

Volume

1

WASHINGTON COLLEGE

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Handbook for Students with Learning Differences

# Handbook and Guide

## Introduction

### **Washington College Policy on Students with Disabilities**

Students who have a qualifying disability that may affect their pursuit of a Washington College education are eligible to receive reasonable academic accommodations. Accommodations for students with documented disabilities will be tailored to meet the student's individual needs and will comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and with subsequent federal legislation pertaining to the disabled and their rights. Requests for accommodations and/or variation in degree requirements, accompanied by appropriate supporting documentation, should be submitted in writing to Cassandra Green, Director of Academic Skills, Miller Library, Washington College, 300 Washington Avenue, Chestertown, Maryland 21620, 410-778-7883, fax: 410-778-7884.

### **Support Statement for Students with Learning Differences**

In conjunction with Washington College's *Policy on Students with Disabilities* (see Washington College catalog), the Office of Academic Skills is the College's designated provider of support services to enrolled students with documented learning differences in compliance with federal statutes as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In this role, the Office is committed to providing reasonable accommodations in order to help students gain equal access, resources, advocacy and collaboration to all Washington College academic programs.

### **Documentation Requirements and Eligibility**

#### *Statement of Eligibility:*

Washington College students with disabilities, who desire to receive reasonable and appropriate services, must identify themselves by presenting current, comprehensive documentation of their disability to the Director of the Office of Academic Skills. The documentation is confidential and will not be added to the student's academic file.

Documentation of the disability must be from an appropriate professional source, verifying the nature of the disability, its functional impact, and the need for specific accommodations. Under this definition, Individualized Education Programs (IEP) or 504 Plans are NOT adequate in providing insight on functional limitations of a disability.

The Office of Academic Skills reviews the documentation to determine its eligibility, and will notify the student if it is complete or if additional information is needed.

### **Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD/ADHD)**

Documentation must be from a qualified professional and must have been completed within the past 3 years or completed by age 18 or over. Documentation should include:

- A history which may include onset, consistency, pervasiveness, and severity of the disorder
- Full report that include a clear diagnostic statement (DSM-IV)
- Aptitude tests (with subtest scores) from one of the following:
  - Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS-III)
  - Woodcock-Johnson Cognitive Ability (WJ-III)
  - Kaufmann Intelligence Assessment Test
- Achievement tests (with subset scores) from one of the following:
  - Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT-II)
  - Woodcock-Johnson Test of Achievement (WJ-III)

### **Learning Disabilities**

Documentation must be from a qualified professional and must have been completed within the past 3 years or completed by age 18 or over. Documentation should include:

- Full report that include a clear diagnostic statement (DSM-IV)
  - Aptitude tests (with subtest scores) from one of the following:
    - Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS-III)
    - Woodcock-Johnson Cognitive Ability (WJ-III)
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- Kaufmann Intelligence Assessment Test
- Achievement tests (with subset scores) from one of the following:
  - Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT-II)
  - Woodcock-Johnson Test of Achievement (WJ-III)

### **Psychological/Psychiatric Disorder (Mood & Anxiety)**

- History of the disorder which may include onset, consistency, pervasiveness, and severity obtained through a structured interview
- Diagnosis using the DSM-IV TR criteria and description of presenting characteristics
- Listing and results of neuropsychological tests, rating scales, or psychological testing used to support current diagnosis
- A description of the **current functional limitations** presented by the student in an academic environment
- Signature of the qualified professional/treating physician including professional credentials and date on which the diagnostic statement was written

### **Physical Disabilities (Neurological, Musculoskeletal, Visual, Auditory, and Miscellaneous)**

- History of the disorder which may include onset, severity, consistency, and pervasiveness
- Diagnosis of the disability
- Listing and results of tests used to support current diagnosis
- A description of the **current functional limitations** presented by the student in an academic environment. May include mobility, manual dexterity, information retrieval, communication, and endurance
- Signature of the qualified professional/treating physician including professional credentials and date on which the diagnostic statement was written

### **Contact:**

Documentation may be faxed to Ms. Cassandra C. Green at 410-778-7884 or mailed to her at: Office of Academic Skills, Washington College, 300 Washington Avenue, Chestertown, MD 21620

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Questions and concerns should be e-mailed to [cgreen3@washcoll.edu](mailto:cgreen3@washcoll.edu). All inquiries will be treated confidentially.

