



ALVERNIA

UNIVERSITY

Student Guide

TO DISABILITY SERVICES

Student Guide to Disability Services

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From the Disability Services Coordinator

Dear Student,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Alvernia University and our Disability Services program. Alvernia is committed to providing equal access for all students with disabilities including, but not limited to, student advocacy and other related services to support your success. This guide describes policies and procedures that will help us to ensure that you and other students with disabilities have effective, equal, and meaningful access to all aspects of university life, while remaining as independent as possible.

If you are new to Alvernia, we encourage you to contact Disability Services prior to your first semester of classes. This will provide us with enough time to evaluate your needs and identify the appropriate resources. If you are unsure about your need for accommodation, we are happy to meet with you to explain our services. Every student with a disability is unique and each need will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Our aim is to provide you with the support and encouragement needed to be able to look back on your academic experience with satisfaction and great pride. Please read this guide and feel free to contact us should you have any questions. We look forward to supporting you.

Sincerely,

Darla Timberlake, MA
Academic Learning Specialist-Academic Intervention
ADA Coordinator
Center for Academic Success- 105 C Bernardine Hall

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended, Alvernia University does not discriminate against students or employees with disabilities. Efforts are made to arrange reasonable accommodations for all qualified persons. Alvernia University is not only committed to the legal requirements of the ADA, but also to the ethical and moral responsibility to treat all members of the campus community with fairness, dignity, and respect.

OUR COMMITMENT

Disability Services at Alvernia University is committed to working with students, faculty, and staff to develop and implement reasonable accommodations and strategies for successful learning while preserving the integrity and academic standards of the University. We are committed to compliance with legal requirements that mandate equal opportunity and access for individuals with disabilities.

OUR MISSION

The Office of Disability Services is part of Alvernia University's Educational Planning Center. Our mission is to enhance the educational opportunities for students with disabilities at Alvernia University.

Our staff is committed to assisting students with disabilities achieve his or her personal and academic goals by authorizing reasonable academic accommodations within the student's classes under appropriate circumstances.

The following information is designed to help you to understand the places and procedures related to obtaining disability related accommodations at Alvernia University.

ADA DEFINITIONS

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Under these laws, a person with a disability is defined as: 1) having physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, 2) having a record of such an impairment, or 3) being regarded as having such an impairment.

Physical impairment is any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the body's systems: neurological, musculoskeletal, sensory organs, respiratory, cardiovascular, digestive, reproductive, genitourinary, hemic and lymphatic, skin, and endocrine.

Mental impairment is any mental or psychological disorder such as mental illness, organic brain syndrome, intellectual disability, or specific learning disability.

Substantially limits is defined as being unable to perform or being significantly limited in ability to perform a major life activity when compared to the average person in the general population.

Major life activities are functions such as caring for one's self, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, and participating in community activities.

Examples of common disabling conditions include a number of learning disabilities, psychological disorders, blindness and low vision, deaf or hard of hearing, traumatic brain injury and mobility limitations, and attention disorders. These conditions must substantially limit one or more major life activities. Temporary, non-chronic impairments that do not last for a long time and that have

little or no long-term impact usually are not disabilities. Such as broken limbs, sprained joints, concussions, appendicitis, influenza and common colds. However, if an individual had a temporary impairment that did not heal properly and resulted in a permanent impairment that substantially restricted the use of a limb, the individual would be considered to have a disability. DS reserves the right to require updated or additional documentation, should such be warranted. Furthermore, documentation of a disability may not in and of itself always be construed as having a need for accommodations.

Temporary impairments need to be evaluated by the Director of Health Services and may be given temporary accommodations to be carried out by Disability Services until released from medical supervision.

REGISTERING WITH DISABILITY SERVICES

To receive formal accommodations and services at Alvernia University, students must first register with Disability Services. The following are the steps to do so for all campus accommodations:

Step 1

Be accepted to Alvernia University and commit to attend.

Step 2

Complete a Student Intake Form and Release of Information form available on the Disability Services website. Incomplete forms will delay your request.

Step 3

Submit appropriate documentation and Student Intake Form to Disability Services by email, fax, or hand delivery. Please allow at least two weeks for us to review your materials.

Step 4

Meet with the Disability Services Coordinator who will contact you to schedule an appointment to discuss your accommodation plan.

REGISTRATION FOR RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Step 1

Be accepted to Alvernia University and commit to attend. You will be mailed the Alvernia Housing Application once your commitment fee is processed.

