Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity (AEO)

Student Handbook

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August 25, 2014

Dear Student,

Vassar College strives to provide and promote a supportive, inclusive, and accessible learning, living and working environment for students with disabilities. These goals are realized through collaboration, the provision of individualized services and accommodations, faculty teaching development, and advocacy.

The Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity (AEO) was established in 1996 as the Office of Disability and Support Services to provide coordinated services and accommodations for qualified students with documented disabilities. A disability may be present before a student enters Vassar or may develop or be diagnosed while attending college.

Vassar students may need accommodations or support services because of a learning difference (e.g. dyslexia, or ADHD), a chronic medical condition (e.g. Crohn’s Disease, severe asthma, or migraine headaches), visual or hearing impairments, mobility or orthopedic challenges, psychological disorders (e.g. anxiety, depression, or OCD), as well as substance abuse and recovery. Students with temporary conditions such as concussion or in post-operative rehabilitation are also eligible for accommodations.

The accommodation process is dynamic and interactive and will be tailored to your individual needs. Our goal is to provide services that recognize you as having individualized needs rather than viewing you as being “disabled.” AEO is available to work directly with you and necessary faculty and administration throughout your academic career to help ensure that your accommodations, services and auxiliary aids are appropriate to your needs, academic program, and campus life experience. The AEO Student Handbook will help inform you of our policies and procedures.

We look forward to working with you in the coming years at Vassar.

With every good wish,

MaryJo Cavanaugh

MaryJo Cavanaugh
Director and Moorhead Learning Specialist
Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity
Disability Rights and Responsibilities: High School vs. College

The key to a successful transition from high school to college is to anticipate and be prepared for the differences between the two settings. In addition to dealing with the same transition issues that all students face, students with disabilities have the added challenge of changes in how support services are requested and arranged. In college students play a more active role and assume more responsibility. The chart below compares the legal rights and responsibilities in high school versus those in college.

The Differences Between Secondary and Post-Secondary Disability Laws

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Secondary (High School)</th>
<th>Postsecondary (College)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the law?</td>
<td>IDEA and Section 504</td>
<td>ADA and Section 504 (subpart E)</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the intent of the law?</td>
<td>IDEA: To provide a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment to students with disabilities. 504: To ensure that no otherwise qualified person with a disability is denied access to, benefits of, or is subjected to discrimination in any program or activity provided by any public institution or entity.</td>
<td>To ensure that no otherwise qualified person with a disability will be denied access to, or the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination by any program or activity provided by any public institution or entity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is covered under the law?</td>
<td>All infants, children and youth requiring special education services until age 21 or graduation from high school.</td>
<td>All qualified individuals with disabilities who meet the entry age criteria or particular program entry criteria of the college and who can document the existence of a disability as defined by the ADA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is responsible for identifying and documenting the need?</td>
<td>School districts are responsible for identifying, evaluating, and planning educational services at no expense to the parent.</td>
<td>Students are responsible for self-identification and for obtaining disability documentation from a professional who is qualified to assess their particular disability. The student, not the institution, assumes the cost of the evaluation.</td>
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## Disability Rights and Responsibilities: High School vs. College

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Secondary (High School)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who is responsible for initiating service delivery?</td>
<td>School districts are responsible for identifying students with disabilities and providing special instruction, individualized educational plans, and/or accommodations.</td>
<td>Students are responsible for notifying the Disability Support Services staff of their disability and of their need for accommodations. Accommodations (not special education) are provided on a semester by semester basis in order for students with disabilities to have equal access to the institution’s programs, services and activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is responsible for enforcing the law?</td>
<td>IDEA is basically a funding statute, enforced by the Office for Special Education and Rehabilitation Services in the U.S. Department of Education. ADA/504 are civil rights statutes, enforced by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), U.S. Department of Justice, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).</td>
<td>Section 504 (Subpart E) is a civil rights statute enforced by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), U.S. Department of Education. The ADA is also a civil rights statute enforced by the U.S. Department of Justice, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What about self advocacy?</td>
<td>The parent or guardian is the primary advocate. Students with disabilities should learn about their disability, the importance of self-advocacy, the accommodation(s) they need, and ways to become a self-advocate.</td>
<td>Students must be able to communicate what their disability is, their strengths, weaknesses how the disability impacts and functionally limits major life activities. They must be able to identify and justify any requested accommodations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kay McVey, Faculty Development Specialist, PROJECT CONNECT, Henderson State University
Every Vassar student must fulfill an intensive freshman writing course, the quantitative course requirement, the foreign language requirement, and requirements for the declared major. Vassar College does not waive requirements because degree requirements and departmental requirements are implemented for sound pedagogic and academic reasons. Students in need of modifications to their academic program, such as taking a reduced course load or petitioning for a substitution of the foreign language requirement, may petition the Committee on Leaves and Privileges, in consultation with the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity. Please contact us if you have concerns about meeting any of your academic program requirements because of your disability.

**Definition of a Disability According to the ADAAA and Section 504**

A student with a disability is any person who has a physical or mental impairment which *substantially limits* one or more major life activities, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such impairment. A *qualified* student with a disability - in the context of post-secondary education - is a student who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission and continued participation in Vassar’s programs and activities.

**Definition of a Reasonable Accommodation**

The Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity works closely with students, faculty, and administration to ensure that accommodations identified and provided are reasonable, effective and appropriate for the student’s needs, the course, program, or activity. *Reasonable accommodations* are defined as any accommodation, adjustment or modification that will provide equal access to the educational process that do not fundamentally alter the *essential components* of the course or program. Essential components are required outcomes (e.g. mastery of specific knowledge, skills, principles, or concepts, attendance requirements, and class participation, etc.) that all students must demonstrate with or without using accommodations. The college has the right to deny a request for an accommodation, adjustment and/or auxiliary aid if the student does not have a disability, if the documentation provided fails to support the need for such accommodation, or if the accommodation requested would result in a fundamental alteration to a course, program, or activity.
Accommodation Overview

Accommodations and services fall into two categories:

a) academic accommodations, modifications or adjustments
b) student life accommodations

Commonly offered accommodations include, but are not limited to, exam accommodations (extended time, low distraction exam room, use of computer, etc.); alternate print formats (Braille, e-text, audiobooks); notetaker services, readers, classroom relocation, housing and meal plan accommodations. Accommodations such as extended time on exams however, are only one part of creating an inclusive learning environment. AEO provides a variety of support services including:

Learning strategy instruction
Academic coaching
Faculty teaching development on inclusive instructional design
Library support services
Reader services
Scribe and transcription services
Sign language interpreters; remote captioning services
Mobility orientation assistance
Career consultation and information on work-related accommodations
Peer mentoring programs

All accommodations decisions are based on your current needs, the nature of your disability, supporting documentation, and the specific requirements of the course, program, or activity.

The College pays for accommodations and services unless otherwise specified. Personal services such as prescriptive devices, health-care aids, personal computing equipment or adaptive software, and private tutoring are the responsibility of the student with the disability.

The College can choose to provide an alternative accommodation other than the one preferred by the student as long as the accommodation method is effective.

Disability accommodations can be made at any time. The availability of the accommodation, auxiliary aid, or service may be affected, however, by a request made later than suggested periods. Accommodations are never retroactive.

Vassar will not provide a disability accommodation, auxiliary aid, or service request if the student does not have a disability; the documentation provided fails to support the need for such accommodation; the accommodation is considered a personal service; or the accommodation requested would result in a fundamental alteration to a course, program or activity.

See Disability Policy and Appeals Procedure for more information.
How to Register with AEO

The process of registering with the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity involves three steps:

1. **Self-Disclose**

   Students receive a self-identification form (in red print) in the matriculation packet. This is the form that officially registers you with AEO. You only need to complete this form once. Additional copies of this form are available from the office and online.

2. **Provide Documentation**

   In general, documentation refers to a detailed letter from a physician, psychologist, or psychiatrist or a psycho-educational evaluation. Documentation of a disability must be provided by an appropriate, licensed professional who is not a family member. If documentation is considered incomplete or inadequate to support an accommodation request, additional documentation will be required. A prior history of accommodation without demonstration of a current need does not warrant the provision of accommodations.

   Documentation should be sent to:

   Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity  
   Vassar College, Box 164  
   124 Raymond Avenue  
   Poughkeepsie, NY 12604-0164

   See our website for guidelines to forward to your doctor, psychologist or psychiatrist.

