



# Accommodation Services Handbook

American Higher Education Development Corporation ("AHED") is committed to providing accommodation services to students with disabilities consistent with the law.

Accommodation Services are managed by each AHED school's Disability Services Coordinator, the Accommodation Services Offices at each AHED school, and by AHED's Compliance Officer, whose contact information is listed at the end of this Handbook. The purpose of our Accommodation Services is to provide assistance to students with diagnosed disabilities to maximize their academic potential, and to minimize various physical and attitudinal barriers. AHED has created this Accommodation Services Handbook to address common questions regarding the services available to students with disabilities that limit a major life activity and to explain in detail the procedures necessary to secure them. It is our goal that all students are given the opportunity to succeed.

The student should note that AHED and the AHED family of schools are not required to modify, waive, or make substitutions for coursework or other requirements that would fundamentally alter or compromise the integrity of an academic program. The Disability Services Coordinator at your campus will gladly discuss your disability with you, and offer advice on how to ensure that your needs are met. Following is a summary of services and accommodations that are available to our students with disabilities and the policies that students must comply with in order to obtain these services. If you have a question not addressed in this Handbook, please contact your campus Disability Services Coordinator.

### **How to Obtain Reasonable Accommodations:**

The term "reasonable accommodation" is at heart a balancing act between the needs of students with disabilities, the educational program's purpose, and the financial and physical limits of higher education institutions. It applies to a request for accommodation, modification or adjustment to a facility, course, program, service or activity that may afford an otherwise qualified student who has a disability with an equal opportunity to attain the same level of performance, benefits and/or privileges as are available to a student who is without a disability.

To determine whether a requested accommodation is reasonable, the Disability Services Coordinator and Accommodation Services staff will seek information from staff and faculty regarding essential standards for courses, programs, services, activities and facilities. In consultation with the appropriate Disability Services Coordinator and/or Accommodation Services staff, AHED's Compliance Officer makes the ultimate determination of whether a specific request for accommodation will be granted.

**Please note:** Neither AHED nor any AHED school is required to modify any element of a course or program that is deemed essential to the curriculum.

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

Students with disabilities have the right to:

1. Equal opportunity to learn through reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services;
2. Equal access to programs, courses, services, activities and facilities offered through the AHED school they are attending;

3. Confidentiality of information regarding their disability, except as disclosure is necessary to provide accommodations and/or is required by law; and
4. Accessible formats of information, as is reasonably available.

Students with disabilities have the responsibility to:

1. Satisfy and maintain essential institutional qualifications and standards for courses, programs, services, and activities;
2. Follow all published procedures for securing reasonable accommodations;
3. Provide from a qualified licensed professional with the appropriate area of expertise comprehensive documentation that details the manner in which their disability limits their participation and supports each accommodation request; and
4. Identify themselves as an individual with a disability when an accommodation is needed, and to seek information, counsel and assistance as necessary.

AHED has the right to:

1. Identify and establish essential functions, abilities, skills, knowledge and standards for courses, programs, services, activities and facilities at its schools, and to evaluate all students (whether disabled or not) on these bases;
2. Request and receive current documentation that supports any request for accommodations;
3. Select among equally effective accommodations which to provide;
4. Refuse an unreasonable accommodation request that fundamentally alters a program or activity of an AHED school; and
5. Deny a request for an accommodation if documentation does not support the request or if documentation is not provided by a student.

AHED has the responsibility to:

1. Provide information to students in reasonable, accessible formats upon request;
2. Provide or arrange reasonable accommodations in courses, programs, services, activities and facilities;
3. Ensure that programs, services, activities and facilities, when viewed in their entirety, are available and usable in a reasonable, integrated and appropriate setting under the circumstances; and
4. Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communications.

### **How Reasonable Accommodations Are Decided Upon**

When deciding whether a requested accommodation is reasonable, the appropriate Disability Services Coordinator, Accommodation Services staff and AHED's Compliance Officer will rely upon the following elements:

1. The appropriate documentation of the disability by a qualified professional and any recommendations made by the diagnosing professional;
2. A student's request for a given accommodation;
3. Barriers that might result from the documented disability in the campus environment;
4. Accommodations that might remove such barriers;

5. Whether a student may obtain access to the course, program, service, activity or facility without a given accommodation (that is, whether the student is otherwise qualified for participation in the course or program);
6. The relative cost and burden of providing the accommodation given the size and resources of the school;
7. Whether or not essential elements of the course, program, service, activity or facility are compromised by the requested accommodation; and
8. Whether if, even after the accommodation is given, a student can perform the essential functions of the educational program.

