

# Disability Services Handbook

Austin College | Division of Student Affairs



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## **INTRODUCTION**

Federal legislation, which continues to be revised, has influenced access to educational opportunities for students with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities have responded to these new opportunities by utilizing job training and educational programs offered at colleges and universities. Austin College has been responsive to this special population and remains committed to serving students with disabilities, as is reasonable.

The purpose of this guide is to provide faculty, staff, and students of Austin College with relevant information, strategies, and resources regarding access services.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Students are eligible for disability services if they have been admitted to Austin College and have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Major life activities include, but are not limited to, such functions as breathing, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, learning, working, performing manual tasks, and caring for oneself.

Students with disabilities who desire accommodations or other services are required to make a formal request with the College through the Access Services Office which is managed by the Director of the Academic Skills Center. Referral to other areas responsible for providing services will then be made as appropriate (e.g., Student Life office, Counseling, Academic Skills Center). It is the student's responsibility to provide written documentation, by a qualified professional that includes a diagnosis, the impairments caused by the disabling condition, and recommended accommodations. Determination of eligibility for services and appropriate accommodations is made on an individual, case-by-case basis

## **DOCUMENTATION**

Written documentation must be provided by a qualified and licensed professional with training and experience relevant to the diagnosed disability. Physical disabilities are most often verified by physicians and psychological disabilities by psychologists or psychiatrists. Learning disabilities may be identified and documented by psychologists or educational diagnosticians. (See **Appendix A** for specific documentation criteria)

For disabilities that may change substantially with time, such as learning or psychological disabilities, evaluations should be recent. Although no specific limits have been set for the age of the evaluation, in order to demonstrate the current impact of the disability and to identify appropriate accommodations, learning disability documentation less than three years old is preferred and documentation of psychological disabilities may need to be within six months. The College may request additional information or updated evaluations, at the student's expense, if necessary to make a decision about eligibility or appropriate accommodations. The College may consult with other professionals for assistance in interpreting or evaluating documentation. The College does not conduct disability evaluations, but can refer students to off-campus professionals who will provide the service, at student expense.

Written documentation identifying the disability/condition should be submitted under the professional's letterhead, dated, and signed (for more specific information, see Documentation Criteria, Appendix A).

The signed statement of diagnostic evaluation should address the following issues:

- 1) A dated and signed letter of evaluation submitted under the professional's letterhead that includes a diagnostic statement identifying the disability/condition, date of the current diagnostic evaluation, and the date of the original diagnosis (Including DSM-V classification, for psychological disabilities and learning disabilities or ICD-10 for medical disabilities);
- 2) A description of the diagnostic criteria and diagnostic test(s) used;
- 3) A description of the current functional impact/limitations of the disability;
- 4) Treatments, medications, assistive devices/services currently prescribed or used;
- 5) A description of the expected progression or stability of the disability over the time frame of the individual's expected college education
- 6) The credentials of the diagnosing professional/including the training and experience which enables the person capable of making the diagnosis
- 7) A Limited Release of Information Form signed by the student authorizing Austin College personnel to receive information from the documenting medical professional.

## **ACCOMMODATING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The goals of the Academic Skills Center (ASC) are to provide services, which will enable students with disabilities to participate fully in college life and to ensure that a person with a disability will not, on the basis of that disability, be denied full and equal access to academic and co-curricular programs.

The College has the right to set and maintain standards for admitting students and evaluating their progress and is not obligated to waive any requirements that are fundamental or essential to the integrity of the program. Therefore, students with disabilities must meet the academic standards for participation in a program, given appropriate accommodations.

The Director of the Academic Skills Center at Austin College coordinates classroom services for students with disabilities. The Director disseminates information about available services, evaluates documentation to determine the appropriate accommodations and assists students in obtaining those accommodations. To obtain services, students with disabilities requesting classroom accommodation must meet with the Director of the Academic Skills Center at the beginning of each semester. Once eligibility is verified and accommodations are identified, students negotiate with current faculty members to arrange accommodations. Students will be given a letter from the Academic Skills Center verifying their eligibility for particular accommodations (See **Appendices E**). Should a student request an accommodation without working with the Director, faculty should direct the student to the Academic Skills Center before the accommodation is provided.

The Academic Skills Center is located in the Wright Campus Center, Room 211. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Students requesting accommodations outside the classroom based on other areas of disabilities (e.g., physical or psychological) need to be referred to the Vice President for Student Affairs, so documentation can be filed, evaluated, and if appropriate, followed by requests for accommodation.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

The goal of accommodations is to provide access to educational programs and co-curricular activities. In some cases, identifying appropriate, effective, and reasonable accommodations is a trial and error process requiring cooperation and feedback from the student with the disability. A student with a disability has a right to request a specific form of accommodation, but the College may offer another effective form instead.

The services available through the Academic Skills Center include, but are not limited to:

- Notification of faculty to arrange for special testing conditions or other academic accommodations
- Assistance with accessibility issues
- Facilitation of communication between students and faculty or staff members
- Referral to other support services on campus or in the community

Accommodations that require the hiring of an auxiliary aide, such as an interpreter, will be coordinated by the Director of the Academic Skills Center and Austin College will negotiate the costs with the student and other agencies involved.

## Testing Procedures

Both the student and the faculty member are responsible for coordinating testing accommodations.

### Student Responsibilities

Students eligible for testing accommodations are responsible for the following:

1. Discuss with professor where and when test will be given.
2. If test is given in the ASC, the student must schedule the test with the ASC one week prior to test date. (See **Appendix F** for sample email communication)
3. Remind professor to submit Testing Instruction Form to the ASC

### Faculty Responsibilities:

Providing accommodations such as extended test time or altered test formats is the responsibility of the faculty member. The Director of the Academic Skills Center may provide suggestions or assistance when necessary to implement the accommodation. Faculty may independently provide test accommodations or seek assistance at the Academic Skills Center.

If the Academic Skills Center is used to provide test accommodations, the ASC Staff should be provided with the following by the professor:

1. Information regarding the standard allotment of time for completion of exam;
2. Information regarding the use of computers or specialized software during testing;
3. Information regarding specialized instructions or items allowed in the testing room;
4. Adequate notice from students in order to reserve rooms and equipment.

Testing instructions can be relayed to the ASC staff by telephone or through the electronic Exam Accommodation Instruction Form located on the Academic Skills Center website

<http://www.austincollege.edu/campus-life/academic-skills-center/exam-accommodation-instruction/>

## Grievance Policy

When a student believes he or she has been discriminated against or denied accommodation on the basis of a disability, the student should first discuss the issue with the instructor in an attempt to resolve the difference. If no resolution is reached after such interaction and consultation with the Director of the Academic Skills Center, the student may file an appeal with the Academic Standing Committee within 7 days of the alleged incident of discrimination. The Academic Standing Committee will issue a determination and suggested resolution. If necessary, the student may make a final written appeal to the Vice President of Academic Affairs within 7 days of the official determination by the Academic Standing Committee. The findings of the Vice President of Academic Affairs shall be considered final.

## Degree Modification

Students may request modification of degree or program requirements on the basis of a disability by submitting appropriate diagnostic documentation and a written request for degree modification to the Director of the Academic Skills Center. The Academic Standing Committee will review the supporting documentation and any additional information appropriate to the request before making a determination. If necessary, a final written appeal may be filed with the Vice President of Academic Affairs within 7 days of the official determination by the Academic Standing Committee. The decision of the Vice President of Academic Affairs shall be considered final.

## Housing

Housing accommodations (e.g., requesting a single room because of a disability or requesting an assistance or emotional support animal) involve an exception to standard policy; therefore, requests will be reviewed by the Vice President of Student Affairs and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. (See **Appendix C-D** for Service Dog and Emotional Support Animal Policies)

## EARLYNOTIFICATION

It is helpful if students with disabilities seek their accommodations early in the semester. Faculty members are encouraged to include this information on their syllabus. The following is a suitable example:

Austin College seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all individuals with documented disabilities and will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations and guidelines. **It is the responsibility of the student to register with and provide verification of academic accommodation needs to the Director of the Academic Skills Center as soon as possible. The student must also contact the Faculty member in a timely manner to arrange for reasonable academic accommodations. For further information regarding disability services or to register for assistance, please contact the Academic Skills Center at 903-813-2454 or visit their office at WCC 211.**

On the accommodation request form, it states that students are to notify the faculty members at least **one week in advance** prior to needing the accommodations. This policy was established to allow faculty ample time to accommodate the student's needs. Although students are encouraged to seek accommodations at the beginning of each semester, they may do so at any point in the

academic year with the understanding that the accommodations go in effect the following week, unless the faculty member chooses to waive the timing requirement (e.g., if a student has a test and seeks extended time but does not request the accommodation until the day before the test, the faculty may elect not to grant the accommodation but provide the extended time on the next test).