3. **Interview with the Director**

   Finally, students must participate in an interview/meet the director either the summer before they matriculate or as the need or wish to request accommodations arises. The interview helps create a more complete picture of the student rather than relying solely on testing documentation. This conversation allows AEO to understand the impact the diagnosis has on everyday activities and how the student has previously managed the accommodation process. Eligibility for other accommodations is also discussed. Under the recently-amended ADA, the student’s personal narrative has become of primary importance in the reporting - and supporting – the need for accommodations on the basis of disability.

Students with disabilities are entitled to privacy and discretion in the handling of all disability-related information. Disability information will be used for the sole purpose of enabling Vassar to provide supportive, academic and other services related to the individual’s disability. Disability-related information, including the comprehensive documentation which established the existence of a disability and need for accommodations, is collected and maintained on separate forms from other academic and employment information and is kept in secure files with limited access. Disability information, documentation, or record of accommodation is not a part of a student’s permanent academic record. Information is shared only on a need-to-know basis.
At the beginning of each and every semester students receive an Academic Accommodation Request Form by email. This form must be completed and returned to the Office Accessibility and Educational Opportunity no later than the end of the first two weeks of class. After you return your form by email, we will prepare your academic accommodation letter which identifies every academic accommodation that has been approved for the current semester. Accommodation letters are emailed directly to you with a cc: copy sent to the Dean of Studies office.

Page 1 is self-explanatory: fill in your name, campus box #, class year, email address, # of credits you are electing for the current semester, and diagnosis (e.g., learning disability, AD/HD, psychological, visual impairment, hearing impairment, chronic health impairment, etc.). Then, list each course number and section number (ENGL 101-05) followed by your instructor’s name (first, last) and his/her email address. Your instructor’s contact information is listed on the course syllabus.

We encourage you to attend at least the first two classes before completing the form. This gives you a chance to figure out which accommodations will work best for each class.

Don’t worry if you end up changing your mind about your class schedule or accommodations after you submit the form. You can always fill out a new form. We’ll update your accommodation letter and send you a new one.
Academic Accommodations

On page 2, check off boxes next to the accommodations you would like to request. We have listed some of the most frequently requested academic accommodations but you are also welcome to write in different accommodations at the bottom of the page.

Your accommodation request must be supported by your disability documentation and there must be a connection between the nature of your disability and the requested accommodation. The majority of academic accommodations can be arranged at the start of the semester, but a few require advance planning the semester ahead. Please schedule an appointment if you are uncertain about whether you qualify for a particular accommodation.

Follow the instructions on the last page, sign your name (electronic signature or type in your name), and indicate whether you want your diagnostic label included on your accommodation letter, or if you would prefer that your accommodation letter simply state that you are registered with the office and eligible to receive accommodations. Page 9 shows a sample of a typical academic accommodation letter.

This is important: Your academic accommodation letter will be emailed to you. You are then responsible for forwarding the letter to your professors AND meeting with each professor during office hours to arrange your academic accommodations. Please schedule an appointment with our office if you have any questions or concerns about the process.
Exam Accommodations

Some students may qualify for additional time to complete exams, may need to take their exam in a small group or lower-distraction environment, or may be eligible to use a computer for the exam. Please speak with your professor at least a week before your exam to work out the details of your exam accommodations. For final exams, you will need to speak with your professors at least two weeks in advance and no later than the last day of classes for any exams scheduled during the Final Exam Period.

Please determine the following in consultation with your professor:

- Will you be taking the exam with the class or in a separate room?
- Do you need to start the exam early or stay after the class ends in order to receive your extra time?
- If you need to take the exam at a different time, that does not conflict with either your schedule or your professor’s schedule.
- Do you need AEO to proctor the exam with extended time, in a private exam room, provide a computer (students may not use their personal computer for exams), etc? (Please keep in mind that if you take your exam through AEO it is possible you will not have access to your professor to ask questions during the exam.)

What if I need my exam proctored by AEO?

Proctors are used to supervise all exams that take place outside the regular classroom setting to protect the integrity of the exam conditions. Contact Melanie Harasym, meharasym@vassar.edu, coordinator of exam arrangements and Moorhead academic coach, at least a week before the scheduled exam date if your professor is unable to proctor your exam or if you prefer to take your exam through AEO. AEO exam proctoring services are available Monday through Friday between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Please include the following information in your email request:

- Course number/section and instructor’s name
- Date and time of scheduled exam as well as length of time given to the class for exam
- Accommodation(s) needed (% extended time, computer, private exam room, etc.)
- Preferred time to take the exam (time must overlap with scheduled exam time whenever possible).

We require a week's notice because:

- We need to arrange space and a proctor for your exam.
- We need time to communicate with your professor, get a copy of the exam, and send you instructions about what to the day of the exam (where to go, what time to arrive, what to bring, or where to pick up a computer, etc.)
- Some exams require special software or equipment, printouts of slides, document conversion, etc. and we need to make those arrangements well in advance.
- Your professor may need to create a new exam for you if you are taking the exam on a different date from the class.

Please remember: Cell phones, PDAs, backpacks, and other personal items are not allowed in the testing room. You will need to leave your belongings with your proctor.
Some students with disabilities may qualify for staggered deadlines as a reasonable academic accommodation. The purpose of Staggered Deadline Accommodation is to provide the student with an opportunity to consult with AEO and his or her instructor well in advance to identify an acceptable alternate submission date - not an extension - for a paper, project, or exam when there are conflicting due dates for assignments or exams in one or more classes. Staggered deadlines are not extensions in that there is planning involved. However, the new deadline may be scheduled after the original deadline.

At the beginning of the semester, qualified students must review their syllabus and meet with their professor to discuss exam dates and assignment deadlines. Staggered deadlines may result in an assignment or test being moved up or moved back in order to accommodate the nature of the assignment, the professor’s course objectives, or the student’s assignment schedule. Typically, exams are not moved unless there are no other options AND the professor is in agreement. Group presentations are also not moved due to potential scheduling conflicts for other members of the group or class.

Requests for staggered deadlines on final papers at the end of the semester are arranged through the Office of Disability and Support Services in consultation with the Dean of Studies Office and the student’s professor. In such cases, the proposed staggered deadline may require a new due date falling during the study period and/or the final exam period. Requests for staggered deadlines for end of semester work must be made before the last day of classes.

Staggered Deadlines are proposed in one of two ways:

1. Staggered deadlines are generally arranged by meeting with the AEO Director. After meeting with the student, the Director will send a staggered deadline proposal to their professor and the student’s class advisor in the Dean of Studies Office by email. Once confirmed, the student is responsible for meeting the new deadline and following up with the professor to confirm paper delivery or other assignment obligations.

2. The student can meet with his or her professor directly to set up a staggered deadline for a particular assignment or exam. The student is then responsible for sending a confirmation email to his or her professor, Dean of Studies Class Advisor, and ODSS confirming the new deadline.

How does this differ from an extension or an incomplete?

When students are unable to complete their academic work for reasons of health or serious emergency, an extension or incomplete may be granted by the Dean of Studies Office. The Office Accessibility and Educational Opportunity cannot approve or grant extensions or incompletes. Similarly, all requests for extensions beyond the final exam period are considered incompletes. A request for staggered deadline made less than a week in advance will be considered as a request for an extension. Students in need of an extension must speak with their professor and contact their class advisor in the Dean of Studies Office.
Notetaker Services

The Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity coordinates a notetaker service for students who, due to a disability or disabilities, are either unable to take notes or need class notes to supplement their own notes and class attendance. A student cannot receive notes for a class they missed without prior approval from their instructor.

Students are encouraged to attend the first few classes to determine if the notetaker service is needed for the class. Once notified by the student AEO will send an email announcement to the class email roster advertising the note-taker position. Your name will not be disclosed. Once hired through Student Employment, notetakers send their typed or scanned class notes to AEO at the end of each week. Lynn Owen, the AEO office specialist will forward the notes to your Vassar email account.

Please recommend classmates whom you know take good notes and attend class reliably.

Do you want to be a Notetaker?

