



<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Disability Support Services Policy for Students</b>
<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Policy Category</b>	<b>Ethics, Integrity, and Legal Compliance</b>
<b>Policy Approval Date</b>	<b>July 18, 2017</b>
<b>Policies Superseded</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Responsible Office</b>	<b>Provost</b>
<b>Related Policies</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Frequency of Review</b>	<b>Three (3) Years</b>
<b>Date of Revision</b>	

**I. SCOPE**

This Disability Support Services Policy (“Policy”) applies to all qualified students of the University in need of reasonable accommodations.

**II. POLICY STATEMENT**

The University is fully committed to providing equal opportunity to all students. As such, the purpose of this Policy is to provide an educational environment that is free from all forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on disability.

**III. POLICY**

**A. Disability Defined**

The University is fully committed to providing equal opportunity to all students, including students with disabilities, and to complying with its obligations under the [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](#) (“ADA”), as amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (“ADAAA”), and Pennsylvania state law prohibiting discrimination against individuals with disabilities. An individual with a disability is defined as any person who (1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities; (2) has a record of such impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment. Some examples of major life activities include seeing, hearing, speaking, walking, learning, reading, concentrating, and interacting with others.

**B. Reasonable Accommodation Defined**

According to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, “No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States... shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” The regulations issued under this Act guarantee entrance of qualified students with disabilities into colleges and universities. A qualified student is entitled to receive a reasonable accommodation that allows for his or her full participation in the University’s educational and extra-curricular activities. Reasonable accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis. The University is not obligated to provide personal aids and services such as attendants, individually prescribed devices such as wheelchairs, readers for personal use or study, or other devices or services of a personal nature.

To be qualified, a student must meet the academic and technical requirements for admission. Under Section 504 of the Act, institutions of higher education are obligated to adhere to the following conditions:

- During the pre-admission phase, the University cannot inquire about disability status, place a limit on the number of qualified students with disabilities who can be admitted, or exclude a student from a

- course of study solely based on disability status.
- Reasonable accommodations or adjustments in degree or academic course requirements must be made when such requirements discriminate against qualified students with disabilities.
- Students with disabilities who feel discriminated against have the right to process complaints through the University civil rights channels and/or to initiate legal proceedings on an individual basis.
- Academic requirements that the University can demonstrate as being essential to the program of instruction and/or to any directly related licensing requirement will not be regarded as discriminatory.

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities to ensure their equal access and participation in the University's programs. However, requests of students need not be provided when: (i) the student is not qualified; (ii) the accommodation would result in a fundamental alteration of the program; (iii) the institution is being asked to address a personal need; or (iv) the accommodation would impose an undue financial or administrative burden.

### **C. Requesting Reasonable Accommodations**

The Office of Academic Development provides services and coordinates academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Students who wish to receive accommodations from the University due to a disability must meet with Disability Support Services (DSS). The University has assigned DSS the authority to make decisions regarding reasonable accommodations. The role of DSS is to assist students in obtaining the services and reasonable accommodations required to ensure equal access to all aspects of the student experience and to assist the University in meeting its compliance obligations.

It is a qualified student's responsibility to alert the DSS of the existence of a disability if a student desires a reasonable accommodation. Qualified students should contact DSS located in Knight Hall at 215-572-4033.

Decisions regarding reasonable accommodations are made through an interactive process with DSS and the student and may involve consulting faculty or staff, as needed. DSS performs an individualized and case-by-case assessment of each qualified student's disability and requested accommodations or modifications to determine whether and what accommodations or modifications can be made. The following factors are considered in determining appropriate accommodations:

- The nature and functional impact of the student's disability;
- The history of accommodations;
- The necessity of the requested accommodations and possible alternative accommodations; and
- Whether the requested accommodations will alter the essential requirements of the course or program.

DSS reserves the right to request additional documentation if the initial documentation the student provides is incomplete or inadequate to determine the need for accommodations. In addition, DSS reserves the right to require documentation prepared by an appropriate, qualified medical professional, including, but not limited to, a statement regarding how the student's disability affects a major life activity.

If the reasonable accommodation as initially provided is insufficient, upon receipt of notice of the insufficiency, DSS shall make a good faith effort to implement any appropriate additional measures necessary to mitigate the barriers to access.

If a student requests a reasonable accommodation directly from a faculty member or other administrator and no letter of accommodation has been sent by DSS, it is the faculty member's responsibility to inform the student that services are available and to refer the student to DSS to begin the process of identifying with DSS and requesting reasonable accommodations. To provide accommodations without verification, or to refuse to provide accommodations recommended by DSS, exposes a faculty member and the University to legal liability. Faculty members are encouraged to consult with DSS if there are questions regarding accommodation issues.