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The documentation materials and other information gathered in the process of determining eligibility for services is confidential and **will be shared with appropriate college personnel solely on a need to know basis.**

An accommodation letter will be given to the student and it is up to the student to decide in which courses the accommodation is needed and to share the letter with those faculty members. The student need not notify a faculty member of a disability if he/she is not requesting an accommodation in that faculty member's class.

## **SUGGESTIONS REGARDING THE DIFFERENT DISABILITIES**

### **Autistic Spectrum Disorder**

What was formerly classified as Asperger Syndrome (AS), now is termed Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The symptoms of ASD vary by degrees from person to person. ASD is a neurological disorder that is characterized by significant impairments affecting social interaction and communication.

Most people have an innate ability to understand nonverbal social cues, to naturally pay attention to what most consider relevant information from our surroundings, and to process this information without much conscious thought. In contrast, people with ASD do not automatically know what to expect or what is expected of them in social situations. A person with ASD has difficulty in understanding and expressing nonverbal aspects of communication, including facial expressions, gestures, body language and tone of voice. The disorder affects the area of the brain that normally handles these aspects of communication. Many, if not most, persons with ASD have very high IQs, but still struggle with social interactions and communication.

As part of the social deficits associated with difficulty in correctly interpreting or expressing nonverbal communications, a student with ASD often exhibits several of the following characteristics:

1. a stiff, pedantic conversational style;
2. lack of eye contact or unusual facial expression;
3. difficulty making friends;
4. inflexibility;
5. an unusual gait;
6. fine or gross motor deficits;
7. an overly literal interpretation of words;
8. social naïveté; and
9. one or more intense, consuming interests that may change over time.

Students with ASD are also prone to becoming overstimulated. While most students can attend to multiple sensory inputs without discomfort, students with ASD may become overwhelmed by such environments. Sometimes students will need to identify a quiet place to retreat when they begin to feel overstimulated. Some classroom accommodations which are typical include a distraction reduced environment for testing, and a seat near the door for stress or sensory breaks.

## **Hearing Impairment**

The hearing impaired category includes individuals with partial or total loss of hearing. Most are considered hard of hearing; total hearing loss is rare. Not all students with hearing impairment benefit from a hearing aid which only amplifies sound. Some hearing disorders cause sound to be distorted so amplification is not helpful.

Some students may also have a speech and language impairment, especially if they had hearing problems from early childhood when language skills are usually learned. Speech for such persons may be difficult.

Most hearing impaired students communicate with sign language. Sign language is somewhat abbreviated so the student may not have mastered the subtleties of written language. Their written material may appear similar to a person whose native language is not English. Some hearing impaired students are able to read lips; however, most cannot. For students who can read lips, the face of the instructor must be directly visible. Speak clearly and distinctly without exaggerated lip movement. It may be helpful to restate other students' questions for the hearing impaired student. Remember, when lecturing not to turn away or cover your mouth with your hand; use facial expressions whenever possible.

Some students may use an interpreter in class. When an interpreter or "signer" is used, it is important not to talk rapidly as sign language is not as rapid as spoken language. Although it will be natural to talk to the interpreter rather than the student, it is accepted practice to talk to the student; the interpreter will understand and expect this.

At first, an interpreter may be distracting, but the class quickly accepts his or her presence. Refer any requests for this service to the Director of the Academic Skills Center.

## **Learning Disability**

Learning Disabilities involve various difficulties which make an otherwise non-disabled person experience difficulties in understanding or using spoken or written language. This condition usually results in the student experiencing difficulty in speaking, writing, reading, spelling, and/or performing mathematical calculations. Typically, students with learning disabilities are of average or above average intelligence. Learning disabilities are a relatively recent diagnosis, and it is possible that a student with one may not be aware of it.

Because of the wide variety of learning disabilities, there is no specific "best way" of teaching the learning disabled student. Aids and services for students with learning disabilities are similar to those for students who have difficulty understanding the written or spoken word. Services may include note takers, readers, tape recorders, oral test administration, extra time for completion, etc.



Because this disability is not visible, it is understandable that you may doubt its authenticity. If you do, please contact the Director of the Academic Skills Center.

## **Manual Impairment**

Manual impairments can result from disabilities such as cerebral palsy, polio, and spinal cord injury. The manual impairment may vary from mild to severe, and spasticity, if present, varies greatly as well.

Students with limited use of their hands may have difficulty writing or holding a pen or pencil. Students may want to use an auxiliary aid such as tape recorder. In some instances another student may serve as a note taker for such students. You are encouraged to let the manually impaired students obtain copies of other students' notes, if needed.

Test administration with manually impaired students may require some individualized attention if writing is a difficulty. Should the faculty member be unable to execute the request, the Director of the Academic Skills Center may be able to provide assistance. Early notification of such needs will be appreciated.

## **Mobility Impairment**

This category of disability includes students using wheelchairs, crutches, braces, walkers, or canes to move about. Not all students with mobility impairments require mobility aids.

Classrooms and course equipment must be accessible to these students. If the course requires travel to off campus locations, these locations must also be accessible. There are some general considerations for students with wheelchairs and other mobility difficulties.

1. If the classroom is inaccessible to the student with disabilities, such as a room on a second floor in a building with no elevator, the class should be moved to another location.
2. If distances between the classes are long, the student may be late because of physical difficulties. Be reasonably lenient in this respect.
3. If a field trip off campus is going to be required, ask the student to aid in the planning of that function (choice of site, proper mode of transportation, etc.).
4. Classes taught in a laboratory setting may require some modification of the workstations. Wheelchair access under a tabletop may be a problem as may aisle widths and reaching distances at the workstation.
5. Some students may not be able to participate in laboratory without an aide. The student can give all the instructions to an aide and learn as much as other students, except of course, the actual manipulation of the objects involved.
6. Students with mobility difficulties are often not confined to wheelchairs. Some students can walk short distances and move easily from the wheelchair to a stationary chair. These students may at times still need some accommodations.
7. Most students with mobility impairments will ask for assistance if they desire it. Offer assistance if you wish, but accept a, "No, thank you" graciously, if given.

## **Psychological Disorders**

Disabilities that are classified as psychological/psychiatric disorders include conditions like bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety and many others. Such conditions are persistent psychological, emotional or behavioral disorders which result in significant impairment of educational, social or vocational functioning.

Some concerns for students with psychological disabilities in the academic setting include side effects of medication, mood swings, class absence due to treatment or medication adjustments, fluctuations in energy and focus, panic attacks, social isolation, and anxiety. Therefore, it is important to encourage the use of appropriate compensatory techniques in order to successfully manage in an academic setting. For example, students should understand their cognitive strengths and weaknesses for the purpose of individualizing learning strategies. In addition employing proper advocacy skills along with organizational and time management skills is vital to establishing self-management and reducing stress.

Accommodations that are common for students with cognitive disabilities are also appropriate for students with psychological disorders. Notetakers, tape recording of lectures, and the use of a laptop for notetaking can address the fluctuations in energy and focus caused by medication adjustments. Other common strategies include extended time for testing, separate testing rooms, reduced course loads, or preferential seating.

Here are some considerations for working with students with psychological disabilities:

1. expect behavior that is consistent with the student code of conduct
2. provide clear direction regarding expectations and be consistent with all students
3. don't attempt a therapeutic relationship
4. express acceptance and reassurance

## **Speech Impediment**

Speech impediments may range from problems with word formation or voice strength to being totally non-verbal. The impediment may include stuttering, accompanied by distorted facial expressions, chronic hoarseness, difficulty with finding a proper word, etc.

Understandably, students with a speech impediment may be hesitant to participate in verbal activities, and pressure to do so may not be useful. It is important to give the student time for expressing thoughts and to avoid supplying words or finishing sentences. When speaking to the speech impaired, continue to talk naturally. The instructor can set the tone that encourages self-expression.