Let us know if you want to be a notetaker. Student notetakers are paid a $100 stipend per course through Student Employment. Please send Ms. Lynn Owen your class schedule at the start of each semester, and she will check to see if a notetaker is needed in your class.
AEO provides textbooks and other class materials in alternative formats for students with print-related disabilities, so they may use text-to-speech software, listen to their books on an mp3 player or personal computer, in Braille or as enlarged text. AEO does not convert materials that are available in an accessible format free of charge or materials that are readily available in electronic formats. Since most conversion processes can be extremely time-consuming, please request alternative print services as far in advance as possible. We advise you to begin the conversation with us the semester before and follow these steps:

**Step One:** Register with AEO
Use the self-identification form to register with the office.

**Step Two:** Let AEO know what course materials are needed in an alternate format.
Use the Alternate Format Request Form on the AEO website: http://accessibilityandeducationalopportunity.vassar.edu/forms/alternate-format.html. Ideally, we need the summer to prepare for fall semester materials and all of winter break for the spring semester.

**Step Three:** Participate in Priority Registration
Due to the time-consuming nature of these types of accommodations, it is important that you participate in Priority Registration through the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity (AEO) and select your courses every semester as early as possible.

**Step Four:** Contact your Professors
As soon as you are registered for classes, contact your professor and request an advance syllabus. Explain that you use alternative print and need to provide the class book list to AEO.

Your materials will be delivered to you via Dropbox. If you have never used Dropbox or would like to become more familiar with it, you can schedule a training session with our accessibility technologist. Contact AEO for more details.
What do I tell my professors?

Vassar’s faculty are extremely devoted and committed to their roles as teachers; they care deeply about their students, and they want to do whatever they can to help you develop your fullest understanding of their course’s subject matter. You must let your professors know that you are working with our office if you anticipate using or needing academic accommodations at any point in the semester.

Your accommodation letter instructs you to arrange to meet in person with each of your professors during the first several weeks of the semester. The purpose of these meetings is for your professor to get to know you better, and to learn more about how your accommodations allow for your unique learning style, and enable you to participate fully in the class.

It would be a good idea to bring a hard copy of your letter (or email it directly to your professors) in case any of your professors have trouble locating their copy. It might also be helpful if you took a look at the course syllabus or outlines beforehand to see if there will be times during the semester when paper deadlines and/or exam dates may overlap or occur closely together. This is particularly important if you are eligible for staggered deadlines.

Tell your professors that you want to review your approved accommodations with them, and to develop an understanding or plan for how your accommodations will be implemented in their class. Use your Accommodation Letter as a guide in these discussions. In most cases, your professors may want to discuss the logistics of providing for your accommodation needs (e.g., how much extra time on exams, requesting a low distraction environment when taking exams, how much of a reminder or advance notice they expect from you, etc.).

You need not disclose the specifics of your diagnosis or disability, and if asked, you should feel free to say you are not comfortable discussing this at the present time. However, be prepared to describe the sorts of support or accommodations that have been helpful to you in the past, and that have been approved for accommodations by AEO.

It will be your responsibility to stay on top of deadlines and due dates, and to remind your professors well in advance when you make your accommodation requests. We encourage you to meet regularly with your professors throughout the year. Get to know them and give them the opportunity to get to know you. You’ll be amazed at how much more you will learn during office hours, and how much easier it will be to arrange your accommodations. If you have any questions regarding this process, or any problems occur, please contact us.

Please remember that this is a partnership with your professors: your accommodations, their courses and communication and collaboration are essential.
What is Academic Coaching?

The academic coaching experience offers students an opportunity to know themselves within the context of their learning profile and accommodation needs. With emphasis on the executive function demands of college, students must become aware of their learning style (metacognition), understand what approaches to reading, writing, and studying work best for them, and learn how to adapt strategies when encountering new bodies of knowledge, disciplinary frameworks, or different teaching styles. Metacognition is not the only requirement for academic success. Students must be sufficiently motivated and encouraged. Students must be given opportunities to learn new skills in a supportive environment that is safe and non-judgmental. Academic Coaching provides such an environment.

Is Academic Coaching for Me?

Many students who are registered with AEO are curious about academic coaching—how it works; what they will have to do; and if it will work for them. Academic Coaching is first and foremost a student-centered process. Through dialogue and inquiry, the student learns how to identify what options are available in a given situation, select the best one, and develop a goal-oriented plan of action. Some action plans may require developing new academic skills by working with the academic coach or the Learning, Teaching, and Research Center staff. Typically, students who find coaching beneficial are committed to the process, willing to take responsibility, are motivated to improve. Coaching students are willing to be honest with themselves as well as their academic coach.

What is a Coaching Session Like?

Students meet with their academic coach for an initial meeting that lasts for approximately 45 minutes. They provide the coach with a brief history of their academic experiences, strengths and challenges, and current goals at college and for coaching. Subsequent conferences, which can last anywhere from 15 minutes to 45 minutes, take place either every week or every other week depending on what will effectively meet the needs of the student. In addition, students stay in communication with their coach by scheduled email and/or phone conferences between meetings, as appropriate. Coaching sessions continue until students feel a greater sense of independence.

Goal Setting

Together, the student and coach develop manageable daily- and long-term goals. Coaching can focus on time management, organization, learning more effective study skills, notetaking skills, reading strategies, test-taking skills, or can focus on balancing academics with personal interests and activities. Throughout the process students learn strategies that they can practice and refine beyond their time at Vassar.

Supportive Accountability

In order to ensure that students are meeting their goals, academic coaching helps hold students accountable through the coaching process. By creating a structure, setting up a tangible plan, observing and reflecting on successes and ongoing challenges coaches help students establish a system of accountability. If the student does not achieve the goal(s), then both will work together to devise a new goal(s) that is more manageable and likely to end in success.

Motivation

Academic coaching is a partnership that requires ongoing dialogue and reflection about what is working and what is not. Students need not worry about being judged or criticized by the coach if a goal is not met. When (or if) this occurs, the coach will recommend a different course of action that will hopefully lead to success. It is important for students to understand before engaging in academic coaching, that the coach will offer guidance and suggestions in a supportive and positive manner. In turn, students are responsible for implementing change and working toward achieving the goal(s) they have identified.
AEO works with students who need special housing accommodations modifications, such as a strobe emergency/fire alarm in their room, an additional handgrip, air conditioning for severe asthma or other significant respiratory disorder, or some other housing accommodation related to the nature of their disability. The College works diligently to meet the needs of all students to provide a quality of residential life that will support students’ academic endeavors and student life development.

Every effort will be made to accommodate students’ disabilities and meet their preferences. However, there may be instances in which students are assigned housing which meets their needs but may not be their first choice of house or room on campus. We encourage you to work with us to identify solutions.

Each January, you will need to request housing accommodations for the following academic year and/or for the summer if you plan to stay on campus for a summer job or internship program. Like other accommodations, students registered with AEO receive a housing form by email, and must return it by the stated deadline. Students work with the Office of Residential Life BEFORE room draw to select a room that will meet their needs (e.g., a room wired for air conditioner, wheelchair accessible, locking bathroom, etc.).

No priority is given to any student for an apartment. All students (regardless of disability) must form a house team, submit their application to Residential Life by the deadline, and then work with AEO to arrange specific housing accommodations. Please contact the AEO director for more information.

Request forms are due no later than February 1st for returning students and July 1st for entering freshmen and transfer students.
Meal Plan Accommodation

Vassar Dining Services

Vassar offers a variety of menu options that will meet most students' dietary and health needs. All students living in the residence halls must be on a meal plan. There are four different meal plan options: minimum, standard, enhanced, and plus. For students with significant, special dietary needs that cannot fully be accommodated through our campus dining services, Campus Dining Services will work with you to develop a medical meal plan. Campus Dining staff is prepared to work with students with severe food allergies to milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, shellfish, soy, wheat, fish, etc. Like housing accommodations, meal plan accommodations are based on supporting medical documentation indicating a student’s disability and specific dietary needs. Students with mobility impairments, sensory impairments or other disabilities should also contact the AEO office to discuss meal plan arrangements and dining hall accommodations, which might better suit their needs. Meal plan accommodations must be updated at the beginning of each semester.

If you need a medical meal plan or need to avoid certain foods because of a food allergy, you must complete a meal plan accommodation form at the beginning of every academic year and return the form to AEO. Then, you will meet with Maureen King, Senior Director of Dining Services. Ms. King will work with you to develop an individualized meal plan and introduce you to the dining staff. For students with food allergies, getting to know the chefs and helpers in ACDC and the Retreat can be very beneficial.