Academic adjustments are based upon an individualized assessment of the student's needs. Ideally, initial accommodation requests should be made prior to the start of class so that the student has the necessary resources in place prior to attending class. All requests should be made in writing to the campus Disability Services Coordinator, who will coordinate the school's effort to provide assistance to students with diagnosed disabilities that substantially limit a major life activity.

Once the student has provided appropriate documentation from a professional qualified to diagnose his or her disability, submitted a written request for an accommodation to the Disability Services Coordinator, and met with the Disability Services Coordinator or Accommodation Services staff to discuss the accommodation services request, the Disability Services Coordinator will then invite faculty for courses in which the student is registered to review the accommodation services requested. Ultimately, AHED's Compliance Officer, after consulting with the campus Disability Services Coordinator, is responsible for determining whether a given request may interfere substantively with the requirements of a course. If he so determines, the student will be informed in writing within 14 days of the original request for accommodations and invited to appeal any negative decision on accommodations resulting therefrom. The student denied accommodations has the option to write a letter appealing the decision, including providing additional relevant information, to AHED's Compliance Officer within 14 days of the denial of services. AHED's Compliance Officer will respond in writing to the appeal within 14 days.

### **Notification of Instructors**

The provision of accommodation services is a responsibility shared between the student, the Disability Services Coordinator or staff, faculty, and AHED's Compliance Officer. Each quarter, the student must meet with the campus Disability Services Coordinator or Accommodation Services staff to review and implement necessary accommodations (if any) for that quarter's classes. During the pre-quarter meeting between the student and the campus Disability Services Coordinator or staff, the student will be provided with a "Notice of Accommodation Plan." This Notice will confirm that a student has a documented disability and is entitled to specific accommodation services.

The Notice is given to the student to deliver in person to each Instructor so that the Instructor has an opportunity to discuss with the student the requirements of a given course and how best to ensure the accommodations requested may assist the student. At the bottom of each Notice is a signature line for each faculty member to sign and return to the campus Disability Services Coordinator within 14 days to confirm receipt of the Notice. There is also an area in which student and Instructor may note any specific concerns about the proposed implementation of the Plan in a given course. This Notice is the only information that Instructors are given about the

student. Faculty members do not have access to the underlying diagnostic documentation of a student's disability absent a student's written permission to the contrary.

**Please Note:** Students may choose which if any accommodations to request for a given course. Faculty members are not required to provide classroom accommodations for students who fail to present them with an accommodation letter.

### **Eligibility**

In order to be eligible for accommodation services through an AHED school, a student must:

1. Provide current and comprehensive documentation by a qualified professional of a disability that limits at least one major life activity, as described below in the section labeled Documentation Requirements;
2. Submit a request in writing to the campus Disability Services Coordinator or Accommodation Services staff for accommodation(s);
3. Attend an initial interview with the campus Disability Services Coordinator or Accommodation Services staff in which the materials required under (1) above will be addressed, together with specific accommodation requests and program limitations; and
4. Schedule an appointment with the campus Disability Services Coordinator or staff prior to the start of each quarter during which that student is enrolled.

All accommodations will ultimately be reviewed and either approved or denied by AHED's Compliance Officer in conjunction with the campus Disability Services Coordinator. Accommodations can take significant time to arrange; students need to make any request for accommodations as early as possible to ensure that needed support is in place prior to the start of classes.

The campus Disability Services Coordinator will keep detailed notes as to the date each step of the request for accommodations process has occurred in order to ensure that the student's request has been fairly addressed. The request for accommodations process and any deliberative process utilized in making a final determination will be fully documented including notes recorded of pertinent discussions.

The campus Disability Services Coordinator will further retain all requests for accommodation, supporting documentation, including the date(s) of the request(s) for academic adjustments or services, the nature of each request, the final determinations and the reason(s) for any denials in the student's file.

**Please Note:** Accommodations CANNOT be provided until appropriate documentation as specified in (1) above is on file in the campus Disability Services Coordinator's Office and the interview specified in (3) above is held.

### **Documentation Requirements**

To be eligible for accommodation services, students must provide documentation that meets the standards for demonstrating a disability, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and related regulations.

AHED requires current documentation from appropriate, qualified professionals to support an accommodation request. In order to be considered current, documentation cannot be older than three (3) years.

If the initial documentation is determined to be inadequate because it fails to describe either the nature or the extent of the disability or otherwise support the accommodation request, AHED has the discretion to require additional documentation. If AHED does require additional documentation, the student will be notified within 14 days in writing of said request.