## **Visual Impairment**

Students with visual impairment may use one or several methods of dealing with visual information. These methods include readers, large print books, magnifying devices, and recorded materials. Visual impairments vary from total blindness to limits on peripheral vision.

Students with partial vision should be encouraged to sit near the front of the classroom to take maximum advantage of visual and auditory cues. Instructors should make every attempt to verbalize material written on the blackboard. Whenever it is possible, it is suggested that visually impaired

students be allowed to touch materials that other students would be "looking at." An overhead projector that would enlarge printed materials may be very useful for some visually impaired students.

Each student will have a favorite method of reproducing lectures. Some will use a note taker, Braille writer, or a tape recorder. A Braille writer may be distracting at first, but other students will quickly get used to the noise.

Some students may use guide dogs. These dogs are highly trained and will not create any problems in the classroom. It is suggested that you do not touch or pet the dog while it is in harness.

Students with visual impairments may need to have tests administered orally. If it is difficult for the faculty member to execute this request, assistance may be provided by the Director of the ASC. Please give two or three days notice, if possible.

Please remember that blindness should not limit participation in most classroom activities. Encourage your visually limited students to participate as fully as they possibly can.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FROM FACULTY**

### **How can I recognize learning disabilities?**

Learning disabilities may be indicated when a student's performance is significantly lower in some area(s) than would be expected given his or her intelligence and ability in other areas. Some symptoms include pronounced difficulty in:

- Keeping letters and words in order when reading or writing
- Dropping endings off words or omitting small "function" words (e.g., "if," "but," "so," "to") when reading or writing
- Sequencing ideas in logical fashion
- Written expression (oral expression of ideas is significantly better than written expression)
- Comprehending what one has heard or read
- Efficiently retrieving information from memory
- Organization, time management skills
- Understanding time and number concepts
- Visual-spatial awareness, sense of direction
- Maintaining consistent levels of performance
- Accurately perceiving verbal and non-verbal social cues

Sometimes students with learning disabilities display poor attitudes towards learning and demonstrate self-defeating behaviors such as lateness to class, frequent absences, lack of participation in class, and a tendency to avoid rather than seek out help from professors. These behaviors are usually not the root of the problem in a student with a learning disability, but rather are maladaptive responses to the problem.

### **Who should I talk to if I have a concern about a student with a disability in my class?**

Talk to the professional staff at the Academic Skills Center and the student's mentor. Together we can discuss strategies that may address the needs of your student in a particular situation.

### **What should I do when a student requests accommodations in my class?**

Ask the student for an Accommodation Request Form (Appendix E) from the Academic Skills Center that recommends reasonable accommodations for your class. You are encouraged to refrain from granting requests for accommodation by students who cannot present you with this official form, as you will not have any way of knowing whether or not the student actually needs such accommodation. It is the student's responsibility to obtain this form from the Academic Skills Center after providing acceptable documentation of disability. It is also the student's responsibility to deliver this form to his/her professors. Take the time to engage the student in a discussion of his/her learning difficulties and to encourage him/her to seek your assistance if encountering difficulty with the class material.

### **What should I tell students who do not have an accommodation request form from the Academic Skills Center?**

Simply refer them to the Director of the Academic Skills Center, in the WCC 211 (903-813-2454). If the student has provided the ASC with acceptable documentation, the Director will prepare an Accommodation Request Form for the student to deliver to the appropriate faculty.

### **Do reasonable accommodations mean lower standards for students with disabilities?**

No. By allowing reasonable accommodations, students with disabilities are afforded equal opportunity to access information and achieve the same high standards expected of all our students. Appropriate modifications to academic requirements simply remove discriminatory barriers, and allow the student to be evaluated in terms of ability rather than disability. Although it is the responsibility of the ASC to determine what accommodations are needed to ensure access and minimize the impact of the disability, it is important that faculty members ensure that the proposed accommodations do not dilute the standards of the course. Faculty members with concerns about accommodations should not hesitate to discuss their concerns with the Director of the ASC. Frequently, successful provision of accommodation is the outcome of negotiation between student, professor, and the ASC.

### **What are some accommodations I might be asked to provide in my class?**

Typical accommodations include:

- Extended (but not unlimited) time on tests
- Distraction-reduced test environment
- Audio-taping of lectures
- Peer note takers
- Readers for exams
- Textbooks in alternate formats (ASC will provide)

### **How do I arrange for distraction – reduced test site?**

You may choose to give the exam to the student in a room that is separate from the rest of your class. If you want the student to test in the ASC, indicate directions for administering your test by filling out the Exam Accommodation Instruction Form found on the ASC webpage (<http://www.austincollege.edu/campus-life/academic-skills-center>). Keep in mind it is the student's responsibility to request this service at least **one week** in advance of the test date so that you can decide where you will test the student. If the student will use the ASC as a testing site, the student should notify the Director of the ASC at least one week in advance so that a room will be assured.

**What if I disagree with the accommodation described in the accommodation request form?**

Making reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is mandated by federal law. However, the manner in which a student's needs are accommodated is negotiable. If you have a pedagogical disagreement with the appropriateness of an accommodation, call the Director of the Academic Skills Center to discuss your concern. Again, successful provision of accommodation is often the outcome of negotiation between student, professor, and the ASC.

**How can I make students with disabilities more comfortable in my class?**

Include an accommodation statement in your course syllabus directing the student to the Director of the ASC to file an official request for accommodations. Remember to protect the student's right to confidentiality by speaking to the student about his or her disability in your office rather than in the class or hallway.

# Appendix A



## Documentation Criteria Academic Accommodations

Austin College works to provide reasonable accommodations and equal access to students with disabilities in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and the Americans with Disabilities Act- Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA).

To evaluate requests for specific accommodations, comprehensive documentation of a disabling condition is necessary. Documentation that sufficiently verifies eligibility describes the current impact of the disability as it relates to the accommodation(s) requested. Documentation must be **current** and relevant and include evaluation by a licensed professional who has appropriate training and experience diagnosing and treating the reported condition and is unrelated to the individual being evaluated.

The following criteria will assure documentation is adequate and appropriate to verify eligibility and support requests for accommodations or auxiliary aids:

Disability documentaton should include:

- 8) A dated and signed letter of evaluation submitted under the professional's letterhead that includes a diagnostic statement identifying the disability/condition, date of the current diagnostic evaluation, and the date of the original diagnosis (Including DSM-V classification, for psychological disabilities and learning disabilities or ICD-10 for medical disabilities);
- 9) A description of the diagnostic criteria and diagnostic test(s) used;
- 10) A description of the current functional impact/limitations of the disability;
- 11) Treatments, medications, assistive devices/services currently prescribed or used;
- 12) A description of the expected progression or stability of the disability over the time frame of the individual's expected college education
- 13) The credentials of the diagnosing professional/including the training and experience which enables the person capable of making the diagnosis
- 14) A Limited Release of Information Form signed by the student authorizing Austin College personnel to receive information from the documenting medical professional.

**Accommodation recommendations from the diagnosing professional are helpful and will be given due consideration.**

### Temporary Disabilities

Documentation for temporary or acute disabilities must be provided for approved temporary accommodations and regularly updated as appropriate.

*Austin College reserve the right to request clarification and further documentation of disability and functional limitations as may be needed to evaluate a student's request for accommodations.*

For more information, contact the Director of the Academic Skills Center  
900 North Grand, Ste. 61544, Sherman, TX 75092  
Phone: 903-813-2454, Fax: 903-813-2038, E-Mail: [asc@austincollege.edu](mailto:asc@austincollege.edu)

Document adapted with permission from Rice University and Lynchburg College

## Appendix B



### LIMITED RELEASE OF INFORMATION

STUDENT NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby authorize AUSTIN COLLEGE ACADEMIC SKILLS CENTER to RECEIVE medical and/or mental health information and/or records regarding diagnosis and treatment, for the College to determine whether student qualifies for an accommodation request.

RELEASE TO/RECEIVE FROM \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Referring Medical Doctor, Therapist, Diagnostician, etc.)

The information may be provided:  by phone  by fax  by mail  by email  
Contact information of above-named medical professional: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that electronic mail (email) is not confidential and can be intercepted and read by other people.