Check out the Dining Services Website:

Peace of Mind Zone

Contact our Registered Dietitian at:
askthedietitian@aramarkcampusdish.com

Menus and Allergen Listings

Campus Dining Services will post menus with ingredients and common allergens listed at the start of each semester on their website. We encourage you to visit this site often to become familiar with your menu options.

Evacuation of Persons with Disabilities: The safe evacuation of all members of the Vassar College community in the event of a fire or emergency is of the utmost importance. The College therefore asks all individuals who may need assistance in an emergency to self-identify themselves to the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity. Once an individual has self-identified, the College will work together with the individual to develop a personal emergency plan that includes specific evacuation procedures from any building on campus including their residence, sheltering procedures, and means of communication in the event of an emergency.

Any individual who cannot evacuate a building in an emergency independently or safely with little assistance from others should shelter in place within a room or office, or move to an area of refuge. If forced to stay in place during an emergency or if you need evacuation assistance:

- Notify others evacuating that you are remaining in your room and ask them to contact Security with that information immediately upon exiting the building.

- Call Security or 911 to inform emergency responders of your exact location and need for assistance. You are strongly encouraged to have a cell phone with you at all times and program the Campus Security emergency phone number (845) 437-7333 into your phone.

The Director of the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity and Director of Environmental Health and Safety, will work with students with disabilities individually to help the student develop their personal evacuation plan. We encourage any person who may need emergency evacuation assistance to carry a cell phone with them at all time with #911 and the campus emergency number, (845) 437-7333 programmed into their phone.

Any individual requiring evacuation assistance is encouraged to update his/her self-identification information semi-annually, no later than August 30 and January 30 of each calendar year, or whenever circumstances warrant an update (e.g., changes in his/her condition that would require a change in assistance). A list of persons needing evacuation assistance will be distributed to Campus Security as well as the Arlington Fire Department.
Counseling Service

Wendy Freedman, PhD – Director of Psychological Services
Wayne Assing, MSW, LCSW - Assistant Director
LaTashe Smith, LCSW – Staff Therapist
Roselynn Garcia-Almonte, PsyD – Staff Therapist
Jennica Karpinski, PsyD - Staff Therapist

Dean of Studies

Benjamin Lotto, Dean of Studies, Advisor to the Class of 2015
Mia Mask, Advisor to the Class of 2016
Elliot Schrieber, Advisor to the Class of 2017
Susan Zlotnick, Dean of Freshmen, Advisor to the Class of 2018
Pauline Saavedra, Assistant Dean of Studies

Dean of Students

David “D.B.” Brown, Dean of Students

Learning, Teaching, and Research Center (LTRC)

Karen Getter, Academic Support and Learning Resources Specialist
Ja’Wanda Grant, Director of the Quantitative Reasoning Center
Matthew Schultz, Director of the Writing Center

Research Librarians

Debra Bucher
Sarah Canino
Barbara Durniak
Thomas E. Hill
Gretchen Lieb
Carol Lynn Marshall
Ronald Patkus
Rachelle Ramer
Laura Streett, Archivist

Department Liaison

CHJA, GRST, PHIL, RELI
MUSI
ANTH, EDUC, GEOG, HISP, SOCI
ART
DRAM, ENGL, FILM, POLI
ECON, HIST
GERM, ITAL
BIOL, CHEM, COMP, ESCI, MATH
Policy Statement

Vassar College is committed to providing individuals with disabilities equal access to the academic courses, programs, and activities of the College. In accordance with the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the College strives in its policies and practices to provide for equal access and opportunity for students with disabilities in all aspects of college life. In support of this mission, the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity provides services to self-identified students with disabilities. The Office for Accessibility also provides assistance in identifying appropriate support and accommodations in the work environment for faculty and staff. Disabilities may include, but are not necessarily limited to, visual impairments, mobility and orthopedic impairments, hearing impairments, chronic medical conditions, learning disabilities, and psychological or emotional disorders.

I. The Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity

The role of the Director is to evaluate requests for accommodations and services based on the needs of self-identified students, faculty or staff members with disabilities, and to coordinate accommodations, auxiliary aids and services with appropriate College personnel. To ensure the provision of reasonable and effective accommodations, individuals must provide documentation of their disability or disabilities by an appropriate professional. Individuals with disabilities must also provide the Director sufficient time to evaluate the request, to determine the appropriate course of action, and to implement appropriate accommodations and support services.

While the accommodation preference of the individual with the disability will be taken into consideration, Vassar College is not required to provide the preferred accommodation as long as the alternative accommodation is reasonable, effective and provides equal access. Vassar College is not responsible for providing services of a personal nature, or for providing prescribed devices or services. Because college and departmental requirements are implemented for sound pedagogic and academic reasons, it is not the policy of the college to waive requirements. Students in need of modifications to their academic program may petition the Committee on Leaves and Privileges, in consultation with the Office Accessibility and Educational Opportunity, for academic modifications.

Requests for accommodations and auxiliary aids and services involve evaluation of the following criteria by the Associate Director and other Vassar faculty, administration, or staff, as appropriate:

a) Whether the person meets the criteria for being otherwise qualified as an individual with a disability under the ADA and Section 504;

b) Whether the disability is appropriately documented in writing by a qualified professional. The amount and type of required documentation will be based upon the nature of the disability and the nature and duration of the requested accommodation;

c) Whether the disability is appropriately documented in writing by a qualified professional. The amount and type of required documentation will be based upon the nature of the disability and the nature and duration of the requested accommodation;
d) Whether the requested accommodation or support service is appropriate to the needs of the person with the disability and appropriate for the academic course, program, activity or work environment;

e) Whether the student, faculty, or staff member will have equal access or opportunity without the accommodation or support service;

f) Whether the accommodation will fundamentally alter the academic course, program, or essential requirements of the job;

g) Whether an alternate accommodation or academic modification could be implemented to provide equal access and opportunity.

The Director will remain available for consultation during the period of accommodation in case modifications to the accommodation or support service become necessary. If a resolution to a request for accommodations and support services, or modifications to such requests, cannot be achieved through informal negotiation, either party involved in the accommodation or support service may file an appeal, as outlined in Sections III through V.

II. Confidentiality

Individuals with disabilities are entitled to privacy and discretion in the handling of all disability-related information. Disability-related information provided to the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity will be used solely for the purpose of enabling Vassar to provide services related to the individual's disability. Information on disabilities is collected and maintained separately from other academic or employment information and is kept in secure files with limited access. Disability documentation is not considered a part of a student's permanent academic record or of an employee's personnel file. It is the policy of the College to maintain confidentiality in all informal and formal proceedings, except as otherwise specified in these statements of procedure.

III. Appeals

Vassar College has adopted an internal appeals process for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints or disagreements about accessibility, accommodations, auxiliary aids and services, and modifications to academic courses, programs, and activities. In addition, recourse can be sought through the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the Office of Civil Rights (EOR), the State Division of Human Rights, or the Courts. State and Federal statutes of limitations are typically 180 days.

The Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action has been designated to coordinate the college's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The Faculty Director of Affirmative Action, who serves as the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, handles inquiries about compliance, and investigates complaints of disagreements or denials of disability-related accommodations and auxiliary aids and services.
If an individual feels that an accommodation, modification, or auxiliary aid is not appropriate, reasonable, or effective, the individual may file a petition for appeal with the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator. If the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator for any reason of conflict of interest, illness, or prolonged absence is unable to carry out his or her responsibilities, a designee shall be appointed by the President of the College.

The ADA/Section 504 Appeals Committee shall consist of the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, who shall serve as Chair, an appointed member of the faculty, and an appointed member of the Committee on Disabilities Issues (CODI). If at any time, the student, faculty or staff member requires an accommodation to participate in the appeals process, the individual must communicate that need to the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator.

IV. Filing an Appeal

a) Where to file a petition for appeal:
The petition for appeal should be filed in writing with the Faculty Director of Affirmative Action, Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, Campus Box 645.

b) When to file:
The petition for appeal should be filed within 30 days of the date of the decision by the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity. Time periods may be extended if the individual has good reason, as determined by the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator. Whenever time deadlines or procedures set forth in the appeals process create problems owing to the nature of the complaint, the urgency of the matter, or the proximity of the upcoming event or program, the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, in consultation with the petitioner, will determine whether an expedited appeals procedure can be fashioned.