**Please Note:** Students bear the cost of obtaining appropriate, current documentation in compliance with this provision.

**Documentation of the disability must state the:**

1. Specific diagnosis;
2. Functional limitations (if any) within the academic environment as a result of the disability;
3. The degree to which the identified disability limits the student in comparison to most people;
4. The testing or evaluation procedures that were utilized to assess the level of limitation;
5. A report of the specific test or evaluation results; and
6. Recommendations for academic accommodation, if any.

**Please Note:** Disability eligibility verification forms are available from the campus Disability Services Coordinator's office for qualified diagnosticians to complete. While not required, these forms might assist the professional in determining specific information necessary to confirm accommodation services eligibility. To obtain the appropriate forms, simply contact your campus Disability Services Coordinator's office. Should you choose not to use these forms, you may request your qualified professional to provide a comprehensive report on his or her letterhead that addresses the aforementioned criteria.

**Requirements for Specific Disabilities**

There are certain disabilities for which AHED requires more specific information in order to determine eligibility for accommodations. These include learning disabilities, visual impairments, hearing impairments and deafness, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and psychiatric disabilities. The following information is provided to assist the appropriate professional in properly documenting a student's disability.

**Learning Disabilities**

Students with learning disabilities who have been diagnosed in high school within the last three years are required to provide the following information to verify eligibility for accommodations:

1. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) issued within the last three years identifying the student as being served for a specific learning disability; and
2. A Multi-Factored Evaluation (MFE) completed by a psychologist or school psychologist within the last three years. This assessment must indicate that the student has a diagnosed learning disability and was receiving services for the disability while in high school.

If a student does not have the documentation specified in (1) and (2) above, the student may instead submit a report that includes a comprehensive psychoeducational assessment performed by a private psychologist or school psychologist indicating the presence of a specific learning disability.

The MFE or psychoeducational assessment for the diagnosis of a specific learning disability must be submitted on the letterhead of the qualified professional or school psychologist/district. The assessment must provide clear and specific evidence of a learning disability that substantially impairs at least one major life activity. It is not acceptable to administer one test, nor is it acceptable to base a diagnosis on only one of the several subtests.

Specifically, the assessment must conform to or include the following criteria:

1. Testing must have been conducted within the past three years;
2. Testing must indicate a specific diagnosis from the DSM-IV. Descriptions such as individual "learning styles," "learning differences," or "academic problems" do not by themselves qualify as a learning disability and will not satisfy this requirement;
3. The nature and the severity of the disability must be supported by the psychoeducational assessment;
4. Actual test scores must be provided. The assessment should include standard scores for all normed measures or percentiles. Grade equivalents are insufficient unless standard scores and/or percentiles are also included;
5. Test scores must show evidence of significant discrepancies and intra-individual differences;
6. A qualified professional or diagnostician must conduct the evaluation. The qualified professional or diagnostician must indicate licensure or certification on the assessment.

The assessment must include the following domains:

1. Aptitude: A complete adult-level aptitude battery is required with all subtests and standard scores. This should include the current version of one of the following:
  - Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (the preferred instrument);
  - Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery: Test of Cognitive Ability; or
  - Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale.
2. Achievement: A complete individually administered standardized achievement test. Acceptable instruments include, but are not limited to the current versions of the following:
  - Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery: Tests of Achievement;
  - Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT);
  - Stanford Test of Academic Skill (TASK);
  - Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults (SATA);
  - Specific achievement tests such as the Test of Written Language-2 (TOWL-2);
  - Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests; or
  - The Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test.

**Please Note:** The Wide Range Achievement Test-Revised is not a comprehensive measure of achievement, and therefore is not acceptable if used as the sole measure of achievement.

3. Information Processing: Specific areas of information processing (such as short- and long-term memory; sequential memory; auditory and visual perception/processing; processing speed; executive functioning, motor ability) must be assessed. Acceptable instruments include but are not limited to the current versions of the following:
  - Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude;
  - Information from subtests of the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale;
  - The Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Ability; or
  - Other instruments relevant to the presenting learning problem.

### **Visual Impairments**

Appropriate documentation of visual impairment should include, at a minimum, information regarding the student's visual acuity, field restrictions, or other limitations. Given the range of such impairments, recommendations for accommodations and services (particularly adaptive technology needs) are beneficial. Generally, visual impairments manifest by at least one of the following:

1. Visual acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eye after the best possible correction;
2. Peripheral field so constricted that it affects one's ability to function in an educational setting; and/or
3. Progressive loss of vision which may affect one's ability to function in an educational setting.