Information to be provided:  Attendance/Dates of service  Diagnosis  Treatment plan/goals  
 Treatment Summary  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Is there any medical and/or mental health information that you do not wish to be released?  Yes  No

If so, what? \_\_\_\_\_

- I understand that I have a right to receive a copy of this authorization.
- I understand that any cancellation, modification, or revocation of this authorization must be in writing.
- I understand that I have the right to revoke this authorization at any time unless Austin College Academic Skills Center has acted in reliance upon it.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to confirm receipt by Austin College Academic Skills Center of any cancellation, modification, or revocation.
- I further understand that information used or disclosed pursuant to this authorization may be subject to re-disclosure by the recipient and may no longer be protected by the HIPAA Privacy Rule, although applicable Texas law may protect such information. In consideration of this consent, I hereby release the source of the records from all liability arising there-from.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ CONSENT to the release of information \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of student) (Date)

EFFECTIVE TIME PERIOD. This authorization is valid for 1 year from the date signed unless another date is specified below.

**Only complete this box if you wish to withdraw permission to release information.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, wish to withdraw my consent to release information on \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Student)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

## Appendix C



### **SERVICE DOG POLICY**

#### **Austin College Policy Regarding the Use of Animals for Accommodation**

It is the policy of Austin College to provide equal access and reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities to participate in any program, service, or opportunity provided by the campus; and to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), the Fair Housing Act, and other applicable federal and state regulations that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. Under the Fair Housing Act, persons with disabilities may request a reasonable accommodation of an assistance animal, including an emotional support animal in housing when its use is necessary to afford a person with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling. With respect to a request for an assistance or emotional support animal, Austin College will determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether such an animal is a reasonable accommodation on campus.

Questions regarding service and emotional support animals should be directed to the Academic Skills Center Director in WCC 211, by phone at 903-813-2454, or by email at [asc@austincollege.edu](mailto:asc@austincollege.edu).

#### **Conflicting Disabilities**

Students who have allergic reactions to service dogs and/or emotional support animals (ESAs) that are substantial enough to qualify as a disability, must follow procedures to document a medical/physical disability and request specific accommodations related to such disability-related needs. Austin College will consider disability-related needs of all parties involved, and explore reasonable accommodations and seek resolution as efficiently and expeditiously as possible.

#### **Service Dog Defined**

A “service dog” is any dog individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Service dogs are trained to do specific tasks or “work” for the benefit of a person with a disability. This work or task the dog performs must be directly related to the handler’s disability.

Service dogs are working animals not pets. Examples of service dogs include, but are not limited to, guide dogs, hearing dogs, and seizure response dogs. A service dog accompanies a person with a disability at all times, unlike a therapy/emotional support animal (ESA). A service dog is an animal with a good temperament and disposition, has reliable, predictable behavior, and is selected and trained to accompany people with disabilities.

#### **Service Dogs Permitted on Campus**

Service dogs provide active support and are permitted to accompany the handler in all public areas on campus, with the possible exception of certain laboratories where protective clothing/gear is required.

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service dog, an individual may be asked the following:





- 1) Is the dog needed because of a disability?
- 2) What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

If the student is residing in campus housing:

- 1) Advance notice will be given to the Director of the Academic Skills Center and the Dean of Students of the need to have a service animal.
- 2) Proof of service dog's up-to-date veterinary health documentation, including proof of immunization, will be submitted to the Director of the Academic Skills Center.

### Service Dogs in Training Policy

Service dogs in training are only allowed on campus when accompanied by an approved trainer. Service dogs in training are required to wear a vest or tag indicating they are in training.

- 1) Individuals with disabilities have the right to train a service dog themselves and are not required to use a professional service dog training program.
- 2) However, service dogs in training are not considered service animals under the ADA. Dogs must already be trained before they can be taken into public places. Until training is complete, service dogs in training do not have the same protection and privileges as a fully trained service dog.\*

*\* State of Texas Code Sec. 121.003 (i) A service animal in training shall not be denied admittance to any public facility when accompanied by an approved trainer.*

*Austin College requires students to provide documentation of their certification as a trainer from an approved organization.*

### Requirements for Students with a Service Dog In Training

- 1) Complete the **Verification Form for Service Animals in Training**. This verification form, along with documentation certifying the student as an approved trainer (#2), will be kept on file with the Academic Skills Center's Access Services Program.
- 2) Provide the Director of the Academic Skills Center with a document verifying certification as an approved trainer. An *approved trainer* recognized by Austin College is an individual who has been certified by an organization whose primary mission is to train service animals for people with disabilities. If the student is not an approved trainer, the student must provide proof that an approved trainer will be with the student and the dog while in campus buildings.
- 3) Meet with the Director of the Academic Skills Center to obtain approval for bringing a service dog in training into campus buildings. During this meeting, the Director of the Academic Skills Center and the student will:
  - a. Review published ADA language that allows for the person to train the dog themselves, but *does not* recognize service dogs in training as a protected accommodation. 9
  - b. Review State of Texas statute that does allow service animals in training to access the same areas as service dogs **as long as** they are accompanied by an approved trainer.
  - c. Review Austin College policy on what constitutes a recognized approved trainer.
  - d. Review Austin College policy that service dogs in training must be identified by a vest or tag indicating they are in training, and must comply with and abide by the same college policies and procedures that any service dog follows. This includes the Student Code of Conduct.



- 4) Allow the Verification Form to be shared with the Student Life Office if the student will be residing in campus residential facilities.
- 5) Provide up-to-date veterinary health documentation for the service dog in training, including proof of immunization to be kept on file in the Academic Skills Center.

### **Responsibilities and Requirements for Service Dogs and Their Handlers on Campus**

The safety and health of Austin College students, faculty, staff, and the service dog are important concerns. Therefore, only service dogs and handlers that meet the specific criteria below will be exempt from regulations that otherwise restrict or prohibit animals. The care and supervision of a service dog is the responsibility of the handler.

To maintain the safety and health of the Austin College community, requirements for service dogs and their owners include the following:

#### **1. Injury, Cleanup, Damage**

- a. The handler is responsible for any damage or injuries caused by the service dog and must take appropriate precautions to prevent property damage or injury.
- b. The handler is solely responsible for cleaning up after the service dog. If the handler is not physically able to clean up after the dog, it is the handler's responsibility to hire someone to conduct this task.
- c. If living on campus with a service dog, the handler's residence may be inspected for fleas, ticks, pests, and/or other damage as needed. The Student Life Office will schedule the inspection and notify the resident of the scheduled inspection. If fleas, ticks, or other pests are detected through inspection, the residence hall will be treated in accordance with college pest control procedures. The handler will be billed for the expense of any necessary pest control treatment.
- d. If living on campus with a service dog, the handler will be financially responsible for expenses incurred above a standard cleaning or for repairs to the residential premises, including losses, liability, and claims.
- e. Owners are responsible for the grooming and bathing of a service dog to maintain the animal's cleanliness. If living on campus, a service dog must be bathed off campus.

#### **2. Service Dog Health, Behavior and Etiquette**

- a. A copy of all required and up-to-date immunizations must be filed with the Academic Skills Center Director.
- b. Service dogs must be spayed or neutered. A copy of the veterinarian's report must be filed with the Academic Skills Center Director.
- c. Service dogs must be under the control of the handler at all times.
- d. Service dogs must be on a leash at all times (except when the dog needs to perform disability related work or tasks that necessitate being off leash).
- e. Service dogs must wear collars and tags at all times.
- f. Service dogs must be housebroken. A handler may be required to remove a dog that is not housebroken.
- g. Service dogs shall not block aisles or passageways for fire egress.
- h. Service dogs should not sniff people, belongings, or otherwise be intrusive to others.
- i. Service dogs shall not display behaviors or noises that are disruptive to others unless this is part of the service being provided to the handler.
- j. Service dogs must possess friendly and sociable characteristics. A specific dog can be restricted from the premises based on any confirmed threatening or territorial behavior.



## Service Dogs in Campus Housing

No animal will be permitted in residence halls or apartments that:

- Is not approved by the Academic Skills Center's Access Services program
- Poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others
- Would cause a substantial physical damage to the property of the University and other residents
- Would pose an undue financial and administrative burden to the college
- Would fundamentally alter the nature of the college's housing operations

Students desiring a service dog to live in residential facilities must provide documentation from a professional veterinarian certifying the animal is in good health, current on all applicable state and local vaccinations, and has had a current well care visit. Handlers must provide satisfactory documentation of compliance with this section on an ongoing basis.

Students with a service dog must comply with the responsibilities and requirements for service dogs and their handlers.