Upon receipt of a petition, the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator will review the petition for appropriateness and timeliness. The ADA/Section 504 Coordinator will provide the petitioner with written notice of receipt of the petition within five working days, and advise the petitioner of the College's appeal policy and procedures for disability accommodations and services.

c) What to file:
The petition must be signed, dated and include the following:
(1) The person's name, address, phone number, and employment or academic status;
(2) A description of the accommodations, if any, that were proposed by the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity with an explanation of why such a proposal or provision is insufficient;
(3) If appropriate, a description of the preferred accommodation, modification, or auxiliary aid or service, and how the accommodation would provide equal access to the academic course, program, or activity.
V. Reviews and Decisions of Appeals

The ADA/Section 504 Appeals Committee will conduct a review of the petition for appeal. In undertaking this review, the Appeals Committee will examine the written evidence provided by the petitioner. The Committee will then interview, consult with, or request written evidence from, any individual the Appeals Committee believes to have information relevant to the issues raised in the petition.

The ADA/Section 504 Appeals Committee will render a decision on whether the proposed accommodation is adequate or inadequate within fifteen working days of the receipt of the petition. The decision by the ADA/Section 504 Appeals Committee will be communicated in writing by the Chair with a copy provided to the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity and other appropriate College staff.

If the proposed accommodation is deemed by the ADA/Section 504 Appeals Committee to be inadequate, the case is remanded to the appropriate college committee, administrator, faculty or staff, who, in consultation with the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity, will then seek a new accommodation or support service that is reasonable, appropriate and effective.

If there is an agreement during the review process between Vassar College and the petitioner to retain the original accommodation or auxiliary aid or service or change to another accommodation, the Chair will prepare a written memorandum of agreement to be signed by the individual and appropriate college administrators, faculty, or staff.

Once the appeal has been settled, the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity, administrator, faculty, or staff, as appropriate, will then impose or initiate proceedings for implementing the accommodation or support service.
DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES

ADHD

Medical and other disabilities

Learning Disabilities

Psychological and Neurological Disorders

SAMPLE FORMS AND LETTERS

Disability Documentation Authorization Form

Academic Accommodation and Services Request Form

Self-Identification Form

Sample Accommodation Letter

Allergy and Dietary Needs Assessment Form

Housing Accommodation Request Forms (summer and academic year)
Documentation Guidelines
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Vassar College follows best practices for disability documentation used by postsecondary institutions to determine the accommodations to which an individual may be entitled.1 Disability documentation for the purpose of providing accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services must both establish disability and provide adequate information on the functional impact of the disability so that effective accommodations can be identified. All documentation is reviewed on an individual, case-by-case basis. Individuals are encouraged to provide their clinicians with a copy of these guidelines. The cost of obtaining disability documentation is the responsibility of the individual. Questions about Vassar College’s documentation requirements should be directed to the Office for Accessibility, Vassar College, Box 164, 124 Raymond Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 12604-0164, (845) 437-7584.

A. Qualified Professional Must Provide the Documentation

A professional providing documentation of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) should be licensed or otherwise properly credentialed, have undergone appropriate and comprehensive training, and have relevant experience in diagnosing and/or treating adults with ADHD. The individual’s name, title, and professional credentials must be clearly stated in the documentation. Documentation from family members will not be accepted even when the family members are otherwise qualified by virtue of training and licensure/certification. All reports must be in English, typed or printed on professional letterhead, dated, and signed.

B. Documentation Must Be Current

Documentation must address how the condition(s) currently impacts the individual in the current setting (postsecondary educational, residential or workplace setting). The need for recent documentation depends on the facts and circumstances of the individual’s condition and need for specific accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services. If documentation is inadequate in scope of content, or does not address the individual’s current level of functioning and need for accommodations, re-evaluation or documentation update may be required. A documentation update for ADHD is a report by a qualified professional that includes a summary of the original ADHD findings, as well as additional evaluation data necessary to establish the individual’s current need for accommodation(s).

Quality documentation generally includes:

- Statement or restatement of diagnosis, including date(s) for all prior diagnoses and data that were used to establish the diagnosis. Evidence regarding the diagnosis should be more than a self-report by the individual.
- Description of the individual’s current functional limitations in a work, academic, residential, or other campus setting as well as across other settings.

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• Observational data, gathered during the evaluation, of behavior such as affect, concentration, attention, executive functioning and fluency. Please provide information about tests and dates of administration, clinical observations, and specific test results of psychoeducational or neuropsychological testing.

• Assessment of cognitive functioning: An update of cognitive functioning is generally not necessary if the WAIS-III, or a comparable measure, was used in the past, given that cognitive functioning is typically stable in adulthood. Standard scores and/or percentiles must be included in the documentation report.

• Academic achievement measures that substantiate the ongoing impact of ADHD on academic or work performance is needed. Updated evaluations need not include a full battery of tests, but may include selected academic tests and subtests deemed appropriate to support current eligibility. There should be an explanation of why certain subtests were selected for the update, interpretation of the reported scores, and a discussion of how any error patterns in performance reflect a substantial limitation. If grade equivalents are reported, standard scores and/or percentiles must accompany them.

C. Recommendation and Rationale for Requested Accommodations Must Be Provided
Effective and reasonable accommodations are individually determined and based on the functional impact of the condition and its likely impact on the current environment (classroom, residential, or workplace setting, course assignments, program requirements, etc.). Recommendations for specific accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services must be logically related to the functional limitations of the individual as a result of their condition(s). If connections are not obvious, a clear explanation of the relationship should be provided. For students, school plans such as an Individualized Education Plans (I.E.P.) or a 504 Plan can be helpful, and may provide insight in making current decisions about accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services. I.E.P. and 504 Plans, however, are not binding on Vassar College, and a prior history of accommodations without demonstration of current need does not warrant the provision of accommodations. If no prior accommodations were provided, the evaluator must include a detailed explanation of why no accommodations were needed or provided in the past and why accommodations are needed at this time.

D. Privacy and Confidentiality
Disability documentation will be treated in a confidential manner and shared only on a need-to-know basis to ensure the provision of reasonable and effective accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services. Disability-related information is collected and maintained on separate forms and kept in secure files with limited access.

Send Documentation To:
Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity
Vassar College, Box 164
124 Raymond Avenue
Poughkeepsie, NY 12604
Vassar College follows best practices for disability documentation used by postsecondary institutions to determine the accommodations to which an individual may be entitled. Disability documentation for the purpose of providing accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services must both establish disability and provide adequate information on the functional impact of the disability so that effective accommodations can be identified. All documentation is reviewed on an individual, case-by-case basis. Individuals are encouraged to provide their clinicians with a copy of these guidelines. The cost of obtaining disability documentation is the responsibility of the individual. Questions about Vassar College’s documentation requirements should be directed to the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity, Vassar College, Box 164, 124 Raymond Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 12604-0164, (845) 437-7584.

A. Qualified Professional Must Provide the Documentation
A professional providing documentation should be licensed or otherwise properly credentialed, have undergone appropriate and comprehensive training, and have relevant experience in diagnosing and/or treating the condition. The individual’s name, title, and professional credentials must be clearly stated in the documentation. Documentation from family members will not be accepted even when the family members are otherwise qualified by virtue of training and licensure/certification. All reports must be in English, typed or printed on professional letterhead, dated, and signed.

B. Documentation Must Be Current
Documentation must address how the condition(s) currently impacts the individual in the current setting (postsecondary educational, residential or workplace setting). The need for recent documentation depends on the facts and circumstances of the individual’s condition and need for specific accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services. If the condition is not stable, information on the typical progression or prognosis of the condition, current treatment plan, and recommended timelines for re-evaluation should be included (including information about the individual’s own strategies).

C. Documentation Must Be Comprehensive
Documentation should be comprehensive and based on objective criteria and diagnostic methods congruent with a particular disability and current professional practices in the field. Methods may include formal instruments, medical examinations, structured interview protocols, performance observations, standardized tests, and unstructured interviews.

Quality documentation will generally include:

- Statement of a specific diagnosis or diagnoses
- Description of the individual’s current functional limitations in a work, academic, residential, or other campus setting as well as across other settings;
- Description of both current and past medications, auxiliary aids, assistive devices, support services, and accommodations including their effectiveness in ameliorating functional impacts of the disability. Information should also be included about any significant side effects from current medications, services, or treatments that may impact physical, perceptual, behavioral or cognitive performance.