### **Hearing Impairments and Deafness**

Appropriate documentation must include the degree of hearing loss and indicate functional limitations resulting from the disability. Hearing impairments are generally diagnosed when a person experiences a hearing loss of 30 decibels or greater, a pure tone average of 500, 1000, 2000 Hz, ANSI, unaided in the better ear. An audiologist's report detailing the student's degree of hearing loss must be included in the documentation.

### **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

Appropriate documentation must include the specific DSM-IV diagnosis, as well as a report that indicates that a rigorous assessment process was used to diagnose the disability in accordance with criterion set by the DSM-IV. The documentation must also specify how the disability substantially impairs a major life activity.

### **Psychiatric Disabilities**

Appropriate documentation must include the specific DSM-IV diagnosis, as well as a detailed description of how this disability causes a functional limitation for the student in the college learning environment. If concurrent accommodations are required based on side-effects of medication used to treat the disability, these medications and their effects on the student should be noted in the documentation.



**Services:****Academic Support Programs**

All students are provided with access to tutoring free of charge upon request. Extra assistance or tutoring is individual time with an Instructor to address any academic questions a student may have about a given course. Students should first request tutoring or extra assistance from his/her instructor and then through the Dean of Student's office if additional assistance is needed.

**Advising**

The campus Disability Services Coordinator and his or her staff are available to meet with students to discuss concerns they might have with accommodations, instructors, and campus accessibility. We also highly recommend that students with disabilities take advantage of the academic advising resources of each individual program area. Accommodation Services staff will gladly meet with disabled students after they have first accessed this resource to help them assess the extent to which it met their needs. We strongly encourage students seeking advisement services to call in advance to obtain an appointment.

**Note-taking**

A note-taking service is available for students with documented significant disabilities, such as physical, sensory, or processing deficits. It is important to note that this service is intended to augment the student's class attendance, not to replace it. Note-takers are other students in the class who may be compensated at the end of the semester to make copies of their notes. Note-takers will be asked to ask Reception to copy free of charge the notes immediately following class. Students employing a note-taker must then make arrangements with Reception to collect the copied notes.

Students who are eligible for this service are given the choice of either: (1) identifying a potential note-taker on their own in class, or (2) asking Accommodation Services staff to send a request to the Instructor asking him or her to announce in class that a student needs a note-taker. In the latter case, interested students will be asked to report to Accommodation Services staff to formalize the arrangement. Note-takers are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

All note-takers must complete employment paperwork at the Accommodation Services Office in order to be compensated. Concerns regarding the quality of notes or the timeliness of delivery should be directed to Accommodation Services staff immediately.

**Parking**

Students wishing to use designated Handicap Parking spaces at AHED schools must have the appropriate state issued placard. If a student does not have such a placard, but wishes to temporarily use Handicap Parking, the student must have his or her physician write a letter on letterhead that indicates (1) the nature of the student's disability and/or injury, and (2) the length of time the student will need special parking. This eligibility form should be returned to the campus Disability Services Coordinator.

## Test Accommodations

Accommodation Services staff can arrange for proctoring, reasonable extended time, and alternative administration of examinations. Provision of the exam to Accommodation Services staff is equally the responsibility of the student, the Instructor and Accommodation Services staff. Specific guidelines have been established to ensure a consistent and expedient process. They are as follows:

The student is responsible for contacting the campus Disability Services Coordinator at least three days in advance to schedule a test. The student is also responsible for reminding the faculty member at least two class meetings in advance that the student will be taking the exam through Accommodation Services. Every effort will be made to arrange test proctoring on the same day and time as the test is regularly scheduled. Each student should be aware, however, that appointment times depend upon the availability of proctors.

All students utilizing the test proctoring service will be expected to take their tests at the same time as other class members. Students must schedule their exams Monday through Thursday to begin between 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 p.m. Any student wishing to take a test at a time and/or date other than as regularly scheduled must obtain written permission in advance both from the Instructor and Accommodation Services. New testing arrangements will be confirmed in writing.

If the student fails to complete the exam at the scheduled time and/or secure permission to take it at another time, the test will be returned to the Instructor, and the student will receive a score of "0" on the exam.

**Please Note:** Because of scheduling conflicts, Accommodation Services staff may need to schedule a student's appointment at a different date and/or time than the regularly scheduled exam. If this situation arises, the staff will notify the faculty member directly.

The Instructor is responsible for delivering the exam to Accommodation Services staff prior to the scheduled test time. The Instructor must provide written permission attached to the test if he or she intends to allow the student to use notes, textbooks, calculators, or other materials during the test (if applicable). At the time the Instructor delivers the exam to Accommodation Services, the Instructor may arrange the method by which the completed exam will be returned to the Instructor.

