

**American University of Central Asia**  
**Student Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Policy**

Task group:

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### **General Terms**

This Policy assumes that success in college or higher academic institutions is largely up to the students, thus, accommodations are not provided to change course syllabi or requirements for particular students but only to provide supports and reasonable modifications of the format of course materials for eligible students with the approval of the responsible faculty.

American University of Central Asia declares its adherence to principles of accessibility of physical environment, under which the University has undertaken key steps of making AUCA environment accessible for all groups of individuals without discrimination. AUCA campus as well as its organization culture are built to be accessible to all groups and individuals.

### **Eligibility for Services and General Procedure**

If a student is enrolled in one or more courses at AUCA and has a disability that limits students' access to the classroom or ability to fully engage into the class materials that affects academic achievement, the student may be eligible for academic accommodations.

If the student seeks academic accommodations or adjustments, they must contact and register with Academic Advising Office as a student seeking accommodations. The Advising Office is the entity that approves and coordinates academic accommodations on campus.

The student (usually in the beginning of the freshman year) must initially complete an Accommodations Request and meet with an Advising Office staff member. Eligibility is based on information gathered during this initial meeting, past educational experiences and accommodations, and disability documentation. The documentation must be current, provide a clear diagnosis by the appropriate medical professional, and specify the functional limitations in an academic setting related to the disability. Prior to proceeding with determination of the accommodations, Advising Office staff might request the student to provide additional documentation from providers, recommended by AUCA.

General eligibility criteria include but are not limited to: physical disability including, neurological conditions, sense organ impairments, musculoskeletal impairments, emotional or mental illnesses, respiratory conditions, digestive ailments, learning disabilities, organic brain syndromes.

## **Documentation Guidelines**

Students who request academic accommodations from AUCA must provide diagnostic information regarding their disability. The information is useful in determining accommodations. We ask students to provide the most current documentation of their disability, which should include some or all of the below listed items:

- A letter from a treatment provider that identifies the diagnosis and current treatment plan
- A psychological or neuropsychological evaluation upon necessity, conducted by a professional psychiatrist or psychologist qualified in diagnosis
- Additional treatment reports and evaluations related to the disability that may help to assess the accommodation requirements.

AUCA reserves the right to request reassessment or additional updated documentation when questions arise regarding previous assessment or previous service provision. Reassessment can be requested by the Advising Office representative upon initial meeting with the student when the documents provided by the student are outdated, incomplete, or contain obvious mistakes or inconsistencies. AUCA and Office for Advising have a right to recommend to student trusted providers who could complete or update the initial documentation. AUCA declares no conflict of interest related to medical referrals and recommendations made to students requesting accommodations.

## **Accommodations Committee**

Upon initial consultation with Advising Office, the student can request a meeting of Accommodations Committee to determine specific accommodations. The Accommodations Committee is an entity which meets upon necessity and is comprised of the following representatives on a case-by-case basis: Advising Office representative or Head, Medical Office representative, and the faculty member teaching the course. The applying student is expected to attend the meeting or a section of the meeting. Students' parents can attend the meeting with the Committee's approval. Specialists of CTLT might be included or consulted in order to help faculty and students modify course content to accommodate it to particular students' needs. Staff of Counseling Service can be included or consulted *upon request of the student*, in cases of their familiarity with the student's difficulties. Relevant academic Department Chair can be included into the meeting upon necessity.

### ***Decision process and decision effectivity***

The decision of whether or not to grant any accommodations is made solely by the Accommodations Committee. The list of accommodations granted in each case is approved only by the Committee. The approval of requested accommodations might be made in a course of more than one meeting of the Committee, based on the necessity to clarify the appropriateness of requested accommodations. All faculty and students are expected to trust the Committee's judgement and final decision.

The members of the Committee are to keep the information on the students requesting accommodations strictly confidential.

Accommodations Committee has the right to refuse to provide specific accommodations if:

- The request is not made within the timeline and procedures as specified in this handbook.

- It constitutes a substantial change or alteration to an essential part of an academic program or course.
- It poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others.
- It poses undue financial hardship on the University.
- The faculty member has not been duly notified.

## **Rights and Responsibilities of Students**

A student with a disability has the right to:

- Appropriate confidentiality of all information related to his/her disability, such as inclusion of only necessary AUCA staff in the decision process and appropriate storage of the obtained information
- Equal access to courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities available through the University
- Receive reasonable accommodations according to his/her disability, determined on an individualized basis using required documentation

A student with a disability is responsible to:

- Disclose their disability and provide documentation regarding their disability from an appropriate health care professional to the Advising Office
- Complete the Accommodations Request Form and request the meeting with the Accommodations Committee in a timely manner request
- Meet with faculty to discuss disability-related needs and accommodations
- Treat all university personnel with respect
- Meet the appropriate course requirements

## **Rights and Responsibilities of the Faculty:**

Faculty members have a right to:

- Fully determine each course content and general methods of teaching
- Ensure that the standards in course(s) are not lowered or compromised for particular students
- Ensure that a student has demonstrated mastery of the essential requirements of a course in order to obtain an appropriate grade
- Grade fairly any student if he/she does not demonstrate mastery of essential course requirements, including students on accommodation plans
- Question a specific accommodation request if it is either inappropriate for their course, or if the nature of the request would alter the essential requirements of a course.
- Request training and consultation from CTLT on syllabus design, multi modal methods to present classroom materials, in-class technology use, variety of assignment options to cover diverse learning needs

However, faculty members are responsible for determination of possible accommodations for each class they are teaching based on the following guidelines:

- *What are the learning objectives and activities (individual/group projects, field trips, presentation) of the course? Are they clearly stated? Where?*
- *What do the course description and syllabus state about the learning process, instructional methods, and student participation?*
- *Does the fundamental nature of the course rely upon student participation as an essential method for learning? How?*
- *To what degree does a student's failure to participate constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of other students in the class?*

- *Do student contributions (e.g., presentations) during the class constitute a significant component of the learning process?*
  - *Is there classroom interaction between the instructor and students? Between/among students?*
  - *How are student achievement and mastery of the course objectives demonstrated? How are they measured? Are there alternative measures that would be acceptable to you?*
  - *How is the final course grade calculated? Are there alternative methods of calculating the final grade that would be acceptable to you?*
  - *Is this course a prerequisite for other courses? Is this course based on prerequisite courses? Are there alternative courses that would meet the student's course of study requirements?*
- Consult the specialists of Advising Office and CTLT on the most appropriate ways to adapt your course to the needs of a particular student without violating the confidentiality of a specific student.

As a faculty member, you are responsible for:

- Trusting/acknowledging that students who are cleared by Accommodations Committee have provided adequate and appropriate documentation of their disability from a registered health care professional; accommodations are based on this documentation.
  - Respecting confidentiality with regards to the specifics of a student's disability and/or accommodation(s).
  - Providing course syllabus and all other relevant course material in advance upon request of Accommodations Committee
  - Understanding that some students with disabilities have academic or behavior problems that are not related to their disabilities. Faculty members are not obligated to treat such problems differently than they would for a non-disabled student
  - Enforce the Code of Student Conduct equally for all students
  - Making the course syllabus available to students as soon as possible
  - Including into syllabi the information to students about university policy related to academic accommodations and encourage them to discuss these accommodations with the Advising.
- Examples of syllabus statements are:

- *AUCA is committed to providing reasonable academic accommodations for all students with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the Advising Office to discuss needed accommodations.*
- *Your success in this class is important to me. If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we may work together to develop strategies for adapting assignments to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.*
- *AUCA Academic Advising Office provides resources for students with disabilities. You will need to provide documentation of disability to them in order to receive official university services and accommodations.*

## **Available Accommodations**

**Accommodations** are defined as any reasonable adjustment required for a student to have equal access to the university's programs and activities, inside or outside the classroom. Examples of potential accommodations include:

- Extended time for completion of exams or other assignments for a student with a learning disability
- Ability to use speech-to-text software for a student with dysgraphia
- Provision of a private, distraction-free testing environment for a student with attention-related problems (Attention Deficit (and Hyperactivity) Disorder)
- A class being moved to a space accessible to a student with a specific mobility impairment
- Provision of air conditioning for a residential student with a respiratory condition
- Permitting a visually impaired student to bring his or her service animal to class.
- Providing scheduling options by offering course at various times of the day and for differing lengths of time
- Designing course profile at e-course (Moodle platform) that can include a complete syllabus in electronic format, daily class notes, streaming video of instructor lectures, etc.
- Providing multiple ways of demonstrating learning through take-home exams, papers, group work, presentations, etc.

Accommodations within AUCA do not include:

- Substantial modifications to academic standards,
- Personal aids/devices,
- Modification or adjustment of requirements essential to any program of instruction, program or activity, or essential to any directly related licensing requirement, or
- Modifications or adjustments that result in undue hardship, considering the nature, cost, and impact of the accommodation, and other factors.

## Accommodations Request Form

1. Your name \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_
3. Department within AUCA/major \_\_\_\_\_
4. Year of study:    Freshmen    Sophomore    Junior    Senior
5. List of courses you are requesting accommodations for. Please include the course codes. (Please be informed that specific accommodations will be determined separately for each course:)
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)
  - f)
5. Reasons for requesting accommodations: please describe the nature of your disability and mention specific diagnoses, if any. (Please attach supporting documents.)

Responsibility statement: Please be informed that student takes responsibility for requesting the accommodations from AUCA. Student takes full responsibility for providing true and sufficient information to the Accommodations Committee.

Confidentiality statement: Please be informed that all information you provide to the Committee and relevant AUCA staff will be kept strictly confidential. We recommend that students minimize disclosure of accommodations-related information to other students.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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