1 Updated November 8, 2010. Guidelines adapted from AHEAD: Association on Higher Education and Disability: Seven Essential Elements of Quality Disability Documentation.
• If applicable, please provide information about tests and dates of administration, clinical observations, and specific test results of relevant medical testing.

D. Recommendation and Rationale for Requested Accommodations Must Be Provided
Effective and reasonable accommodations are individually determined and based on the functional impact of the condition and its likely impact on the current environment (classroom, residential, or workplace setting, course assignments, program requirements, etc.). Recommendations for specific accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services must be logically related to the functional limitations of the individual as a result of their condition(s). If connections are not obvious, a clear explanation of the relationship should be provided. For students, school plans such as an Individualized Education Plans (I.E.P.) or a 504 Plan can be helpful, and may provide insight in making current decisions about accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services. I.E.P. and 504 Plans, however, are not binding on Vassar College, and a prior history of accommodations without demonstration of current need does not warrant the provision of accommodations. If no prior accommodations were provided, the evaluator must include a detailed explanation of why no accommodations were needed or provided in the past and why accommodations are needed at this time.

E. Privacy and Confidentiality
Disability documentation will be treated in a confidential manner and shared only on a need-to-know basis to ensure the provision of reasonable and effective accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services. Disability-related information is collected and maintained on separate forms and kept in secure files with limited access.

Send Documentation To:
Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity
Vassar College, Box 164
124 Raymond Avenue
Poughkeepsie, NY 12604
Vassar College follows best practices for disability documentation used by postsecondary institutions to determine the accommodations to which an individual may be entitled. Disability documentation for the purpose of providing accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services must both establish disability and provide adequate information on the functional impact of the disability so that effective accommodations can be identified. All documentation is reviewed on an individual, case-by-case basis. Individuals are encouraged to provide their clinicians with a copy of these guidelines. The cost of obtaining disability documentation is the responsibility of the individual. Questions about Vassar College’s documentation requirements should be directed to the Office of Disability and Support Services, Vassar College, Box 164, 124 Raymond Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 12604-0164, (845) 437-7584.

A. Qualified Professional Must Provide the Documentation

A professional providing documentation of a Learning Disability should be licensed or otherwise properly credentialed, have undergone appropriate and comprehensive training, and have relevant experience in diagnosing adults with LD. The individual's name, title, and professional credentials must be clearly stated in the documentation. Documentation from family members will not be accepted even when the family members are otherwise qualified by virtue of training and licensure/certification. All reports must be in English, typed or printed on professional letterhead, dated, and signed.

B. Documentation Must Be Current

Documentation must address how the condition(s) currently impacts the individual in the current setting (postsecondary educational, residential or workplace setting). The need for recent documentation depends on the facts and circumstances of the individual's condition and need for specific accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services. If documentation is inadequate in scope of content, or does not address the individual's current level of functioning and need for accommodations, re-evaluation or documentation update may be required. A documentation update for a learning disability is a report by a qualified professional that includes a summary of the original LD findings, as well as additional evaluation data necessary to establish the individual's current need for accommodation(s).

Quality documentation generally includes:

- Statement or restatement of diagnosis, including date(s) for all prior diagnoses and data that were used to establish the diagnosis.
- Diagnostic Interview: including information about developmental history, including milestones such as language and speech acquisition and early motor skill development, relevant medical history, including the absence of a medical basis for the present symptoms, relevant academic or employment history, including areas of uneven academic achievement, results of prior standardized testing taken with or without accommodations, relevant family history, relevant psychosocial history, and information about pre-existing or coexisting disorders, including behavioral, medical, neurological, and/or personality disorders, along with any history of medication use that may affect the individual's learning.
- Results from a neuropsychological or psycho-educational evaluation that provides clear evidence that a specific learning disability does or does not exist. The evaluation should include measures of cognitive aptitude, academic achievement, and information processing. Reporting of standard scores and percentiles for all adult normed measures must be included. All data must logically reflect a substantial limitation of learning for which the individual is requesting the accommodation. The choice of the neuropsychological or psycho-educational assessment battery should be guided by the overall objective(s) of the evaluation, information obtained during the diagnostic interview, sound clinical judgment and prevailing professional practices.
The following is not intended to be an exhaustive list or to restrict assessment in other pertinent and helpful areas such as vocational interests and aptitudes.

- **Cognitive Aptitude**: The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Third Edition (WAIS-III) with subtest scores is the preferred instrument. The Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery III (W-J-III); Tests of Cognitive Ability or the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale: Fifth Edition are also acceptable.

- **Academic Achievement**: Assessment of academic ability in the areas of reading, writing, and math is required. Suggested instruments include: Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery III: Tests of Achievement (W-J-III); Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT-II); Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK); or a combination of tests in specific skill areas such as the Test of Written Language-IV (TOWL-IV); the Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised; the Nelson Denny Reading Test; the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test; or the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test. The Wide Range Achievement Test-III (WRAT-III) is not a comprehensive measure of achievement and therefore is not suitable.

- **Information Processing**: Specific areas of information processing such as short- and long-term memory, sequential memory, visual and auditory perception/processing, or processing speed must be assessed. These areas may warrant evaluation as indicated by results from assessment of ability and achievement.

**C. Recommendation and Rationale for Requested Accommodations Must Be Provided**

Effective and reasonable accommodations are individually determined and based on the functional impact of the condition and its likely impact on the current environment (classroom, residential, or workplace setting, course assignments, program requirements, etc.). Recommendations for specific accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services must be logically related to the functional limitations of the individual as a result of their condition(s). If connections are not obvious, a clear explanation of the relationship should be provided. For students, school plans such as an Individualized Education Plans (I.E.P.) or a 504 Plan can be helpful, and may provide insight in making current decisions about accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services. I.E.P. and 504 Plans, however, are not binding on Vassar College, and a prior history of accommodations without demonstration of current need does not warrant the provision of accommodations. If no prior accommodations were provided, the evaluator must include a detailed explanation of why no accommodations were needed or provided in the past and why accommodations are needed at this time.

**D. Privacy and Confidentiality**

Disability documentation will be treated in a confidential manner and shared only on a need-to-know basis to ensure the provision of reasonable and effective accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services. Disability-related information is collected and maintained on separate forms and kept in secure files with limited access.

**Send Documentation To:**

Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity  
Vassar College, Box 164  
124 Raymond Avenue  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12604
Documentation of Psychological and Neurological Disorders

Vassar College follows best practices for disability documentation used by postsecondary institutions to determine the accommodations to which an individual may be entitled. Disability documentation for the purpose of providing accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services must both establish disability and provide adequate information on the functional impact of the disability so that effective accommodations can be identified. All documentation is reviewed on an individual, case-by-case basis. Individuals are encouraged to provide their clinicians with a copy of these guidelines. The cost of obtaining disability documentation is the responsibility of the individual. Questions about Vassar College’s documentation requirements should be directed to the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity Vassar College, Box 164, 124 Raymond Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 12604-0164, (845) 437-7584.

A. Qualified Professional Must Provide the Documentation
Psychological and neurological disorders comprise a range of conditions characterized by emotional, cognitive, and/or behavioral dysfunction or impairment. Not all conditions are disabilities. A professional providing documentation should be licensed or otherwise properly credentialed, have undergone appropriate and comprehensive training, and have relevant experience in diagnosing and/or treating individuals with psychological or neurological disorders. The individual’s name, title, and professional credentials must be clearly stated in the documentation. Documentation from family members will not be accepted even when the family members are otherwise qualified by virtue of training and licensure/certification. All reports must be in English, typed or printed on professional letterhead, dated, and signed.

B. Documentation Must Be Current
Documentation must address how the condition(s) currently impacts the individual in the current setting (postsecondary educational, residential or workplace setting). The need for recent documentation depends on the facts and circumstances of the individual’s condition and need for specific accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services. If the condition is not stable, information on the typical progression or prognosis of the condition, current treatment plan, and recommended timelines for re-evaluation should be included (including information about the individual’s own strategies).