If a student has content-specific questions about the exam during proctoring, every effort will be made to contact the Instructor. If Accommodations Services staff are unable to reach her/him, they will instruct the student to provide a written explanation of her/his question, to be attached to the exam.

Once a student begins a proctored exam, the student is not permitted to leave the office for any reason. If, in accordance with the student's Accommodation Plan, the student needs to take frequent breaks, the exam will be broken up into smaller sections. Each section will be independently administered and the student will be permitted to take a break after she or he hands in the individual sections to the proctor. The student will not, however, be permitted to return to a section she or he has completed.

In the event of cheating or plagiarism, the proctor will end the exam immediately, and return the exam to the Instructor with a written description of what occurred. The student will then be

subject to disciplinary action in the same way that any student taking the exam within the classroom environment would be.

### **ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act Grievance Procedure**

As stated in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, qualified students with disabilities have the right to request accommodations and to receive fair treatment within the educational system. AHED is dedicated to resolving conflicts and disagreements regarding requests for reasonable accommodations.

If you feel that you have been subjected to unfair or improper treatment due to a disability, you may contact your campus Disability Services Coordinator. The process and timeline for filing a grievance are as follows:

1. Students shall express their concern initially with the appropriate faculty/staff member involved in the conflict in an informal manner. The campus Disability Services Coordinator should be contacted at the same time by the student to clarify rights and procedures for both parties.

The campus Disability Services Coordinator will keep detailed notes as to the date each step of the accommodations grievance process has occurred in order to ensure that the student's request has been fairly addressed. The accommodations grievance process will be fully documented including notes recorded of pertinent discussions.

The campus Disability Services Coordinator will further retain all requests for accommodation, supporting documentation, including the date(s) of the request(s) for academic adjustments or services, the nature of each request, the final determinations and the reason(s) for any denials in the student's file.

2. If the complaint is unresolved after the informal discussion, the student may file a formal, written statement of the problem with the campus Disability Services Coordinator's Office. The written complaint to the campus Disability Services Coordinator must clearly state the basis for the complaint (*i.e.*, the who, what, where, when and why), and must:

- Clearly state the nature and basis of the grievance ;
- Be signed and dated;
- Provide the name(s) of the person(s) alleged to have engaged in unfair or improper treatment due to a disability;
- Document specifics of the incident(s) in question; and
- Identify any known witness(es) who have knowledge of the allegations .

**Note:** In cases of alleged illegal discrimination based on race, sex, or handicap, the campus Disability Services Coordinator will contact AHED's Compliance Officer prior to advising the student about course of action.

3. The campus Disability Services Coordinator, in consultation with AHED's Compliance Officer, will conduct an investigation. AHED's Compliance Officer will respond in writing to the student within 14 days of the filing date of the complaint. As appropriate, AHED may designate different persons to review cases or may consolidate complaints when such action is consistent with administrative efficiency and a fair resolution of the problem. Written notification will be provided to the student in such a case.

4. If the student feels that the decision is arbitrary and capricious, or if they have new evidence to present, the student may appeal in writing to AHED's Compliance Officer within 14 days of the decision. If no appeal is made in writing to AHED's Compliance Officer within 14 days of the decision, then the decision shall be final. Upon appeal to AHED'S Compliance Officer, the following must be done:

- A copy of the appeal must be submitted to the campus Disability Services Coordinator and to AHED's Compliance Officer; and
- Upon appropriate review, the appellate determination must be communicated in writing to all parties involved within 14 days of the date of the appeal.

5. At any stage of the grievance procedure, if it was determined that law and/or college policy was violated, a remedy to the problem will be offered. If it is determined that there was no violation, the complainant will be notified within 14 days and other options for possible resolution of the complaint will be explained, including the right of the student to contact the United States Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, 500 W. Madison Street, Suite 1475, Chicago, Illinois 60601.

The Disability Services Coordinator for each campus is listed in each campus catalog supplement.

AHED's Compliance Officer is Jeffrey Bodimer. His contact information is as follows:

Jeffrey Bodimer  
Chief Operations/Compliance Officer  
American Higher Education Development Corporation  
116 Village Blvd, Suite 200  
Princeton, NJ 08540  
Phone: 404-704-2426  
[jbodimer@ahed.com](mailto:jbodimer@ahed.com)



## Acknowledgement of Accommodation Services Handbook

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (please print), hereby acknowledge receipt of AHED's Accommodation Services Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date