



Center for Accessibility Services and Academic Accommodations Accommodation & Documentation Policy

Overview

American International College (the “College”) recognizes that students with disabilities are an important part of the campus community and thus complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (“Section 504”) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (the “ADA”). The College also prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability and is committed to providing equal educational opportunity to qualified students with disabilities in accordance with the law. The College also prohibits discrimination against someone solely because of his/her association with an individual with a disability.

Section 504 is a civil rights statute designed to prevent discrimination against individuals with disabilities. It provides that:

No otherwise qualified individual with disabilities in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of his/her disability be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance . . . 29 USC 794.

The ADA, which took effect in 1992, was modeled after Section 504. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in employment, public accommodations, transportation, State and local government services, and telecommunications.

An “individual with a disability” is a person who:

1. Has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits a major life activity;
2. Has record or history of such an impairment; or
3. Is regarded as having such an impairment.

“Major life activities” include, but are not limited to: caring for oneself; performing manual tasks; seeing; hearing; eating; sleeping; walking; standing; lifting; bending; speaking; breathing; learning; reading; concentrating; thinking; communicating, and working.

The following major bodily functions are also considered “major life activities”: functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, and digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions.

Students with disabilities who need appropriate and reasonable accommodations must identify themselves as having a disability. Disclosure of a disability is always voluntary, but the College will not be able to provide accommodations without the student first contacting the appropriate party.

Application Guidelines

Once students have contacted the Center for Accessibility Services, they will be given a Request for Accommodations application to fill out as well as a copy of the Documentation Policy which serves as a guideline as to the documentation necessary to support their request.

A Request for Accommodation form shall be filled out prior to the start of the academic school year. It is the student’s responsibility to notify CASAA if anything on the application changes. Students can amend their application at any point whether it is to request additional accommodations or to remove a particular accommodation.

For those students with permanent disabilities, a request for accommodations shall be filled out once per year, prior to the start of the academic year.

For those students with any other type of disability, a request shall be filled out prior to the beginning of the school year. Depending on the nature of the disability, the student may be asked to fill out another application prior to the start of the spring semester.

Documentation Guidelines

Acceptable forms of documentation include:

Primary Documentation

A letter prepared by an appropriate professional, such as a medical doctor, psychologist, or other qualified diagnostician, showing that that they have a current disability and need a reasonable accommodation.

- The letter shall include the following:
 - a diagnosis of the current disability, including the date and how the diagnosis was reached, on appropriate letterhead and signed by the appropriate professional with their credentials.
 - information on how the disability affects a major life activity;
 - Information on how the disability affects academic performance and any recommendations.

High School special education evaluations (i.e. psychological, educational, speech-language)

Secondary Documentation

An individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan that shows accommodations that the student has received and may have been effective in the past. IEP's and 504 Plans are generally not sufficient by themselves as there are differences between postsecondary education and high school education. Also, in some cases, the nature of a disability may change.

Documentation for Housing Accommodations

A letter prepared by an appropriate professional, such as a medical doctor, psychologist, or other qualified diagnostician, showing that they have a current disability and need a reasonable accommodation.

- The letter shall:
 - Include a diagnosis of the current disability, including the date and how the diagnosis was reached, on appropriate letterhead and signed by the appropriate professional with their credentials.
 - Establish a clear connection between the recommended housing request and the impact of the disability
 - Address why the requested housing accommodation is a medical/health need for the student

Documentation for Air Conditioner Accommodations

A letter prepared by an appropriate licensed professional, such as a medical doctor or other qualified diagnostician, showing that they have a current disability and need a reasonable accommodation.

- The letter shall:
 - Include a diagnosis of the current medical condition and/or disability, including the date, on appropriate letterhead and signed by the appropriate professional with their credentials.
 - Establish a clear connection between the recommended air conditioner request and the impact of the disability
 - Address why the requested air conditioner accommodation is a medical/health need for the student

Documentation for Meal Plan Reduction/ Waiver

A letter prepared by an appropriate professional, such as a medical doctor, psychologist, or other qualified diagnostician, showing that they have a current disability and need a reasonable accommodation.

- Include a diagnosis of the current medical condition and/or disability, including the date, on appropriate letterhead and signed by the appropriate professional with their credentials.
- Establish a clear connection between the recommended meal plan request and the impact of the disability
- Address why the requested meal plan accommodation is a medical/health need for the student

All documentation must provide enough information to decide what an appropriate and reasonable accommodation is. If the documentation does not meet the College's requirements, students will be informed in a timely manner as to what additional documentation they need to provide. In some instances, this may require a new evaluation. (The College is not required to conduct or pay for a new evaluation to document a disability and the need for an accommodation.)