Step 2

Complete the Alvernia Housing Application and list specific accommodation needs as they relate to a collegiate residential setting.

Step 3

Complete a Student Intake Form with Disability Services and Release of Information Form. This form is located under Disability Services on the Alvernia University website. Submit forms to Disability Service

REGISTRATION FOR MEDICAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Step 1

Be accepted to Alvernia University and commit to attend.

Step 2

Complete a Student Intake Form and Release of Information Form available on the Disability Services website. Submit forms to Disability Services.

Step 3

Make an appointment with Health Services and provide updated medical documentation of your diagnosis with medical recommendations for accommodations.

Temporary impairments need to be evaluated by the Director of Health Services and may be given temporary accommodations to be carried out by Disability Services until released from medical supervision.

DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES

Students wishing to receive accommodations must:

- ✓ Submit a Student Intake Form
- ✓ Complete a Release of Information Form
- ✓ Provide official documentation that meets the following criteria:

Learning Disability

- Most recent documentation of test results from a neuropsychological or psycho-educational evaluation that addresses: aptitude, achievement, and information processing
- Diagnostic summary with rationale and recommendations for specific accommodations

Attention Disorder (ADD/ADHD)

- Comprehensive evaluation that evidences early and current impairment
 - Evaluation must address the presenting problem, diagnostic interview, and rule out any alternative explanations
- Include diagnosis with DSM-IV/DSM-5 code
- Include recommendations for accommodations, medical treatment, and environmental management
- Diagnostic summary must address whether treatment produces positive responses and indicate how the disability limits one or more major life activities

Psychological or Psychiatric Disabilities

- Most recent documentation must be provided by a licensed professional
- Include diagnosis with DSM-IV/DSM-5 code and clearly describe the nature of the disability
- Include rationale and recommendations for specific accommodations

Medical, Mobility, and Sensory Impairments

- Documentation must clearly state the extent to which the condition affects the individual's ability to function
 - Include medical testing that verifies the nature and severity of the condition
 - Include rationale and recommendations for specific accommodations
- ✓ Provide documentation that is prepared by a licensed professional (who is not related to the student) on official letterhead, dated and signed.

HOUSING ACCOMMODATIONS

An emotional support animal (ESA) is a companion animal which provides therapeutic benefit, such as alleviating or mitigating some symptoms of a disability, to an individual with a mental or psychiatric disability. Emotional support animals are typically dogs and cats, but may include other animals. In order to be prescribed an emotional support animal by a physician or other medical professional, the person seeking such an animal must have a verifiable disability. To be afforded protection under United States federal law, a person must meet the federal definition of disability and must have a note from a physician or other medical professional stating that the person has that disability and that the emotional support animal provides a benefit for the individual with the disability.

Requests for single rooms, dorms with private kitchens, dorms with private bathrooms and a reduction in campus meal plans must be reasonable and are decided on a case by case basis. Documentation provided by a licensed professional must document that your long term disability warrants these accommodations on a college campus for health, wellness and academic success.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Requests for academic accommodations must be reasonable and are determined on a case-by-case basis. Reasonable accommodations may include exam modifications, academic modifications, and auxiliary services.

Exam modifications may include extended test time, distraction reduced testing, use of a reader or a scribe, use of a calculator, and arrangements to take exams at an alternative time.

Academic modifications may include a reduced course load, priority registration, course meetings in accessible locations, and course substitution.

Auxiliary services may include assistive technology, note takers, materials in large print, readers, and alternative forms of text.

Accommodations that fundamentally alter the nature of the course work or the materials assigned, or are unduly burdensome financially or administratively, do not qualify as reasonable accommodations.

ATTENDANCE STATEMENT

Many factors must go into consideration with regards to being excused from attendance in a University class due to health or disability, for instance: written attendance policies of a class. Documentation provided by a licensed professional must document that your long term disability warrants these accommodations on a college campus.

If attendance is essential to the class, an excuse not to attend and/or a request for an attendance accommodation may not be a viable option. The decision to modify attendance requirements is thusly based upon many factors.

If the class requires a degree of attendance that cannot be met by the student, withdrawal from the class may be a consideration. The Alvernia University Office of Disability Services must consider all elements of a situation to determine if an instance exists that would warrant absences above the number determined appropriate by the instructor.

An Attendance Agreement between the student and each faculty member **MUST** be completed for the excused attendance accommodation to be used within the course. The Attendance Agreement Form will be included with each student's letter of accommodation that refers to that specific accommodation.