## Exclusion of Service Dogs from Campus

Federal law mandates a service dog to be removed from campus in the following circumstances:

- 1) Out of Control Animal: If improper animal behavior happens repeatedly, the handler may be prohibited from bringing the animal into any campus facility until the handler can demonstrate that steps have been taken to mitigate the behavior. Improper behavior includes, but is not limited to, activity that may interfere with the quality of life of other residents on campus, such as barking or other disruptive noise;
- 2) Non-Housebroken: A handler may be directed to remove a dog that is not housebroken;
- 3) Direct Threat: A handler may be directed to remove an animal that Austin College determines to be a substantial and direct threat to the health and safety of individuals. This may occur as a result of a very ill animal, a substantial lack of cleanliness of the animal, or the presence of an animal in a sensitive area like certain laboratories or mechanical areas.

## Penalties for Improper Use of Assistance Animals

Section 121.006 of the Texas State Policy identifies penalties for improper use of Assistance Animals:

- 1) A person who uses a service animal with a harness or leash of the type commonly used by persons with disabilities who use trained animals, in order to represent that his or her animal is a specially trained service animal when training has not in fact been provided, is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction shall be punished by:
  - (a) a fine of not more than \$300; and
  - (b) 30 hours of community service to be performed for a governmental entity or nonprofit organization that primarily serves persons with visual impairments or other disabilities, or for another entity or organization at the discretion of the court, to be completed in not more than one year.
- 2) A person who habitually abuses or neglects to feed or otherwise neglects to properly care for his or her assistance animal is subject to seizure of the animal under Subchapter B, Chapter 821, Health and Safety Code.

## Verification and Agreement of Policy Receipt



I have submitted a copy of my service dog's up-to-date veterinary health documentation, including proof of immunization, to be kept on file in the Academic Skills Center. I have read the policy pertaining to service dogs and understand that I may be asked to remove my service dog from Austin College for state and federal non-compliance as outlined within this policy.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Director, Academic Skills Center: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**Service Dog In Training Verification Form**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DOB:** \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ AC Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Campus Housing Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

Check here if living off campus \_\_\_\_\_

Check if you have provided necessary certification of training to the Academic Skills Center \_\_\_\_\_

I recognize that I am a student enrolled at Austin College, and I am requesting to have my Service Dog in Training with me on campus and in campus buildings. I understand that I have to follow all policies within the Student Code of Conduct, and that my Service Dog in Training must comply with and abide by the same Austin College policies and procedures that any service dog follows. This includes any policies specific to campus housing when residing in Austin College residential facilities.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I have verified the Austin College certification of training documentation and will agree to share necessary paperwork with the Student Life Office.

Academic Skills Center Director \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Frequently Asked Questions About Service Dogs**

FAQs about Service Dogs [https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/service\\_animal\\_qa.html](https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/service_animal_qa.html)



## Appendix D ESA Request Checklist

- Consult Access Services for Information & Application Deadlines:**

[www.austincollege.edu/asc/access-services](http://www.austincollege.edu/asc/access-services)

- Read Austin College ESA Policy**

- Consult w/Academic Skills Center Director for Clarification:**

[asc@austincollege.edu](mailto:asc@austincollege.edu)

- Approval or Denial Received in Writing:** No animal can be brought to campus until written approval is received from the Director of the Academic Skills Center.
- Re-application:** After initial approval, a complete application must be re-filed and approved each subsequent academic year in which ESA is requested or a new ESA is required.

### Completed ESA Applications Must Include:

- Agreement to Abide by ESA Policy:** Student will sign this form verifying they read, understand, and agree to follow all components of the ESA policy. This must be submitted with the Verification/Request Form for Emotional Support Animal.
- Limited Release of Information Form:** Students must complete and return this form with their application. This must be submitted with the Verification/Request Form for Emotional Support Animal.
- Verification/Request Form for Emotional Support Animal:** This form must be completed by the treating physician or mental health provider to permit the college to determine:
- That the individual has a disability for which the animal is needed;
  - How the animal assists the individual including whether the animal has undergone any training;
  - The relationship between the disability and the assistance that the animal provides.
- Off-Campus Emergency Contact Information:** An off-campus, alternative caretaker must be included on the Verification/Request Form and will be called in the event an emergency keeps the owner away from campus for a prolonged period of time.
- ESA Health Documentation (up-to-date veterinary records):** Documentation must be submitted from a professional veterinarian certifying the ESA is in good health, spayed or neutered (for dogs/cats), current on all applicable state & local vaccinations, up-to-date on general maintenance vaccinations appropriate to the species. This must be submitted with the Verification/Request Form for Emotional Support Animal.
- Roommate/s Agreement (statement written & signed by roommate/s):** Roommate/s will write & sign a statement verifying agreement to live in the same residence as the proposed ESA. They must print their name, sign their name, and date this statement. The agreement may also be emailed from roommate's AC email address. This statement must be submitted with the Verification/Request Form for Emotional Support Animal.

**Submit All Materials To: [asc@austincollege.edu](mailto:asc@austincollege.edu)**

## **Austin College Policy Regarding the Use of Animals for Accommodation**

It is the policy of Austin College to provide equal access and reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities to participate in any program, service, or opportunity provided by the campus; and to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), the Fair Housing Act, and other applicable federal and state regulations that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. Under the Fair Housing Act, persons with disabilities may request a reasonable accommodation of an assistance animal, including an emotional support animal in housing when its use is necessary to afford a person with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling. With respect to a request for an assistance or emotional support animal, Austin College will determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether such an animal is a reasonable accommodation on campus.

Questions regarding service and emotional support animals should be directed to the Academic Skills Center Director in WCC 211, by phone at 903-813-2454, or by email at [asc@austincollege.edu](mailto:asc@austincollege.edu).

### **Emotional Support Animal (ESA) Defined**

An emotional support animal (ESA) is an animal that provides comfort to an individual with a disability upon the recommendation of a healthcare or mental health professional. An emotional support animal does not assist a person with a disability with activities of daily living, is not required to be trained to perform work or tasks, and does not accompany a person with a disability at all times. ESAs can be species other than dogs. The role of an ESA is to live with a student and alleviate the symptoms of an individual's disability to provide equal opportunities to use and enjoy college housing. The revised 2010 ADA regulations specify that "the provision of emotional support well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks," so these animals are not considered service animals.

### **Conflicting Disabilities**

Students who have allergic reactions to service dogs and/or emotional support animals (ESAs) that are substantial enough to qualify as a disability, must follow procedures to document a medical/physical disability and request specific accommodations related to such disability-related needs. Austin College will consider disability-related needs of all parties involved, and explore reasonable accommodations and seek resolution as efficiently and expeditiously as possible.

### **Things to Consider When Contemplating an Emotional Support Animal as an Accommodation in College Housing**

- 1) Time obligation related to care of specific species
- 2) Time away from the animal, student schedule, lifestyle, other responsibilities
- 3) Financial cost of food, supplies, veterinarian visits
- 4) Previous ownership of species or anxiety an animal may experience in a new environment
- 5) Caring for the animal during school breaks
- 6) Travel
- 7) Training of animal (housebroken or litter trained)
- 8) Ideal time to bring it to campus





## Eligibility for Emotional Support Animals as an Accommodation

A student requesting an emotional support animal (ESA) should identify with the Director of the Academic Skills Center as a qualified student with a disability (i.e., have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities) and provide documentation explaining how the animal will be necessary to offer the student equal opportunity to use and enjoy Austin College residential housing not otherwise possible.

A student is not permitted to live with an ESA until given written approval by the Director of the Academic Skills Center.

An individual may request an emotional support animal as an accommodation in a campus residential facility if:

- 1) The individual has a disability;
- 2) The animal is necessary to afford the individual an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling; and
- 3) There is an identifiable relationship between the disability and the assistance the animal provides.