C. Documentation Must Be Comprehensive
Documentation should be comprehensive and based on objective criteria and diagnostic methods congruent with a particular disability and current professional practices in the field. Methods may include formal instruments, medical examinations, structured interview protocols, performance observations, standardized tests, and unstructured interviews.

Quality documentation will generally include:

- Statement of a specific diagnosis or diagnoses
- Description of the individual’s current functional limitations in a work, academic, residential, or other campus setting as well as across other settings;
- Description of both current and past medications, auxiliary aids, assistive devices, support services, and accommodations including their effectiveness in ameliorating functional impacts of the disability. Information should also be included about any significant side effects from current medications, services, or treatments that may impact physical, perceptual, behavioral or cognitive performance.
- If applicable, please provide information about tests and dates of administration, clinical observations, and specific test results of psychiatric, psycho-educational or neuropsychological testing.

D. Recommendation and Rationale for Requested Accommodations Must Be Provided
Effective and reasonable accommodations are individually determined and based on the functional impact of the condition and its likely impact on the current environment (classroom, residential, or workplace setting, course assignments, program requirements, etc.). Recommendations for specific accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services must be logically related to the functional limitations of the individual as a result of their condition(s). If connections are not obvious, a clear explanation of the relationship should be provided. For students, school plans such as an Individualized Education Plans (I.E.P.) or a 504 Plan can be helpful, and may provide insight in making current decisions about accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services. I.E.P. and 504 Plans, however, are not binding on Vassar College, and a prior history of accommodations without demonstration of current need does not warrant the provision of accommodations. If no prior accommodations were provided, the evaluator must include a detailed explanation of why no accommodations were needed or provided in the past and why accommodations are needed at this time.

E. Privacy and Confidentiality
Disability documentation will be treated in a confidential manner and shared only on a need-to-know basis to ensure the provision of reasonable and effective accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services. Disability-related information is collected and maintained on separate forms and kept in secure files with limited access.
Disability Documentation Authorization

Students, faculty or staff requesting accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services on the basis of a disability must provide documentation by an appropriate professional. Disability information provided to Vassar College will be used solely for the purpose of enabling Vassar to provide accommodations or services related to the individual’s disability. Disability related information, including the comprehensive documentation which establishes the existence of a disability and need for accommodations and services, is collected and maintained on separate forms from other academic or employment information and is kept in secure files with limited access. Disability information is not considered a part of an individual’s permanent academic or personnel record, and is shared only on a need-to-know basis. Please sign this form and return it to the address listed below. You should retain a copy of this form for your personal records. The cost of obtaining documentation is the responsibility of the individual. If the documentation is considered to be incomplete or inadequate to support an accommodation request, additional documentation may be required. Please contact the Associate Director of the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity, (845) 437-7584 for further information.

I, (please print name) ________________________________________________________________, hereby authorize the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity (AEO) at Vassar College to receive documentation of my disability. I understand that this information is confidential and will be used only for the purpose of enabling Vassar College to provide me with reasonable and appropriate accommodations and services as related to my disability. I understand that the AEO may contact my diagnostician for further information in order to help determine an appropriate and effective accommodation plan, and consult with medical experts for the purpose of enabling Vassar to provide work related, academic and other accommodations or services related to my disability.

Signature _____________________________________________________________________

Date_________________________

Signature of parent or guardian __________________________________________________________________________
(if under 18 years of age)

Name of Diagnostician/Title ________________________________________________________________________________

Address _______________________________________________________________________________________________________

Phone ________________________________________  Fax _________________________________________

THE DOCUMENTATION REPORT MUST INCLUDE:

• A specific diagnosis and/or history of symptoms including the date of diagnosis, and date of last contact with evaluator
• Information regarding onset, longevity and severity of symptoms
• Information regarding how the disability and/or related medications and treatments interfere or limit any major life activity across different settings including participation in the courses, programs and activities of the college
• A detailed explanation should be provided as to why each accommodation is recommended and should be correlated with the specific functional limitations of the disability or disabilities and the academic course, program, activity, residential or work environment

Please send documentation to:

Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity Vassar College,
Campus Box 164
124 Raymond Avenue
Poughkeepsie NY 12604
In accordance with the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008, Vassar College seeks to provide students with documented disabilities those support services and other reasonable accommodations needed to ensure equal access to the programs and activities of the college. The Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity supports this mission by coordinating auxiliary aids, accommodations, and services for self-identified students with disabilities. Disabilities may include, but are not necessarily limited to, learning disabilities (LD), attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD), psychological disorders, mobility and orthopedic impairments, chronic medical conditions, sensory impairments, and substance abuse/recovery.

Students may register for accommodations and services with the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity by providing appropriate documentation of their disability or disabilities. Documentation must indicate a specific diagnosis, and state how the disability and/or related medications and treatments interfere with or limit any major life activity including current participation in courses, programs, or activities of the college. Please refer to http://aeo.vassar.edu for specific guidelines for documenting a learning disability, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD), psychological disorders, and chronic health impairments. The cost of obtaining documentation is the responsibility of the student. Please contact the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity for more information about services, (845) 437-7584.

STUDENT CONTACT INFORMATION

Name __________________________ Class __________________________
Permanent Address __________________________ Phone __________________________
Email __________________________

DISABILITY INFORMATION

1. Please state your diagnosis or diagnoses:

2. Please list the accommodations or services that you would like to request as they relate to academics, housing, and/or meal plan:

3. Documentation from a licensed professional is Enclosed □ Being sent under separate cover. □ Expected date _______

please see reverse side
I, (please print name) _____________________________________________, hereby authorize the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity at Vassar College to receive documentation of my disability. I understand that this information will be used only for the purpose of enabling Vassar College to provide me with reasonable and appropriate accommodations and services as related to my disability or disabilities. I understand that the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity may contact the person providing the documentation for further information.

Signature ________________________________________________________________ Date________________________

Signature of parent or guardian (if under 17) ____________________________________ Date________________________

Name of Physician or Diagnostician _______________________________________________________________________

Title and credentials __________________________________________________________________________________

Agency or Affiliation __________________________________________________________________________________

Address _________________________________________________________________ Phone ______________________

_________________________________________________________________ Fax ________________________

Is there additional information you would like to share that, along with your documentation, will be helpful in determining accommodations?

Please return this form with accompanying documentation by June 1 to:

Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity
Vassar College, Box 164
124 Raymond Avenue
Poughkeepsie, NY 12604-0164

Phone: (845) 437-7584
Fax: (845) 437-5715
TTY: (845) 437-7750
ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT SERVICE REQUEST
SPRING TERM 2016

Name ___________________________________________ Class __________________

Campus box __________ Cell # __________________________ Email __________________

# of credits this term ___________ Academic Advisor: ____________________________

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SPRING 2016 SEMESTER:

1. PRINT out this form and return it to the AEO office in OLB 125 preferably by Monday, February 15, 2016 or as soon as you are aware of your need for accommodations and/or services. Please note: Academic accommodation request forms are accepted throughout the semester but accommodations are never retroactive.

2. Please make sure you complete the form as legibly as possible. If there is incomplete information (i.e. missing first name of professor, section number, etc.), it will delay the completion of your official accommodation letter.

3. You will receive a PDF copy of your accommodation letter for the current semester from the director with instructions on how to finalize your accommodations with your professors within seven (7) days of returning your form.

4. IMPORTANT: You must forward your accommodations letters to your professors and schedule a time to meet with them IN PERSON to discuss your accommodations. We recommend that you email the letter to your professors, but you may also print it out and hand-deliver it to them when you meet. AEO does not send your accommodation letters to your professors.

5. REMEMBER: We strongly encourage you not to wait until midterms, the end of the semester or right before your first exam to self-identify to your professors because it may be too late to make arrangements. It is better to be prepared for the possibility rather than to risk not receiving the accommodations for which you are eligible!

6. All exam accommodations requests must be made in a timely manner at least 1 week in advance (5 business days). Final exams or exams scheduled during the last week of classes need to be scheduled at least 2 weeks in advance.

Please contact AEO to schedule an appointment with the director if:

(1) You would like to update your accommodations or are in need of additional accommodations or services;

(2) You would like assistance arranging your accommodations with your professor(s), and/or

(3) You are dissatisfied with the effectiveness of your accommodations. We are here to support you and cannot if we are unaware that there is a new need, concern, or problem.
Release of Information

Date: ______________ I, (please print name) ________________________, authorize the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity (AEO) to verify my need for academic accommodations and services. I understand that information about my disability will only be used for the purpose of enabling Vassar College to provide me with supportive, academic and other services related to my disability.