Attendance policies for individual classes (as stated on the course syllabus) and Alvernia University wide attendance policies are stated in the handbook for each individual major. Each academic major has a list of core performance standards that need to be met for completion of requirements of that academic program. **Those core requirements apply to all students, regardless of disability status.** *The Office of Disability Services does not issue excuses for absences.* **Please note that accommodations are not retroactive. Please plan accordingly.**

NOTIFICATION TO FACULTY

Students requesting academic accommodations in the classroom must present a Letter of Accommodation and meet with you to design the Attendance Agreement (if applicable). Disability Services staff will provide students with this written verification. It is the student's responsibility to pick up the letters and Attendance Agreement form from Disability Services and deliver them to their instructors. **The signed agreement form must be returned to Disability Services by the student before the end of the third**

week of class. Disability Services does not mail letters to faculty members.

The student should meet with each professor to deliver the letters and discuss the accommodations that will be necessary in each class. It is recommended that students provide their instructors with these letters within the first 2 weeks of class each semester. If testing accommodations have been approved, students should remind instructors of their need for testing accommodation in advance of each exam. **Instructors are under no obligation to provide accommodations for a student who does not identify oneself as a student with a disability.**

CONFIDENTIALITY AND RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Disability Services respects the confidential nature of student records and personally identifiable disability-related information. Letters of Accommodation for instructors, therefore, do not disclose the specific nature of a student's disability. Instead, the letters explain that the student has provided documentation of a disability and lists the approved accommodations for that student. On a legitimate, need-to-know basis, Disability Services may at times discuss the impact of the disability and the accommodations required with appropriate individuals on campus. Documentation provided to Disability Services by the student will not be released to any person or agency unless the student provides written permission by signing a Release of Information Form, or unless there is a court order.

DISABILITY SERVICES APPEAL OR GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Institutions of higher education have the obligation to make informed decisions about accommodations. These decisions may not always agree with recommendations from outside professionals or with prior Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs) and 504 Plans.

Students who do not agree with the accommodation decisions of the Disability Services office should follow the process outlined below.

A student who disagrees with the appropriateness of a decision regarding accommodations should speak first with the Academic Learning Specialist-Academic Intervention Coordinator, Darla Timberlake, to resolve the issue.

If a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, the student should appeal to the Associate Dean for Educational Planning, Danielle Saad, in writing, preferable a PDF letter handed in person, attached to an email or sent via US mail.

If a satisfactory resolution still cannot be reached, the student has two options. For academic accommodations, written appeals should be sent to the Chief Academic Officer, Provost Shirley Williams. For non-academic accommodations related to medical and physiological disabilities, including campus access (residential, classroom, social and athletic) written appeals should be sent to the Vice President for University Life, Dr. Joseph Cicala.

If the Provost or Vice President of University Life (as appropriate) feels that the decision settled upon by the Academic Learning Specialist or Associate Dean was reached according to ADA guidelines, written notification of the decision will be issued to the student and kept in the student's file in the Disability Services Office.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students with disabilities at Alvernia have the right to:

- Equal participation in and access to the courses, programs, services, and activities offered through the University;
- Receive reasonable accommodation, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services;

- Appropriate privacy and confidentiality of information regarding their disabilities;
- Reasonably available academic information in accessible formats.

Students with disabilities at Alvernia have the responsibility to:

- Meet institutional qualifications and maintain institutional standards for courses, programs, services, and activities;
- Identify, in a timely manner, as an individual with a disability when an accommodation is needed and seek information, counsel, and assistance as necessary;
- Demonstrate and/or document (from an appropriate licensed professional) the nature of the disability and how such disability limits their participation in courses, programs, services, and activities;
- Follow published procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.

UNIVERSITY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Alvernia University has the right to:

- Identify and establish function, abilities, skills, knowledge, standards, and criteria for courses, programs, services, and activities, and evaluate and determine reasonable accommodations on this basis;
- Request and receive through, Disability Services, current documentation from an appropriate licensed professional that supports requests for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services;
- Refuse an unreasonable accommodation, adjustment, and/or auxiliary aid or service that creates an undue burden for the University, or fundamentally alters the courses, programs, services, or activities of the University.