## Procedures to Verifying Eligibility and Requesting an Emotional Support Animal

Students must follow institutional policy and procedures regarding ESAs and submit a formal request for an ESA accommodation by submitting all of the following documentation together:

- **Agreement to Abide by ESA Policy (p. 7):** A signed form verifying the student read, understands, and agrees to follow all components of the ESA policy. This must be submitted with the Verification/Request Form for Emotional Support Animal (ESA).
- **Limited Release of Information Form (p.8):** Students must complete and return this form with their application. This must be submitted with the Verification/Request Form for Emotional Support Animal (ESA).
- **Verification/Request Form for Emotional Support Animal (pp. 9-10):** This form must be completed by the treating physician or mental health provider to permit the college to determine:
  - That the individual has a disability for which the animal is needed;
  - How the animal assists the individual including whether the animal has undergone any training;
  - The relationship between the disability and the assistance that the animal provides.
- **Off-Campus Emergency Contact Information (p. 9):** An off-campus, alternative caretaker must be included on the Verification/Request Form and will be called in the event of an emergency that keeps the owner away from campus for a prolonged period of time. The contact information of the alternative caretaker will be filed with campus police.
- **ESA Health Documentation (up to date veterinary records):** Documentation must be submitted from a professional veterinarian certifying the ESA is in good health, spayed or neutered (for dogs/cats), current on all applicable state and local vaccinations, up-to-date on general maintenance vaccinations appropriate to the species. ESA owners will provide updated vaccination documentation on an ongoing basis as necessary. Applicable animals must wear a current rabies vaccination tag on campus.



- **Roommate/s Agreement (statement written and signed by roommate/s):** Roommate/s will write and sign a statement verifying agreement to live in the same residence as the proposed ESA. They must print their name, sign their name, and date this statement. The agreement may also be emailed from roommate's AC email address. This statement must be submitted with the Verification /Request Form for Emotional Support Animal (ESA).

## **Exclusion of Emotional Support Animals from Campus Facilities**

In accordance with the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), Austin College allows ESAs only in residential facilities. Animals must comply with all City of Sherman Code of Ordinances regarding animals and the State of Texas Health and Safety Code §822.101 (Animals defined as "Dangerous Wild Animals").

No animal will be permitted in residential facilities that:

- 4) Is not approved through the Academic Skills Center's Access Services program
- 5) Poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others: A handler may be directed to remove an animal that Austin College determines to be a substantial and direct threat to the health and safety of individuals. This may occur as a result of a very ill animal, or a substantial lack of cleanliness of the animal.
- 6) Is out of control: If improper animal behavior happens repeatedly, the handler may be prohibited from bringing the animal into any campus facility until the handler can demonstrate that steps have been taken to mitigate the behavior. Improper behavior includes, but is not limited to, activity that may interfere with the quality of life of other residents on campus, such as barking or other disruptive noise.
- 7) Is not housebroken: A handler may be directed to remove an animal that is not housebroken or litterbox trained.
- 8) Would cause a substantial physical damage to the property of the college and other residents
- 9) Would pose an undue financial and administrative burden to the college
- 10) Would fundamentally alter the nature of the college's housing operations

## **Removal of Animal**

Austin College may remove or require the removal of the ESA if it poses a threat to the health and safety of others on campus, disrupts the educational environment of Austin College and/or the residential community, or the if the owner does not comply with the rules and responsibilities listed in this policy. It is the responsibility of the ESA owner to ensure the ESA does not interfere with the quality of life of other residents on campus. This includes noise violations (e.g. barking or other disruptive noise).

## **Approval of Requests for Emotional Support Animals**

The ADA Compliance Committee, consisting of the Vice President of Student Affairs, the Dean of Students, and the Director of Academic Skills Center, will evaluate all documentation and issue a decision regarding the requested ESA. The Director of the Academic Skills Center will notify the student and the Student Life Office regarding approval status. The committee reserves the right to request additional information, request a meeting with the student and/or recommend an alternate accommodation.

***After initial approval, a complete application must be re-filed and approved each subsequent year in which an ESA is requested or a new ESA is required.***



## Denials of Requests for Emotional Support Animals

Austin College is not required to provide accommodations that would pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others. Austin College will also deny requests that would: (1) result in substantial physical damage to the property of others; (2) pose an undue financial and administrative burden on the College; or (3) fundamentally alter the nature of the College's residence life operations.

## Responsibilities and Requirements for Emotional Support Animals and Their Handlers

To maintain the safety and health of the Austin College community, requirements for ESAs and their owners include the following:

### 1) **Animal and Owner Etiquette and Behavior:**

- a. The ESA owner agrees to abide by all other residential policies. An exception to the animal policy made under this ESA Policy does not constitute an exception to any other Austin College policy.
- b. The owner must notify the Director of the Academic Skills Center if the ESA is no longer needed, or is no longer in the residential facilities. To replace a previously approved ESA, the owner must complete and submit required documentation and forms to the Academic Skills Center.
- c. A copy of all required and up-to-date immunizations must be filed with the Academic Skills Center Director.
- d. Dogs and cats must be spayed or neutered. A copy of the veterinarian's report must be filed with the Academic Skills Center Director.
- e. The ESA owner is solely responsible for the animal's well-being and cleaning, including but not limited to regular feeding, bathing, grooming, daily care and veterinary services.
- f. Dogs as ESAs must be "housebroken" and cats as ESAs must be litterbox trained. An owner may be required to remove an animal that is not housebroken.
- g. Collars and tags must be worn at all times.
- h. An ESA must be taken out of the building by way of the shortest and most direct path, and must be maintained under standard restraints such as a carrier and/or collar and leash when outdoors, in public areas, or in transit and must be confined to the residence when not in transit.
- i. Animals which constitute a threat or nuisance to staff, residents or property, as determined by Residence Life staff must be removed within seven (7) days of notification. If the Austin College Campus Police personnel determine an animal poses an immediate threat, animal control may be summoned to remove the animal. If the behavior of an animal can be addressed and changed by the owner so the animal does not have to be removed, then a written action plan must be submitted by the owner. The action plan must outline the action to take place to alleviate the problems and also must give a deadline as to the length of time the plan will take to complete. Any action plan must meet the approval of the Dean of Student Life. Any animal owner found not adhering to a removal directive will be subject to disciplinary action.

### 2) **Animal Supervision:**

- a. The ESA must accompany the owner if the owner leaves campus for a prolonged period. The ESA may not be left unattended overnight in the residential facilities to be cared for by another campus resident.
- b. The owner will be required to set up an off-campus, alternative caretaker for the ESA in the event of an emergency that keeps the owner away from campus for a prolonged period of time. The contact information of the alternative caretaker will be filed with campus police.



- c. The designated off-campus emergency contact person indicated will retrieve the animal from campus if the owner is quarantined or isolated on campus for COVID-19 related symptoms.
  - d. When ESAs are left unattended in a student's room, they are required to be stored in a crate, carrier, kennel, or other appropriate enclosure. This containment will allow Austin College personnel to routinely access the residential facilities for maintenance and other routine tasks without posing a risk to the animal or Austin College staff.
  - e. The owner will hold Austin College blameless in the event the ESA goes missing. Austin College staff are not responsible for the retrieval of the ESA in the event the animal escapes or becomes lost.
- 3) **Injury, Cleanup, Damage:**
- a. The handler is responsible for any damage or injuries caused by their animal and must take appropriate precautions to prevent property damage or injury.
  - b. The handler is solely responsible for cleaning up after the ESA. If the handler is not physically able to clean up after the animal, it is the handler's responsibility to hire someone to conduct this task.
  - c. Animal waste must be immediately disposed of properly by the owner. It is the owner's responsibility to dispose of litter box contents and any solid animal waste in a plastic bag, and then place that bag in the garbage dumpsters outside of the residence. Animal feces may not be disposed of in any trash receptacle or through the sewer system inside any building on the Austin College campus.
  - d. Residents with cats must properly maintain litter boxes. In consideration of health of the cat and occupants of the residence, cat litter box contents must be disposed of properly and regularly.
  - e. If living on campus with an ESA, the handler's residence may be inspected for fleas, ticks, pests, and/or other damage as needed. The Student Life Office will schedule the inspection and notify the resident of the scheduled inspection. If fleas, ticks, or other pests are detected through inspection, the residence hall will be treated in accordance with college pest control procedures. The handler will be billed for the expense of any necessary pest control treatment.
  - f. If living on campus with an ESA, the handler will be financially responsible for expenses incurred above a standard cleaning or for repairs to the residential premises, including losses, liability, and claims.
- 4) **Restricted Areas:**
- a. The ESA will remain in the ESA owner's assigned campus room and is not permitted in other students' rooms or the common areas of the residential facilities, or in other areas of Austin College such as classrooms, academic buildings, administrative buildings, libraries, dining services areas, fitness center, etc.



