



Student Accessibility Center
Office Contact Information
930 Claremont Avenue
Ashland, OH 44805

Student Accessibility Center Handbook

Phone Numbers

Voice: 419-289-5904

Fax: 419-289-5294

Ohio Relay: dial 711

Hours of Operation

Monday-Friday | 8:00AM-4:00PM

Staff Contact Information

Staff	Email Address
Julie Donatini – <i>Director</i>	jdonatin@ashland.edu
Jackie Holmes – <i>Testing Coordinator</i>	jholme12@ashland.edu

This handbook provides students, course instructors, and staff a comprehensive overview of policies, procedures and accommodations coordinated by the Student Accessibility Center (SAC). If you have any questions, or would prefer the handbook in an alternative format, please contact us. To use an accommodation, students must first be approved by the SAC. If your needs or circumstances change, you can communicate with the SAC to explore adjustments to your approved accommodations.

University Commitment

Ashland University, in accordance with applicable Federal and State laws and university policy, does not discriminate based on disability. Equal educational opportunity is required by federal and state law, including the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. Individuals seeking reasonable accommodation for academic programs should contact the SAC.

General Policy

The SAC collaborates with students, instructors, staff, and community members to create usable, equitable, inclusive and sustainable learning environments. SAC determines eligibility for services and reasonable accommodations through a collaborative process between the student, instructor and SAC staff. Our services are designed to encourage independence, backed by a comprehensive system of support. Students are expected to communicate their accommodations to their instructors. In

instances where the student requests are met with questions or concerns regarding provision or appropriateness of the recommended accommodations, SAC staff will communicate directly with the instructor.

Confidentiality and Release of Information

The Student Accessibility Center (SAC) is committed to ensuring that all information and communication pertaining to a student's disability is maintained as confidential as required or permitted by law. The following guidelines about the treatment of such information have been adopted by SAC and will be shared with students. These guidelines incorporate relevant state and federal regulations

1. No one will have immediate access to student files in SAC except the appropriate staff of SAC.
2. Any information regarding a disability is considered confidential and will be shared only with others within the university who have a legitimate educational interest.
2. This information is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
3. Sensitive information in SAC student files will not be released except in accordance with federal and state laws.
4. A student's file may be released pursuant to a court order or subpoena.
5. If a student wishes to have information about his/her disability shared with others outside the University, the student must provide written authorization to the SAC Director to release the information. Before giving such authorization, the student should understand the purpose of the release and to whom the information is being released. The student should also understand that there may be occasions when the Director will share information with institutional personnel regarding a student's disability at his/her discretion if circumstances necessitate the sharing of information and the Director has determined that there is an appropriate legitimate educational interest involved.
6. A student has the right to review his/her own SAC file with reasonable notification.

Eligibility for Accommodations

All students with disabilities who are interested in attending Ashland University must complete the admission process prior to accessing SAC services.

Any otherwise qualified student with a documented disability may be eligible to receive accommodations through SAC. In order to access SAC services, a student must (a) be either currently enrolled at AU or admitted to AU and about to attend; and (b) complete the intake and registration process with SAC.

The purpose of accommodations is to reduce or eliminate any barriers to access to or use of educational courses, campus services or programs that exist because of an individual's disability. The law does not require SAC to waive specific courses or

academic requirements considered essential to a particular program or degree. Accommodations that do not fundamentally alter a course or program are made on a case-by-case basis. Students who request accommodations must self-identify and provide appropriate verification of their disability. Eligibility for reasonable accommodations will be determined on an individual basis.

Documentation of a Disability

To verify disability and its severity, and to determine appropriate accommodations, the SAC reviews clinical documentation and the student's self-report. All documentation is reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and accommodations are determined through an interactive process. Submitting evidence of a diagnosis alone may not meet the standard of a disabling condition or be sufficient to warrant accommodations. All accommodation recommendations must be logically related to the student's functional limitations based on evidence from the documentation/information submitted by the student. The SAC reserves the right to request updated documentation and/or additional documentation to support specific accommodations.