Alvernia University has the responsibility to:

- Provide academic information in accessible formats to persons with disabilities upon request, unless to do so would constitute an undue burden for the University;
- Ensure that courses, programs, services, and activities, when viewed in their entirety, are available and usable in the most integrated and appropriate settings;
- Evaluate students and applicants on their abilities, not their disabilities;
- Provide or arrange for appropriate and reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services for students with identified disabilities in courses, programs, services, and activities;
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication concerning students with disabilities.

TESTING ACCOMMODATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Only students who have been approved for testing accommodations are entitled to proctored exams through Disability Services.

Section 504 and ADA allow for accommodation on testing, but they do not require schools to accommodate students to such a degree that they have advantages over other students.

Scheduling Exams

To schedule an exam with Disability Services, students must submit a request for testing using the Testing Accommodation Request Form, which must be hand delivered to Disability Services by the student at least THREE (3) FULL WORKING DAYS prior to the requested exam date. Testing times are Monday through Friday 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM.

For exams scheduled on...	Testing requests must be received by...
Monday	The previous Wednesday
Tuesday	The previous Thursday
Wednesday	The previous Friday
Thursday	Monday of the same week of the exam
Friday	Tuesday of the same week of the exam

Each section of the Testing Accommodation Request Forms must be completed (including the instructor section) before a test will be scheduled.

Taking the Exam

- Arrive on time just as you would if you were taking the test in your classroom.
- Only items indicated by the professor on the testing request form will be permitted in the testing room--personal items are not allowed.
- Students should take restroom breaks before the exam has begun, as no breaks will be allowed unless breaks are an approved accommodation.
- No cheating or disruptive behavior. Students exhibiting such behavior will be asked to leave immediately.
- Please note that all exams are monitored by camera.

Rescheduling Exam/Missed Exams

Students are responsible for notifying Disability Services staff and their professor if an exam is to be missed for any reason. Arrangements to reschedule the exam must be discussed with the faculty member directly. Faculty must then email Disability Services to confirm permission for a student to reschedule a missed exam.

Delivering and Returning Accommodated Exams

Disability Services must receive exams no later than the day before (Monday-Friday) the scheduled test date, unless the faculty member indicates on the request form that the student will bring the exam with them to their testing appointment. Monday morning exams should be delivered to the Disability Services office before 5:00 PM Friday.

Disability Services will not use interoffice mail for delivery or return of exams.

The following options are available for exam delivery:

- Hand delivery to ODS by faculty
- Email to: disability.services@alvernia.edu
- By student in a sealed envelope

The following options are available for exam return to faculty:

- Delivery to department secretary
- Scanned and sent by email to faculty's Alvernia email address
- Delivered by student in a sealed envelope
- Pick up by faculty during ODS hours of operation

TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS AND MEMORY CUE CARDS

Memory Cue Cards for Exams have been approved as an academic accommodation. Please refer to the following instructions:

The contents of a cue sheet are at the instructor's discretion and should not run contrary to the essential requirements of the course. Only the professor can determine whether a cue sheet compromises the integrity of the course. A cue sheet should not contain a synopsis of course material, but rather mnemonics (a device such as a pattern of letters, ideas, or associations that assists in recalling information) and formulas that would enable the student to solve the problem.

If the purpose of a test is to determine whether or not the student knows specific definitions, having those words or definitions on a cue sheet would make it an answer sheet and therefore, not acceptable. If the definitions were written but not connected to the terms to be defined in any way, this may be allowable, since it will trigger the student's memory of the correct term. The ideal cue sheet would most likely make little sense to anyone but that specific student.

If remembering the information on the cue sheet is deemed to be an essential learning objective or outcome of the course, it should not be allowed. For example, if the learning objective or outcome of the course is to know the formula, it should not be allowed on the cue sheet; however, if the learning objective or outcome of the course is to demonstrate the ability to apply the formula, then it could be allowed on the cue sheet.

Cue sheets must be reviewed and approved by the instructor since the instructor decides the learning objectives or essential requirements of the course. Instructors can choose to remove memory triggers that are deemed to be essential learning objectives for the course. Note: It is understood that some courses do not lend themselves to the use of cue sheets.