## Legal Rights and Responsibilities

### Whose responsibility is it?

<b>ISSUE</b>	<b>SECONDARY Section 504/IDEA</b>	<b>POSTSECONDARY Section 504/ADA</b>
Identification	School	Student
Assessment	School	Student
Programming	School/Parent	Student/College
Advocacy	School/Parent	Student
Decision Making	Placement Team	Student
<b>Transition Planning</b>	Placement Team	Student

Source: Brinckerhoff, L.B., Shaw, S.F., & McGuire, JM

### Self-Advocacy Skills

Self-Advocacy is important for success in college. Colleges and universities are restricted from seeking you out due to privacy laws. You are solely responsible for requesting the services you believe you need. Below are a few suggestions to make a smooth transition in developing self-advocacy skills at Washington College:

1. Know yourself and your disability: You need to know how to talk about your learning difference and needs in a way that other people will understand (the ADA coordinator, your professors).
  2. Know your rights and responsibilities – Educate yourself through the college website and government information about a college's legal responsibilities and your rights.
  3. Know where to go for help – It is important to your success in college knowing where to find resources, especially when you need help.
  4. Take action – See your ADA coordinator to discuss your needs and rehearse what to say to your professors. An accommodations letter will be provided, but it is up to you to discuss the needs stated in the letter with your professors.
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## Definitions

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990** - This Act is intended to eradicate discrimination against certain protected groups, to "level the playing field" so that everyone has the same access and opportunity, unhindered by prejudice. This anti-discrimination law is a civil rights act, not an entitlement program, and is outcome-neutral. Deficits must be judged relative to the average level of performance within the general population.

**Comprehensive** - Through the use of psycho-educational testing or other means of verifying the nature and extent of a disability, the documentation or evaluation report should include the following six components: (1) evidence of the existing impairment, (2) background information, (3) relevant testing, (4) specific diagnosis, (5) explanation for ruling out alternative diagnoses, and (6) an integrated summary.

**Psycho-educational assessment** - A battery of tests administered by a qualified professional are conducted to rule out alternate or co-morbid diagnoses for ADD, ADHD, psychological disorders, and learning disabilities. The test selection varies based on the suspected disability. The testing is comprehensive, meaning that it consists of both aptitude testing and achievement testing with subtest scores included in the evaluation report.

**Reasonable academic accommodations** - **Reasonable** accommodations are based on: (1) the nature of the specific "functional impairment," and (2) the educational or testing environment in which the individual will be functioning. **Academic** accommodations are task-specific and are meant to eliminate or reduce the impact of the impairment on a particular activity. Assistive devices or adaptations serve to ease the impact of the disability on a particular activity. Examples may include ramps, curb cuts, use of a word processor and /or spell checker, opportunity to tape record lectures, use of a note taker, having extended test time in a distraction-free environment, etc.

## Accommodations Rubric

Accommodation	Party Responsible for Providing Accommodation	Description
Acquiring Accommodations for courses	Student, OAS Director	Initial request should begin when student visits the Director during the first or second week of each semester.
The <i>Accommodations Letter to the Professor</i>	Student, OAS Director	Director drafts letter that aids student and professor in the discussion of her/his accommodation needs.
Taped books	Student	The student contacts the publishing company and orders taped books.
Kurzweil Reader (3000)	OAS, Library, Office of Information Technologies (OIT)	The Kurzweil 3000 Reader is a windows-based software program that offers a comprehensive set of tools customized to accommodate diverse learning abilities, even foreign language learning. Most popular features include the ability to hear, see, track and understand what you are reading; and correct what you are writing.
Dragon Naturally Speaking (9)	OAS	Allows you to talk to a computer while it types (dictate) into any program that accepts text. Most popular uses are: composing letters, memos, or sending email messages.
Tape-record lectures	Professor permission, Student, and OAS	By permission, allowed to tape record lectures.
Note-taker	Student, Instructor, OAS, and Student Volunteer	The professor will ask the class for volunteers to take notes via announcement in class or email. The volunteer will come to OAS to get the necessary materials, sign up and get paid.
<b>Extended</b> time for tests, quizzes, and/or in-class assignments	Student, Professor, and OAS	Time and a half or double time. Finals- time and a half only. Please note that it is “extended” time--not to be confused with “unlimited time” or “un-timed.”
Separate, distraction- <i>reduced</i> rooms available for testing	OAS	Quiet, low-distraction environment or private testing environment.