## Penalties for Improper Use of Assistance Animals

Section 121.006 of the Texas State Policy identifies penalties for improper use of Assistance Animals:

- 1) A person who uses a service animal with a harness or leash of the type commonly used by persons with disabilities who use trained animals, in order to represent that his or her animal is a specially trained service animal when training has not in fact been provided, is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction shall be punished by:
  - a) a fine of not more than \$300; and
  - b) 30 hours of community service to be performed for a governmental entity or nonprofit organization that primarily serves persons with visual impairments or other disabilities, or for another entity or organization at the discretion of the court, to be completed in not more than one year.
- 2) A person who habitually abuses or neglects to feed or otherwise neglects to properly care for his or her assistance animal is subject to seizure of the animal under Subchapter B, Chapter [821](#), Health and Safety Code.



### **Agreement to Abide by ESA Policy**

I have submitted a copy of my emotional support animal's up-to-date veterinary health documentation, including proof of immunization and spay/neuter record, to be kept on file in the Academic Skills Center. I have read the policy pertaining to emotional support animals and understand that I may be asked to remove my animal from Austin College for non-compliance with policies and procedures outlined within.

I understand it is my responsibility to communicate any relevant changes regarding my ESA agreement (i.e., roommate change, room change, updates to vaccinations, etc.)

I agree to have the emergency contact person I indicated to retrieve my animal from campus in the event of an emergency as outlined in this policy and in the policy updates on the Access Services webpage. I understand that my animal must be removed from campus if I am quarantined or isolated on campus for COVID-19 related symptoms.

I understand I will need to re-apply for an ESA each academic year and re-application paperwork will be accepted through the last day of class day of each spring semester.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Director, Academic Skills Center: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



LIMITED RELEASE OF INFORMATION

STUDENT NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby authorize AUSTIN COLLEGE ACADEMIC SKILLS CENTER to RECEIVE medical and/or mental health information and/or records regarding diagnosis and treatment, for the College to determine whether student qualifies for an accommodation request.

RELEASE TO/RECEIVE FROM \_\_\_\_\_ (NAME OF REFERRING PHYSICIAN, MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDER, DIAGNOSTICIAN)

The information may be provided:  by phone  by fax  by mail  by email
Contact information of above-named medical professional: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that electronic mail (email) is not confidential and can be intercepted and read by other people.

Information to be provided:  Attendance/Dates of service  Diagnosis  Treatment plan/goals
 Treatment Summary  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Is there any medical and/or mental health information that you do not wish to be released?  Yes  No

If so, what? \_\_\_\_\_

- I understand that I have a right to receive a copy of this authorization.
I understand that any cancellation, modification, or revocation of this authorization must be in writing.
I understand that I have the right to revoke this authorization at any time unless Austin College Academic Skills Center has taken action in reliance upon it.
I understand that it is my responsibility to confirm receipt by Austin College Academic Skills Center of any cancellation, modification, or revocation.
I further understand that information used or disclosed pursuant to this authorization may be subject to re-disclosure by the recipient and may no longer be protected by the HIPAA Privacy Rule, although applicable Texas law may protect such information. In consideration of this consent, I hereby release the source of the records from all liability arising there-from.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ CONSENT to the release of information \_\_\_\_\_
(Signature of student) (Date)

EFFECTIVE TIME PERIOD. This authorization is valid for 1 year from the date signed unless another date is specified below.

Only complete this box if you wish to withdraw permission to release information.
I, \_\_\_\_\_, wish to withdraw my consent to release information on \_\_\_\_\_.
(Signature of student) (Date)



**VERIFICATION/REQUEST FORM FOR EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMAL (ESA)**

**Part I: To be completed by student:**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed ESA Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Type of Animal: \_\_\_\_\_ Age of Animal: \_\_\_\_\_

Residence Hall & Room #: \_\_\_\_\_

Off-Campus Emergency Contact Name/Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
(will care for the animal in case of emergency)

I authorize Austin College to receive information from my provider named herein \_\_\_\_\_  
I authorize my provider to discuss my condition(s) with appropriate and qualified Austin College personnel on an as-needed basis.  
Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Attach additional paper if this space is not adequate

**Part II: To be completed by health care provider as described below:**

A licensed clinical professional/health care provider who fills out this form must be familiar with the history and functional limitations of the above-named student.<sup>1</sup>

Complete this form as thoroughly as possible so we may better evaluate the request for this accommodation. Austin College personnel will contact the above-named health care professional if more information is needed:

How long have you treated \_\_\_\_\_ Date of initial contact \_\_\_\_\_ Date of last office visit  
or counseled student? \_\_\_\_\_ with student: \_\_\_\_\_ with student: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. Specific disability/disorder (DSM-V), including when student was first diagnosed, severity, and current symptoms:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 2. Identify the specific limitations/impairment caused by the disability and how this substantially limits one or more major life activities for this student:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup>The provider completing the form cannot be a relative of the student.  
<sup>2</sup>42 U.S.C. § 3604(f)(3)(B)





3. Explain how the accommodation of an ESA is necessary for the individual to use and enjoy campus housing<sup>2</sup>:

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4. Identify any other accommodations that may be effective in allowing use and enjoyment of housing. If applicable, indicate any mitigating measures that have been tried, or are currently being used, and how they alleviate or eliminate limitations:

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5. Have you discussed the responsibilities associated with properly caring for an animal while engaged in typical college activities and residing in campus housing? Do you believe those responsibilities might exacerbate the student's symptoms in any way?

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6. Has the proposed ESA undergone any specific training?

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7. Have you discussed with the student, the importance of reading and understanding the College policy on ESAs?

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**Name of Treating Professional:** \_\_\_\_\_

**License #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Treating Professional:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Return Form to:**  
Director, Academic Skills Center  
900 North Grand, Ste. 61544  
Sherman, TX 75090  
Office: (903) 813-2454  
Fax: (903) 813-2038  
Email: asc@austincollege.edu

<sup>1</sup>The provider completing the form cannot be a relative of the student.  
<sup>2</sup>42 U.S.C. § 3604(f)(3)(B)

## Appendix E

To: Faculty of **ID #**  
 From: Director of the Academic Skills Center  
 Date:  
 Re: Academic Accommodations

**This Information is Confidential**

This student provided documentation that supports recommended accommodations in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The following accommodations are recommended for this student:

**Classroom accommodations**

- Note-sharing                       Computer for in-class note-taking
- Audio recording of class lecture
- Extra time for work assigned to be completed during class meeting time
- No penalty for misspellings on in-class writing assignments
- Advance and/or additional access to audio/visual materials
- Interpreter               Front-row seating
- Textbooks in audio format (qualified students will arrange for this service w/ASC but will need books in advance)
- Other:

**\*Exam accommodations**

*\*Exam accommodations apply to in-class, timed settings;  
 Students will verify exam arrangements with professor/ASC one week prior to each test*

- 1 ½ extra time on exams & quizzes               double time for exams & quizzes
- Distraction-reduced test environment
- Use of Computer to type test responses               Use of Assistive Technology for exams
- Other:

**Additional recommendations & comments:**

**COURSES FOR WHICH ACCOMMODATIONS ARE REQUESTED:**

1. <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/> Course/Professor	2. <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/> Course/Professor	3. <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/> Course/Professor
4. <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/> Course/Professor	5. <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/> Course/Professor	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/> Course/Professor

This student has been encouraged to discuss the academic adjustments listed above with you. We welcome your input and questions regarding academic services and accessibility.

<sup>1</sup>The provider completing the form cannot be a relative of the student.  
<sup>2</sup>42 U.S.C. § 3604(f)(3)(B)



## Appendix F

### Contract of Agreement for Testing Procedures

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to the following terms and conditions for exam scheduling/administration through the Academic Skills Center.

#### Scheduling Policy for Exams

- I understand that it is my responsibility to discuss testing accommodations with my professors at least one (1) week before the scheduled exam.
- I understand that, if possible, my professor and I may arrange for testing accommodations to be provided within the classroom, office or other location designated by my professor.
- I understand that if any professor is unable to provide appropriate accommodations in her/his office, classroom or other designated location, I may make arrangements with the Academic Skills Center provided I give required notice.
- The following guidelines are the minimum standard to obtain testing accommodations in the Academic Skills Center. (We encourage you to schedule your exams as early as possible).

