

**Disability Services Student Handbook**  
Virginia Wesleyan University

**The Law**

The policy and intent of Virginia Wesleyan University is to fully and completely comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Virginians with Disabilities Act (VA Code Sec. 51.5.5-41), to the extent that they apply to the University.

As a result, Virginia Wesleyan University will not discriminate against qualified students with a disability in any academic activity, including examinations or any other student-

the University. Certain accommodations are unquestionably within the capabilities of the office and the University and are typical. Other accommodations may require a change in policy, procedure, or place a large financial burden on the University. Such cases must be supported by specific documentation of the student's disability and may require consultation with University officials. Accommodations cannot be applied retroactively to any grades already been given or any past absences.

### **Accommodation Process**

Self-disclosure is the first step in the process of obtaining accommodations. It is the responsibility of the student to make contact with the Disability Services Office. The office will not seek out a particular student with a disability in order to provide him/her accommodations or see if any accommodations are needed. For the Disability Services Office to start an official file for a student, he/she must fill out the Disability Intake Form online. It is upon receipt of this form that the office will then begin to determine whether or not the student is a qualified individual with a disability, defined as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more life activities, and is otherwise qualified to be a student.

Students must provide documentation of their stated disability. Such documentation should be provided by a licensed professional in a field relevant to the condition under question and be no more than four years in age. However, exceptions of the age of the documentation may be made on case-by-case basis with the approval of the Disability Services staff. Disability documentation should provide:

1. A diagnostic statement identifying the condition(s)
2. Testing results
3. Current functional impact of the condition(s)
4. Treatments, medications, assistive devices/services currently prescribed or in use
5. The expected progression or stability of the impacts described over time
6. Recommended accommodations and services

Such documentation is ideal but all elements are not mandatory. For instance, most physicians fail to recommend any specific accommodations for the student. However, all acceptable documentation must give a confirmation of a disability.

Usually, the next step in the accommodation process is to meet with the student in an interactive one-on-one meeting. During this meeting the student and Disability Services staff will discuss what accommodations should be put in place based upon the documentation and what has been helpful for students in the past.

Once these three steps are completed (intake form, documentation, meeting w/student) the office will then create an Authorized Accommodations Form to establish the approved accommodations for the student. In order to create such a plan the student must provide the title, number, section, and name of the instructor of the course(s) in which he or she is requesting accommodation(s). The student will then present the Authorized Accommodations Form to their instructors and get their signature. The student must also sign the form and then return the signed copy to the Disability Services Office where it will be held on file. It is then the responsibility of the student to contact the instructor and discuss with him/her the manner in which the accommodations will be carried out. This process is repeated, at the request of

the student, each semester. Accommodations can also be reviewed at any time during the semester and updated to better fit a student's needs.

It should be noted that Virginia Wesleyan University reserves the right to choose among reasonable accommodations as long as the chosen accommodation is effective. If a student refuses a reasonable accommodation, the University will be deemed to have complied with its obligation under the ADA.

decided on as the route that the University will take, information about the textbooks in question must be gathered. First, the student must supply a copy of a receipt for their purchases. The student must also sign an electronic text usage agreement. Next, the Disability Services Office must identify at least the following information for each text: work's title, ISBN, course it is being used for, and publisher. Useful resources in this process are the bookstore, and amazon.com. After this information is compiled, Disability Services must contact the book's publisher and request an e-text or use a clearinghouse website like Learning Ally, Bookshare or AccessText.

Each publisher is different in how they handle the request of an e-text. If an e-text is available for the book in question then the publisher's instructions to obtain it should be followed. If, the publisher does not have an e-version available, then permission must be obtained from the publisher to convert the text to electronic document. If permission is granted then a hard book must be obtained (it is best to check if the publisher has a complimentary copy available). Once this is done the book binding must be cut, and the pages scanned to create a pdf document. It has proven helpful to enlarge the copies as much as possible to ensure better accuracy in the text recognition process. Once the textbook is in the format of a Word document it has to then be edited against the original copy to ensure that it is compatible with the page numbers in the original format and there are no mistakes with its presentation.

### **Class Substitutions**

Class substitutions for the foreign language and/or math requirements of the





student must make an appointment to meet with the Coordinator of Disability Services. During that appointment, they will review their accommodations and their upcoming class schedule, at which time a new set of Authorized Accommodations Forms will be made for the new classes with the agreed upon accommodations.

### **Grievance Regarding Accessibility**

On occasion a Virginia Wesleyan University student with a documented disability may have a concern or dispute with regard to reasonable accommodations in courses, or else the presence of barriers in attitude, architecture, or communication. If such a concern arises, it is the student's responsibility to present his or her concern to the appropriate faculty or staff member who is involved and request a timely response. The faculty or staff member should listen, give serious attention to the complaint's concern, and attempt to resolve it in a mutually satisfactory way or refer the student to an appropriate office on campus. If the concern cannot be resolved in this manner, it is the student's responsibility to report the unresolved situation to the Disability Services Coordinator. If the concern still cannot be resolved, the Disability Services Coordinator will forward the concern to the chair of the Disability Awareness Committee, who will direct a grievance subcommittee to review the concern and determine appropriate action within a reasonable amount of time. The Vice President of Academic Affairs will review matters involving the academic program, curriculum, and faculty members beforehand. If the concern involves the Disability Services Coordinator, the student should contact the Director of Human Resources directly. Any complaint and its outcomes are recorded in the student's Disability Services confidential file and will be held for a time of 7 years past the date the student leaves the University.

## Definitions

**Disability**