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Scribe (to record in writing what is dictated by the student)	Student, Professor, and OAS	Responses can be dictated directly to the OAS Director, designated scribe or into Dragon Naturally Speaking software.
Request for Foreign Language Substitution	Student, Advisor, Faculty, OAS, Assistant Dean, Registrar	The student should consult with the Director of the Office of Academic Skills and submit appropriate documentation which verifies a foreign-language or language-based learning disability.
Use of computer for in-class written work and/or tests	Student, Professor, OAS or Library	To assist with written work (Notetaking), or written portion of tests (essay questions).
Preferential seating	Student; Professor	Designated seat in front of class where professor can be seen and in hearing range.
Permission to use a calculator during tests	Student	Simple addition, subtraction, multiplication and division functions.
Other OAS services that are available (but not mandated)	Student, OAS	The OAS offers individual and group tutoring, individual study and learning strategies appointments with the Director; and study skills workshops/presentations on-campus. Take advantage of the services the OAS offers all Washington College students!

## Overrides, Exemptions, and Substitutions

A student may petition the Office of the Provost and Dean for substitutions of foreign language requirements (including placement testing) and math substitution if student documentation directly states a learning difference or shows substantial evidence in testing related subscales extreme difficulty in areas related to learning or speaking a foreign language and processing math.

Procedure: Consultations begin with the Director of OAS who petitions the Assistant Dean of Academic Resources for evaluation of documentation, presentation of rationale for request and final decision.

## Grievance Procedure

The Grievance Procedure

The Washington College Grievance Procedure is available to students who feel that they have been subjected to discrimination or harassment. Information regarding the grievance procedure may be obtained from the following: Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, Senior Vice President for Finance and Management, Provost and Dean of the College, Director of Public Safety, and the Director of Human Resources.

If a student with a learning difference wishes to file a grievance, the student can initiate the process by speaking with the Director of the OAS.

To receive additional information concerning the civil rights of students with disabilities in educational institutions, students may contact the following office(s):

Region III - Philadelphia (Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia), Paul Cushing, Regional Manager  
Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
150 S. Independence Mall West  
Suite 372, Public Ledger Building  
Philadelphia, PA 19106-9111  
Main Line (215)861-4441  
Hotline (800) 368-1019  
FAX (215)861-4431  
TDD (215)861-4440  
[www.ed.gov/ocr](http://www.ed.gov/ocr)

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## Campus Resources

Campus Office	Contact Information
Career Services	Caroline House 410-778-7890 <a href="mailto:career_center@washcoll.edu">career_center@washcoll.edu</a>
Counseling Center & Health Services	Queen Anne's House 410-778-7261
The Math Center	Main Floor, Miller Library 410-778-7862
Miller Library	410-778-7280
Office of Academic Skills	2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Miller Library 410-778-7883
Office of Information Technologies	2 William Smith Hall, Lower Level 410-778-7777
Office of Multicultural Affairs	CAC, First Floor 410-810-7457 (Office)
Public Safety	Lower level of Wicomico Residence Hall. extension 7810
The Writing Center	Goldstein 106 410-810-1417

## Resource Agency Websites

The Association on Higher Education and Disability  
Available at <http://ahead.org>

*Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities* available at <http://www.ed.gov/OCR>

U. S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights *Know Your Rights WEB PAGE*  
Available at <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/disabilities>.

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