (15) days of the determination at issue. In circumstances where there is a concern relating to denial of accommodations, SAS will engage an outside consultant to review the documentation and provide recommendations to SAS. The consultant may be faculty, administrators or professionals who can provide information pertinent to the case. If confidential information is to be released to or received by a third-party not affiliated with AUC, the student will be asked to sign a Release of Information Form. Following the review of the request for reconsideration, SAS will notify the student of its decision within ten (10) days after meeting with the student.

If the issue is not resolved through reconsideration, the student may request a review of SAS's process by the Dean of Students within ten (10) days of receiving SAS's decision on reconsideration. The Dean of Students will make an inquiry into the complaint and may contact faculty, administrators or professionals that can provide information pertinent to the case and will contact the student in writing with a final decision regarding the reconsideration. The Office of the Dean of Students will notify the student of its decision within fifteen (15) days after receiving the student's request for review of SAS's process.

VII. Instructor Obligations and Responsibilities Regarding Academic Accommodations

An instructor who receives an accommodation letter from SAS for a particular student should provide the accommodations required throughout the semester. An instructor shall not deny accommodations provided by SAS to the student or negotiate additions or reductions to those accommodations.

If the letter requires that the instructor undergo a specific training exercise in order to enhance their ability to assist the student in question, the instructor must undergo the specified training.

If accommodation instructions are unclear, it is the responsibility of the instructor to directly contact SAS by emailing sds@aucegypt.edu

Instructors should provide guidance to all students requesting accommodations at the beginning of each semester through a statement in the syllabus.

Ensure instructional materials are available in accessible formats. For further assistance with this process, instructors are encouraged to contact the Office of Tech Solutions' Assistive Technology Services by emailing assist.tech@aucegypt.edu

VIII. Complaint Reporting, Investigation, and Resolution

AUC is committed to ensuring that all students with verified disabilities have the opportunity to participate in educational programs and services on an equal basis. A student who believes that they have received inappropriate or inadequate services from instructors or other AUC personnel has the right to seek a review of such concerns.

Complaints of an *academic nature* (including, but not limited to, refusal to sign SAS's letter of accommodation, refusal to extend the student's approved accommodations, or refusal to utilize tools and systems that provide equal access to learning and opportunity) and *non-academic nature* (including, but not limited to, refusal to provide equal access to facilities, services or activities), should be reported to:

1. Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as a first-level intervention. SAS will reach out to the involved parties (student and/or faculty) to resolve the complaint;
2. If a resolution is not achieved, SAS will report the complaint to CSW's Senior Director as a second-level intervention. The CSW's Senior Director will reach out to the involved parties (student and/or faculty) to resolve the complaint.
3. If a resolution is not achieved, CSW's Senior Director will report the complaint to the Dean of Students as a third-level intervention, and the CSW's Senior Director will report the resolution to the student in question.

A student who has not achieved a satisfactory resolution may send a written formal complaint by email to the Dean of Students. The petition must be submitted in writing, and must include the following information;

1. A full description of the problem and relevant facts.

2. A summary of the steps the student has already taken in an attempt to resolve the problem, including the names of the persons involved.
3. A statement of the requested resolution, and the student's rationale for the requested accommodations.
4. Any supporting documentation
5. The name, ID number, and the signature of the person initiating the complaint.

An ad-hoc committee consisting of the Dean of Students, faculty members, CSW staff, and student representatives will investigate the grievance. The committee may interview or consult with the student and any other individual the committee believes to have relevant information, in which case, the committee's decision will be final. The Dean of Students will report the committee's decision to the student in question and to the Provost.

Students who believe they have received inappropriate or inadequate services from SAS should also report the issue directly to the Dean of Students.

Students who believe that they have been subjected to or witnessed discrimination based on their Disability may file a complaint with the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE). Complaints by students are reviewed according to AUC's Anti-Harassment and Non-Discrimination Policy. OIE may interview or consult with the student and any other individual believed to have relevant information, including faculty, staff, and students and will report the resolution to the student in question.

The student's confidentiality shall be maintained by each person involved in the informal or formal investigation or resolution of a student grievance under this Policy. Any disclosures regarding the student or the investigation, including any disclosures of clinical information provided by the student, shall be limited to the minimum information needed to accomplish the investigation or address the student's grievance. If confidential information is to be released to a third-party, the student will be asked to sign a Release of Information Form. Upon the resolution of the student's complaint, all notes, correspondence, and other documents relating to the student's grievance shall be transferred to SAS.

Note*: It is against AUC policy for any staff or faculty member to retaliate against a student who has requested/been granted accommodation. If a student experiences retaliation, please report this to the Office of Institutional Equity immediately. It is also a violation when a faculty member pressures a student to disclose their disability, medical status, or treatment plans. Faculty members only receive the approved letter from SAS which details the accommodations that need to be implemented.