Professionals Who Can Provide Clinical Documentation

- The provider must have comprehensive training and experience in the relevant specialty and hold appropriate licensure and/or certification
- The provider must be familiar with the history and functional limitations of the student's condition and provide detailed information about the substantial nature and level of the impairment and its impact on major life activities
- It is recommended that the documentation provided is not from a family member or someone with a personal relationship with the student or student's family

Relevant Documentation

- Documentation must reflect the status of the student's current functional limitations
- Typically, diagnoses with no anticipated fluctuation of functional limitations require a current report.
- Typically, diagnoses that may change or are considered episodic, require updated documentation every 6 months to a year.

Documentation Guidelines

Documentation should include:

- A specific medical diagnosis, including present symptoms, their duration, and severity
- A discussion of relevant developmental, historical, and familial information
- Objective measures used to determine diagnosis (attach results)

- Description of the student's presenting impairment and its substantial impact on major life functions in an educational environment
- Rationale for recommended accommodation(s) that is logically related to functional limitation(s), based on evidence from the clinical evaluation
- Duration in which the student has been under the clinician's care and date of last contact
- Recommendations for accommodations in post-secondary academic environment can be helpful if they include a clear rationale. Each recommendation should be based on interview, observation, and/or testing and correlated with both the diagnosis and the student's functional limitations. **NOTE:** Test anxiety alone is not a disability.

If the documentation which has been submitted does not contain sufficient information to determine appropriate accommodations, the student will be contacted by the SAC.

Supporting Documentation

The qualified evaluator's report, while necessary, is by no means the only documentation we can use to better understand and accommodate the student. Other helpful documents include records of previous accommodation, high school 504 plans or IEP's, previous medical evaluations, report cards, transcripts, and parent, teacher, tutor, therapist or employer reports. SAC reserves the right to access student transcripts (e.g. classes taken and grades earned at AU) for evaluation purposes.

How to Request Accommodations

1. Review your syllabi at the beginning of the semester. Look at the requirements of each of your classes and consider your disability-related needs. Some accommodations may not be necessary for every class.
2. Email your accommodation letter to your instructors. Remember, accommodations are not retroactive, so be sure to generate your letters as early in the semester as possible.
3. Contact your instructors. In this conversation, you do not need to disclose the specific nature of your disability.
4. Keep in touch. Communicate promptly with your instructors throughout the semester as accommodation needs arise. Do not wait until days or weeks after you have an accommodation need. If you have any questions or run into any issues in this process, contact SAC promptly, as needs arise.

SAC Code of Student Conduct

To best serve our students, the Student Accessibility Center staff expects everyone to be courteous and appropriate to one another. Profanity, aggression (verbal or physical),

threats, yelling, slamming doors or items, failing to comply with the Student Accessibility Center guidelines, etc. are considered unacceptable and disruptive. Offending persons will be asked to leave the center immediately, and Safety Services will be contacted.

Disruptive and disorderly conduct or failure to comply with the guidelines and expectations of the university's Code of Student Conduct and the Student Accessibility Center, may result in contacting the Office of Student Conduct and campus security. The same general expectations of behavior apply to all students, including those with disabilities. Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center must adhere to the policies and guidelines stated in the Code of Student Conduct. These policies apply to academic and non-academic behavior on and off campus. To refer to the Code of Student Conduct, please visit the website of the Office of Student Conduct at www.ashland.edu/student-conduct.

Helpful Hints for Initiating and Using Accommodations

1. Meet 1-on-1 with your professor.

It is recommended that you request a one-on-one meeting (in-person or online) with your professors or visit during office hours early in the semester to discuss accommodations and provide professors with your Accommodation Letter. Students taking online classes should email the Accommodation Letter to their professors and may want to ask their professors for a phone conference meeting.

2. Remember to be specific.

When meeting with the professor, make specific accommodation requests. **You do not need to disclose the nature of your disability to your professor.** If you are uncomfortable identifying your disability, keep the conversation focused on the accommodations for which you are eligible.

3. Maintain communication:

- With the SAC – schedule follow-up appointments as needed.
- With professors - stay in contact throughout the semester and provide reminders of planned accommodations, such as scheduled tests in the SAC or other distraction reduced testing area.
- Students should immediately alert the SAC and/or their professor if they are having difficulties with any accommodation, service or classes.

Exam Accommodations

Exam accommodations apply to timed quizzes, midterms and finals. More specifically, exam accommodations apply to any timed written assessment designed to be completed in a single sitting and graded for accuracy.