#### **D. Confidentiality**

DSS is committed to ensuring that all information and communication pertaining to a student's disability is maintained as confidential as required or permitted by law. The [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) protects this information. No one will have access to student files in DSS except appropriate staff of DSS. Any information provided to DSS regarding a disability is considered confidential and will be shared only with others within the University who have a legitimate educational or legal interest. A student's file, as part of their official University Academic Record, may be released pursuant to a court order or subpoena. If a student wishes to have information about their disability shared with others outside the University, the student must provide written authorization to DSS in order to release the information.

#### **E. Appeal & Grievance**

Any disagreements regarding a requested service, reasonable accommodation, or adjustment should be brought to the attention of DSS as soon as possible. DSS staff and the Assistant Dean of Academic Development will make efforts to negotiate a resolution. See Procedures for additional information.

#### **IV. PROCEDURES**

See the Procedures related to this Policy.

#### **V. EFFECTIVE DATE**

This Policy shall be effective on the date that it is signed by the President.

#### **VI. SIGNATURE, TITLE AND DATE OF APPROVAL**

By:   
President

Date: July 18, 2017



## PROCEDURES

<b>Related Policy</b>	<b>Disability Support Services Policy for Students</b>
<b>Responsible Office</b>	<b>Office of Academic Development</b>
<b>Initial Date</b>	<b>July 18, 2017</b>
<b>Revision Date</b>	

### I. SUMMARY

These Procedures are related to the Disability Support Services Policy for Students (“Policy”). See Policy for the definitions of any capitalized terms contained in this document. Please see the Policy for the definitions of capitalized terms below.

### II. PROCESS

#### Registering with Disability Support Services

To receive Reasonable Accommodations or any other special services or consideration due to a disability at the University, students are required to register with Disability Support Services (DSS). It is the student’s responsibility to initiate Reasonable Accommodations and services by:

- Self-identifying with DSS by completing the [Self Identification Form](#);
- Scheduling a meeting with the DSS staff. This interview is critical to understanding the student’s needs. Students should be prepared to discuss their disability and how it impacts his/her ability to learn or participate in another major life activity.
- Providing appropriate documentation<sup>1</sup> in order to qualify for Reasonable Accommodations. Students are encouraged to meet with DSS staff if they have any questions regarding documentation.
- Referring to the [Disability Support Services webpages](#) for procedural steps for registering with DSS and for documentation guidelines.

#### Requesting Academic Accommodations

During the first few weeks of the semester, students will meet with DSS staff to prepare memos to faculty outlining accommodations for each course. Ideally this should occur after a student registers for classes, but at least three weeks before classes begin in order to put the necessary accommodations in place before the start of the semester.

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<sup>1</sup> DSS reserves the right to request additional documentation if the initial documentation the student provides is incomplete or inadequate to determine the need for accommodations. In addition, DSS reserves the right to require documentation prepared by an appropriate, qualified medical professional, including, but not limited to, a statement regarding how the student’s disability affects a major life activity.

- Students do not need to provide new documentation for every semester, unless they require accommodations that are not supported by their documentation on file.
- Students must meet with DSS staff at least once a semester in order to receive accommodations. For each subsequent semester that students are enrolled at Arcadia University, they must visit Disability Support Services, which will prepare the letters of accommodation for their classes.
- Students must submit letters of accommodation to their faculty members when the semester begins. Faculty members can consult with DSS staff if they need additional clarification.

### **Requesting Housing Accommodations**

Decisions regarding housing accommodations are made jointly between DSS and Student Affairs/Residence Life.

- New students with requests for special housing accommodations due to a disability or medical condition are strongly encouraged to contact DSS as early as possible, preferably on or before June 15.
- Returning students should make housing accommodation requests by March 1. Although requests for accommodations may be made at any time, availability of these spaces may be limited.
- Students should note their accommodation requests while completing the Housing Portal during Housing Selection.

### **Appeal and Grievance Process**

In the event that a student is having difficulty or is not receiving agreed-upon Reasonable Accommodations, the student should contact DSS staff or the Assistant Dean of Academic Development to resolve the matter.

Students filing a grievance against a faculty or staff member because of perceived discrimination should refer to the procedures contained within the [Non-Discrimination and Non-Harassment Policy](#). Students filing a grievance against another student should refer to the procedures for discrimination and harassment under the [Student Code of Conduct](#) found in the Student Handbook.

Please refer to the [Disability Support Services webpages](#) for more information regarding accommodations and procedures. For more information about documentation guidelines, please refer to the DSS website: <https://www.arcadia.edu/academics/academic-support/disability-support-services/documentation-guidelines>