Types of Disabilities and Timeframe for Relevant Documentation

Documentation should be current and relevant but not necessarily recent. For those students that are in programs that require licensure, updated documentation may be needed as most licensing bodies require documentation within the 3 years prior to sitting for the licensing exam.

Permanent Disabilities

For those students with permanent and unchanging disability, including but not limited to the following, they will only need to provide the college their documentation one time and will not need to get updated documentation. In the event that any updated testing or evaluation is done, it would be in the student's best interest to bring in the updated documentation so any accommodations may be reviewed for appropriateness.

ADHD

Dyslexia

Physical impairments of a permanent nature (not relating to surgery)

Vision Impairment

Hearing Impairment

Chronic Illness
Food allergies

Other Disabilities

For those students with disabilities that may change over time, documentation should be current and relevant. Students with documentation that is not current or relevant may be asked to get tested and/or re-evaluated. During this time, students may be provisionally approved for accommodations pending further documentation from the appropriate professional. Examples of disabilities that may change over time include but are not limited to the following:

- Mental Health (e.g. anxiety, depression, etc.)
- Eating Disorders
- Learning Disabilities (e.g. speech, verbal, writing, reading, auditory)
- Seasonal Allergies
- Asthma
- Dietary needs

Temporary Medical Disabilities

For those students who will need temporary accommodations due to a medical condition will receive accommodations on an on-going temporary basis. Documentation will be need to be updated on a frequent basis and appointments for a check in will be made between the student and CASAA. Documentation will need to be provided from the students primary doctor, surgeon or athletic training. Examples of conditions that fall under this category include but not limited to the following:

- Concussions
- Surgery
- Admission to hospital for extended stay
- Pregnancy

Approved Accommodations

Upon completion of the Request for Accommodations and provision of the appropriate documentation, CASAA will review the material for completeness and discuss the request with the student. Once the interview is complete CASAA will make a determination on whether the student is qualified to receive accommodations. If further information or documentation is needed the student will be notified within 1 business day. As time may be of the essence CASAA will make every effort to review the documentation and render a decision and notify the

student of such decision within 2 business days. In the event that circumstances do not allow a decision and notification within 2 business days, then CASAA will do so as soon as possible thereafter.

It is at the sole discretion of CASAA to approve all, some or none of the requested accommodations. It is also at the sole discretion of CASAA the timeframe allowed for any approved accommodations. The appropriate length of time (provisional, 1 semester, 1 academic year, until graduation) will be decided based on the nature of the disability as well as the specific accommodation.

If students have questions regarding the decision, they may set up a time to discuss the decision with CASAA. If the student is not satisfied with the decision regarding their accommodations, they may refer to the Student Handbook, Section 4, regarding grievance procedures.

Once a student has applied and been approved for accommodations it is the students' responsibility to follow through with the accommodation. For example, if the student is approved for extended time on testing, the student does not have to use the time and can instead opt to take the exam in class instead of with CASAA. Another example would be if a student is approved for access to Kurzweil or Learning Ally. It is the students' responsibility to bring the relevant book information to CASAA so that the request of the books in audio format from the appropriate party.

Available Accommodations

The following accommodations may be requested at any time during the students' academic career here at the College.

Testing Accommodations

- Extended time for exams
- Distraction-reduced environment for exams
- Reader/text-to-speech technology
- Scribe
- Use of computer
- Use of calculator for exams where appropriate
- Use of music/white noise
- Enlarged font

Assistive Technology

- Text-to-Speech Software (Kurzweil, Learning Ally)
- Dictation Software (Dragon)
- Alternative format texts/literature
- Note-Taking Software (Sonocent)

Communication Accommodations

- Sign-language interpreters

Classroom Accommodations

- Note-taking services
- Preferential classroom seating
- Use of computer for note taking
- Accessible classroom and furniture
- Classroom relocation
- Class notes in alternate format
- Movement breaks
- Permission to audio record lectures/classes
- Copy of instructor's note, power points, outlines upon request
- Study guide upon request

Other Accommodations

- Housing Accommodations**
- Meal Plan accommodations***
- Personal Care Attendant (provided by student)
- Reduced course load
- Flexible Attendance
- Priority registration
- Other Accommodation

** In general, the diagnoses such as ADD/ADHD or Specific Learning Disability do not lend themselves to a single room accommodation. A single room cannot guarantee a quiet environment. Students who need to study in a quiet environment can have their study needs met in areas such as the library.

*** Meal Plan accommodations will be considered for medical reasons only. Prior to approval, Accessibility Services will meet with Food Services to discuss options for the student.

Confidentiality

Information provided to CASAA will be kept confidential unless disclosure is authorized by the student or required by law.