☐ Yes, please include my diagnosis of ____________________________.

☐ No, please simply state that I have a documented disability and am registered with the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity (AEO). Do not include the nature of my diagnosis.

_________________________________________  ___________________________
Signature Date

Is there any additional information that you would like included in your accommodation letter? Please provide it below:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Please indicate course number AND section number, your instructor’s full name.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE/SECTION#</th>
<th>INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Example: PSYC 105-51)</td>
<td>(First AND Last name, legibly written or typed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Course#/section#____________________</td>
<td>Instructor______________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Course#/section#____________________</td>
<td>Instructor______________________________</td>
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<td>3. Course#/section#____________________</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Course#/section#____________________</td>
<td>Instructor______________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accommodations and Support Services

Please notify the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity (AEO) if you ADD or DROP a course, or if adjustments need to be made to your accommodation plan during the semester.

Check the box if you would like to request a particular accommodation or support service.

☐ Academic Coaching Support Services (who?)

☐ Exam Accommodations
  - Extended Time (50%) ☐
  - Extended Time (100%) ☐
  - Low Distraction Exam Room ☐
  - Computer ☐
  - Other_________________________________________________________

☐ Staggered Deadlines (please indicate, however, prior assessment and approval by AEO required)

☐ Advance Reading List and Notice of Assignments

☐ Alternative Print Format (E-text, audio file, Braille, enlarged print etc)
  Which classes/What format?________________________________________

☐ Notetaker Service (include section number, please)
  Which classes?_____________________________________________________

☐ Permission to tape record class lectures (NOTE: Once approved, you must ask permission from your professor before recording any class sessions. You must also negotiate how the recordings will be used and destroyed at the end of the semester.)

☐ Chronic Health Impairment Advisory for Professors/Dean of Studies Office

☐ Course Advisement for Next Semester (Please call AEO to set up an appointment during PRE-REGISTRATION period with MaryJo Cavanaugh, director. This does NOT replace your meeting with your pre- or major academic advisor.)

☐ Classroom Relocation or Specialized Furnishings in Accessible Classrooms
  What/Where?_____________________________________________________

☐ Class, Lab or Library Mobility Assistant

☐ Other (e.g. computer for notetaking; reduced course load, etc.)

______________________________________________________________
Student is registered with the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity (AEO), and is in need of academic accommodations in your course. [Student] has been diagnosed with [DISABILITY], the nature of which [Student] prefers to keep confidential. Please keep this information private and disclose only on a need to know basis with other faculty, administrators or staff. You should keep a copy of [Student]’s accommodation letter on file for the duration of the semester. Please contact MaryJo Cavanaugh at macavanaugh@vassar.edu if you have concerns about an accommodation being recommended. Thank you for your assistance.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Extended time for in-class exams time and a half (50%) double time (100%).
Extended time should only be provided for in-class quizzes and exams, and not for take-home exams or paper assignments. [Student] should make arrangements specific exam accommodations at least a week in advance of the scheduled exam date. Exams may be proctored with additional time by the professor or other designated proctor. AEO can also proctor exams with advance notice. [Student] is responsible for contacting Melanie Harasym, mehabasym@vassar.edu who coordinates all exam proctoring, at least one week in advance to request exam proctoring services.

Low Distraction Test Environment
[Student] would benefit from taking exams in a location that has limited background noise and fewer students. An appropriate test environment could be a private office, conference room, or empty classroom that has limited background noise or activity (e.g., no phones, copy machines, traffic, etc). Please discuss test locations with [Student] in advance. [Student] should contact AEO for exam proctoring services at least a week in advance.

Use of a Computer in Class for Notes and for Exams
[Student] will provide his/her own computer for taking notes or completing in-class assignments. AEO provides eligible students with a clean laptop computer the day of the exam that has the Internet capability blocked. We can also proctor exams in one of our AEO exam proctor rooms with a desktop computer. [Student] is responsible for requesting exam accommodations at least a week in advance of the scheduled exam date, and contacting AEO directly to reserve a computer.

Staggered Deadlines
The purpose of Staggered Deadline Accommodation is to provide the student with an opportunity to consult with AEO and the professor in advance to identify an acceptable alternate submission date, not an extension, for a paper, project, or exam when there are conflicting due dates for assignments or exams in one or more classes. [Student] is then expected to meet the new deadline as assigned. Please contact AEO if a deadline cannot be moved due to nature of the exam, project, or assignment.
Scribe or Transcription Services
Scribe and transcription services for papers, exams, and assignments are available through AEO for students who are unable to write or type due to a disability related need. [Student] will be using this service for quizzes or exams. Students, who wish to work with a scribe on assignments or papers, should contact AEO at least a week in advance to schedule an appointment to work with a scribe. A transcriber will provide the student with a verbatim electronic document (i.e., Microsoft Word). The transcriber will use spelling and grammar check program to check the final document, but will not perform any other editing. The student is responsible for proofreading the document to ensure accuracy of the transcription. If the transcriber is unsure of the spelling of a word or a name, they will indicate it in the text immediately after the word with the following mark with a “Comment” note. Once transcribed, the document will be sent as an email attachment directly to the student by email and to the professor in case of exams for review and final editing. The student is responsible for getting the assignment/exam to the instructor in the preferred format (electronic/hard copy).

Accessible Classroom Facilities
The Registrar's Office has assigned your class to a classroom that is wheelchair accessible. In some classrooms, wheelchair accessible desks have been placed in the room. Please reserve the desk for [student's] use. Please contact the Registrar’s Office and/or AEO if you need assistance, or if the furnishings are not adequate to comfortably accommodate [Student] and your classroom needs. Please arrange for out-class meetings, labs, or other events to be held in wheelchair accessible locations. Contact Dennis Cody, Transportation Director if wheelchair accessible transportation is needed for a class fieldtrip.
2015-2016 HOUSING ACCOMMODATION REQUEST

Form Due: February 9, 2016

Name ___________________________ Class Year ______________________

Student ID# ________________________ Current House/Room# __________

Are you registered with AEO? YES ☐ NO ☐ IN PROCESS ☐

Have you received disability-housing accommodations before? YES ☐ NO ☐

What disability-related housing accommodations do you anticipate needing next year? Please provide specific information about your particular disability and why it requires some form of specialized housing consideration.

Do you plan to participate in TA/TH/SC Apartment Draw? YES ☐ NO ☐

Please refer to Office of Residential Life policies and deadlines for Apartment Draw information.

Do you anticipate living on campus this summer? YES ☐ NO ☐

If yes, do you need any special housing accommodations for summer housing? What?

Disability documentation:

Enclosed ☐ On file with AEO ☐ Being sent under separate cover ☐

Expected arrival: ____________
SUMMER 2016 HOUSING ACCOMMODATION REQUEST

Name ________________________ Class Year __________________

Student ID# __________________ Current House/Room# __________

Are you registered with AEO? YES ☐ NO ☐ IN PROCESS ☐

Have you received disability-housing accommodations before? YES ☐ NO ☐

What disability-related housing accommodations do you anticipate needing next year? Please provide specific information about your particular disability and why it requires some form of specialized housing consideration.

Do you plan to participate in TA/TH/SC Apartment Draw? YES ☐ NO ☐

Please refer to Office of Residential Life policies and deadlines for Apartment Draw information.

Do you anticipate living on campus this summer? YES ☐ NO ☐

If yes, do you need any special housing accommodations for summer housing? What?

Disability documentation:

Enclosed ☐ On file with AEO ☐ Being sent under separate cover ☐

Expected arrival: __________
Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity (AEO)

Allergy and Dietary Needs Assessment Form

Spring 2016

Name______________________________________ Class Year________________________

Student ID#_________________________ Cellphone number________________________

Are you registered with AEO? YES ☐ NO ☐ IN PROCESS ☐

Have you received a meal plan accommodation before? YES ☐ NO ☐

1. What kind of food allergy or dietary needs do you have?

2. What special needs/accommodations do you need from Campus Dining?

Disability documentation:

Enclosed ☐ On file with AEO ☐ Being sent under separate cover ☐

Expected arrival: ____________

Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity (AEO)

Allergy and Dietary Needs Assessment Form

Spring 2016