PROCEDURES

1. Once a student has been approved for a cue sheet by DSO, the accommodation will be included on the student's accommodation letter.

a. Instructors: Please ensure that the letter is current (i.e. the letter will note the current semester). *Accommodation letters from previous semesters are not valid.* Please review the student's semester accommodation letter. Contact the DSO office if you have concerns regarding the use of the cue sheet and the essential requirements of the course.

b. Students: DSO recommends that you discuss your accommodations with each of your instructors. For each exam requiring a cue sheet, the student will complete a DSO Test Request form according to DSO guidelines

2. Instructors: Please indicate approval of a cue sheet on the DSO Test Request Form. For each exam, the student prepares a cue sheet that is no larger than one page, single-sided, 8" x 11.5" page, written by hand or 12 size font type, double spaced. An index card may be used instead, at the discretion of the instructor. Please note: A student with a visual impairment may need a larger cue sheet with the same number of characters in a larger font.

3. The student provides the cue sheet for editing and final approval, at least 5 business days prior to the test/exam, to the instructor. This means that the student will contact the instructor well in advance of the exam to confirm the due date for the cue sheet.

4. At least five (5) business days prior to the test/exam, the instructor reviews the student's cue sheet and chooses one of the following options:

- a. Approve the cue sheet "as is" or
- b. Remove (if handwritten: delete, scratch out, or black out with a marker; if in a Word document: delete) information that the instructor has deemed inappropriate. If an item on the cue sheets

provides a complete answer, rather than a trigger for an answer, the item must be removed.

c. Disallow the cue sheet entirely because the memory triggers on the cue sheet are deemed to be essential criteria or learning objectives for the course.

5. If the cue sheet is approved by the instructor, the instructor signs the cue sheet and submits it along with the student's test directly to the Disability Services Office three (3) days prior to the date of the test/exam.

6. Only the mutually agreed upon cue sheet will be allowed in the test/exam at DSO. Students cannot bring other course materials into the DSO testing room unless previously approved by the instructor (as noted on the DSO Test Request Form).

7. If the student arrives at DSO to test with a cue sheet not approved by the instructor, the cue sheet is not allowed. DSO staff will not contact the instructor on behalf of the student to request approval for a cue sheet. This is the responsibility of the student.

Once the student completes the exam at DSO, the test and the cue sheet will be returned to the instructor.

CONTACT US

Disability Services staff are happy to answer any questions you may have about this guide and/or accommodations at Alvernia University. Please feel free to call or email using the following information:

Disability Services
(610) 568-1499 Phone
(484) 335-4486 Fax
disability.services @alvernia.edu

OTHER CAMPUS RESOURCES

Health and Wellness Center

This center provides both medical and counseling services. All visits to Alvernia's nurses and physicians are free of charge to registered students. In addition to health services, counseling is available to students in need of emotional support.

Location: Veronica Hall
Phone: (610) 568-1467
Email: h&w@alvernia.edu
Hours: Mon-Fri, 9am-12pm & 1pm-4pm

Tutoring and Writing Center

This center is available to undergraduate students who would like assistance in most courses. Peer and professional tutors are available to help students build skills in writing, math, science, and foreign languages. Students can make appointments by calling the appointment hotline at 610-568-1494, or by stopping by the tutor information desk in the Learning Center.

Location: Bernardine Hall Suite 105
Hours: Mon-Fri, 8am- 4:30pm; Sat, 12pm-4pm*; Sun, 4pm-8pm*
*Not all subjects are available at this time

OFF CAMPUS RESOURCES

Office of Student Financial Planning

If you have questions about financial aid, student employment, student billing, or any other related concern, you can meet with a counselor from this office who can further assist you.

Location: Bernardine Hall, Room 1103

Phone: (610) 796-8356

Email: financialaid@alvernia.edu

Hours: Mon-Thurs, 8am-6pm, Fri, 8am-4:30pm

Summer Hours*: Mon-Thurs, 8am-5pm, Fri, 8am-4:30pm

*May 28th to August 16th

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

The Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, or OVR, provides vocational rehabilitation services to help persons with disabilities prepare for, obtain, or maintain employment.

READING

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

3602 Kutztown Road, Suite 200

Reading, PA 19605

610-621-5800 Voice

610-621-5820 TTY

800-442-0949* Voice

877-475-7326* TTY

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/vocational_rehabilitation/10356

Transportation

BARTA shall provide complementary paratransit service to individuals with disabilities that is similar to the level of service provided to individuals without disabilities who use the fixed-route bus system. In BARTA's case, providing paratransit service that is comparable to BARTA's fixed-route service has resulted in an expansion of paratransit service hours to include longer service hours on weekdays and the addition of service hours on weekday evenings and Saturdays, for those persons who are "certified" as being "ADA eligible".

<http://www.bartabus.com/special-services/applications>

BARTA Special Services at 610-921-2361.