*Students must make arrangements with the ASC & course professor to reserve a space for testing accommodations one (1) week before each exam.*

- I understand that if I do not meet this deadline with the ASC, it is my responsibility to make individual testing arrangements with my professor. The professor may not be able to provide an accommodation without being provided the required notice per policy.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to notify the Academic Skills Center if tests are cancelled, changed, or if I decide not to use the Academic Skills Center for a particular exam. I will work with both the professor and the ASC to arrange an alternate test time/date.
- I understand it is my responsibility to complete any forms or procedures required to set up my own testing accommodations and I will not ask others, including my professors, to do this for me.

#### Testing Regulations

- I understand that if I arrive more than 20 minutes late for a scheduled exam administered through the ASC. I may not be allowed to take the exam so the office can remain on schedule with room reservations. In this case, I will go to the classroom to take the exam with the other students or I will speak with my professor to discuss the possibility of rescheduling the exam. If I begin my exam late (up to 20 minutes), the number of minutes will be deducted from the time allotted from the exam. I will still need to complete my exam by the originally scheduled completion time.
- I understand that I must abide by the Academic Integrity Policy of Austin College.
- I understand that I will be asked to leave my belongings, including bags, jackets, electronic devices, etc., outside of the testing room.
- I understand that I must ask permission before leaving the ASC testing area once my exam begins.

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Student Signature



## Appendix G

### Access Services

#### Procedures for Using Accommodations in College

- UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE OF THE ACCOMMODATION REQUEST FORM THAT IS GIVEN TO YOUR FACULTY
  - APPROPRIATE METHODS TO DISCUSS ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS WITH PROFESSORS
    - discuss this form with your faculty so that mutual understandings can be made and good working relationships can be gained
    - If you have testing accommodations, ask what to expect when there is a quiz or pop quiz in their class. How will your accommodations be managed?
    - How will tests be conducted during this time of social distancing?
    - If you plan to take a test in the ASC and space is not available at your specified testing time, ask your professor for approval to adjust the test time.
    - Ask each professor to clarify any expectations and make sure you understand your responsibilities.
  - DISCLOSE WHAT FEELS COMFORTABLE ABOUT YOUR DISABILITY
    - Your diagnosis is not indicated on the accommodation request form.
      - explain how your learning differences are manifested in the classroom and what compensatory strategies you use to cope.
      - Encourage your professor to communicate with you, or the ASC Director, about your individual needs.
- DISCUSS POLICIES FOR REQUESTING/RECEIVING SERVICES
  - EACH SEMESTER
    - Accommodation request forms must be filled out with the Director at the beginning of each semester.
    - Be sure to fill out a new accommodation request form for any course you add during the semester.
  - ONE WEEK NOTICE REQUIRED TO SET UP CLASSROOM & TEST ACCOMMODATIONS
    - One-week advance notice allows faculty/staff to make arrangements to accommodate your needs.
    - Without adequate notice given by the student, faculty/staff may elect not grant the accommodation
    - ASC & Professors require a week's notice from you when scheduling test accommodations; this will help us manage social distancing appropriately
  - REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS
    - Accommodations are aimed at providing access to educational programs.
    - You have a right to request a specific form of accommodation, but the College may offer another effective form instead.
    - If your instructor is concerned that an academic accommodation may alter or otherwise compromise the integrity of the course requirements, we may discuss alternative and reasonable solutions with you.
    - If you are receiving note-taking assistance initial here to indicate receipt of AC NOTE TAKING ASSISTANCE FORM.AUDIO RECORDING FORM:
- DISABILITY SERVICES POLICY HANDBOOK ON ASC WEBSITE
- ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
  - As a student registered for ADA services, you are representing all others enrolled in our access services program. You will agree to maintain academic integrity and honesty when testing in the ASC, classroom, or remote setting to be academically honest.

## Appendix H

### Lecture Recording Agreement Form Access Services Program WCC 211, 903-813-2454 asc@austincollege.edu

Students with disabilities who are unable to take or read notes have the right to audio record class lectures for their personal study only.<sup>1</sup> Recording lectures is a reasonable accommodation for students whose documentation calls for this accommodation.

#### Policy for Recording Lectures

Students must seek the permission of their instructor before using any audio recording devices to record lectures, discussions, etc. If such permission is granted, neither the resulting recordings nor any form of copies of transcripts of the recordings may be used for any other purpose than as a replacement for notes taken in class. Permission to make recordings will not be withheld if such recordings are reasonably necessary to accommodate a student's disability as defined by law. Students with disabilities who require this accommodation must sign the Recording Lectures Agreement Form before the start of the course and prior to recording.

#### Conditions of Agreement

Students that are eligible to record class lectures must agree to the following terms:

- Students will agree to abide by the Policy for Recording Lectures.
- Students will not copy or share audio recordings with anyone, except for a transcriber who may be required to type it if needed for the accommodation. Lectures recorded for educational purposes may not be shared with other people without the consent of the lecturer. Information contained in the recorded lecture is protected under federal copyright laws and may not be published or quoted without the consent of the lecturer and without giving proper identity and credit to the lecturer.
- At the conclusion of the course, the student will erase audio recordings from all the classes or return the recordings to the instructor, whichever the instructor prefers.

I have read and understand the above policy on recording lectures at Austin College, and I agree to abide by this policy with regards to any lectures I record. The student code of conduct will cover any violations of this agreement.

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Student Name (Please Print)

Student Signature

Date

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I give my permission for this student to record lectures in my course \_\_\_\_\_ during the term of \_\_\_\_\_ under the conditions described above.

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Faculty Name (Please Print)

Faculty Signature

Date

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<sup>1</sup> Code of Federal Regulation 34CFR104.44 (b) for Section 504: Other rules. A recipient to which this subpart applies may not impose upon handicapped students other rules, such as the prohibition of tape recorders in classrooms or of guide dogs in campus buildings, that have the effect of limiting the participation of handicapped students in the recipient's education program of activity.



## Appendix I

### Procedures for Students with Approved Accommodations: Note-Sharing

#### Volunteer In-Class Note Taker

\_\_\_\_\_ Austin College uses volunteer students to share notes from class.

initials

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that note-sharing assistance is NOT a substitute for attending class and another person's notes should be used as a supplement to my own notes.

initials

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that the note-sharer's notes will only include the notated information from the lecture portion of the course.

initials

initials

\_\_\_\_\_ I will ask another student in my class to share notes with me.

initials

\_\_\_\_\_ You do not need to indicate you are using this as an accommodation. You may offer to exchange phone numbers so that you can study together or exchange other information regarding your class.

initials

\_\_\_\_\_ When I photocopy other students notes in the Copy Center located in the campus mail center on the 1st floor of the Wright Campus Center, the ASC will pay for my copies. I will present my campus ID to the mail center so they can verify I am approved to copy on the ASC account.

initials

\_\_\_\_\_ If I have difficulty locating a volunteer to share notes, I will

initials

- talk to my professor and ask for advice or assistance in locating a note-sharer and;
- inform the ASC Director as soon as possible by calling 903-813-2454 or emailing [asc@austincollege.edu](mailto:asc@austincollege.edu)



## Appendix J

### SAMPLE EMAIL FOR TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

#### Scheduling Email

*(send at least 1 week prior to test)*

To: {Insert professor Email}

CC: {Laura Ramsey at the Academic Skills Center or asc@austincollege.edu}

Subject: Test Accommodations

Professor **{insert name}**,

I'd like to use my testing accommodations for the exam scheduled for {insert course name / number} on **{insert date}**. I'd like to take the exam in the Academic Skills Center at **{insert time arranged}**. Please let me know if there are any issues with me taking the exam at that time. The ASC will need the Exam Accommodation Instruction Form. I have included the link for your convenience:

<http://www.austincollege.edu/campus-life/academic-skills-center/exam-accommodation-instruction/>

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

{Insert Your Name}



## Appendix K

### Austin College Access Services Agreement and Receipt Form

I understand that I am encouraged to discuss my **Academic Accommodation Form** with my professors to ask and answer any questions related to my accommodations in their class. I will work with each professor to understand best methods to utilize these accommodations in their class. I will inform the ASC Director when and if I need assistance in setting up or utilizing my approved accommodations.

I acknowledge the receipt of the following intake forms verifying my approved accommodations for this semester and all other forms related to my accommodations and services.:

- Accommodation Form
- Test Contract Form
- Access Services Procedures for Using Accommodations in College Form
- Procedures for Students with Students Using Audio Recording & Note Sharing Form

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_





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Academic Skills Center