Exam accommodations typically do not apply to lab work, homework/projects, untimed “take-home style” exams, or dissertations.

Exam accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

- Extended time
- Distraction reduced space
- Computer for word processing
- Assistive technology
- Accessible formats (e.g., Braille, Microsoft Word, enlarged print)
- Reader or scribe
- Access to restroom

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center have three options for taking exams (tests/quizzes):

1. Take exams with the class, in the classroom without accommodations.
2. Take exams with accommodations if students and professors agree to a time and place.
3. Schedule and take exams in the SAC Testing Areas.

Scheduling Exams in SAC:

1. Complete the Testing Proctoring Services form (<https://forms.office.com/r/7ABN2GGWzb>) for your upcoming test **at least 3 business days prior to the date of the exam.**
2. Once the form is received, you will receive an Outlook calendar invite for your test. Your instructor will be included in this invite.
3. Make sure your instructor completes the Faculty Test Proctoring Form (<https://forms.office.com/r/gKiuA0nygg>) to give SAC instructions.
4. When it is time for your test, please arrive on time. Students arriving late are responsible for obtaining their instructor’s permission to reschedule.
5. Once your exam is complete, students are required to check out with the testing coordinator.

If you have back-to-back classes, and you have an exam in the first one, schedule your extended time ahead of the standard time for the exam.

If you have three classes in a row, and you have an exam in the middle class, or if you have an evening class, you will need to work with your professor to establish a different time to take your exam to ensure that you receive your extended time or other test accommodations.

Policies for taking exams in the Student Accessibility Center:

Students on the Ashland and Mansfield campuses who are eligible for testing accommodations will be provided with a testing accommodation agreement each semester. The agreement will be reviewed and signed by the student and SAC.

1. Identifying an appropriate time for testing is a shared responsibility between the student and the instructor. Generally, we cannot offer the option of taking an exam outside of the scheduled class time without approval from the instructor. Recognizing scheduling conflicts may arise, SAC will proctor exams at other times upon notification from the instructor.
2. We ask that all exams be scheduled at least three (3) days before the exam date. If we have less than 3 days notice, we may not be able to assure that all aspects of the assigned accommodation can be put in place in a timely fashion. Students should schedule their exam on the same day and time as the rest of the class taking the exam. If you have back-to-back classes, and you have an exam in the first one, schedule your extended time ahead of the standard time for the exam. If you have three classes in a row, and you have an exam in the middle class, or if you have an evening class, you will need to work with your professor to establish a different time to take your exam to ensure that you receive your extended time or other test accommodations.
3. Students must arrive on time for their exams. Students who are unable to make their appointment or arriving late are responsible for obtaining their instructor/professor's permission to reschedule. Missed exams may only be rescheduled with approval from the instructor.
4. Hooded shirts and jackets are permitted with the hood down. No hats or head coverings other than for religious reasons.
5. Cell phones, smartwatches, fitness bands/trackers and all devices with recording, internet, or communication capabilities that are 1) not related to approved accommodations; or 2) are not approved prior to the exam by the instructor for the purposes of the exam; are prohibited in the SAC testing center and private testing rooms. A separate room is provided for storage of these and other personal items (including but not limited to hats, purses, backpacks, food, and drinks other than water) during testing. This policy is in place to protect the student(s) and the integrity of the testing process and will be strictly enforced. Students may also be asked to remove all loose items from their pockets and place them in storage.
6. Students are not allowed to take books, bookbags/backpacks, notes, or any class-related materials into a testing area unless their instructor has provided written permission.
7. Engaging in misconduct and/or possession of prohibited materials will result in dismissal from the Testing Center and reporting of the incident to the instructor.

8. Test Center staff may grant permission for restroom breaks. Testing time does NOT freeze during restroom breaks. If a student leaves the Testing Center for any reason without permission, the exam will be collected. If the student is gone for an unreasonable amount of time, the exam will be collected.
9. Tests may be scheduled during the following times: Monday-Friday between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm. The SAC operates on the university calendar.
10. Students may not share, copy, lend, sell, post or otherwise distribute test material to anyone, including classmates, other students, or the general public.

Online Test Accommodations

- SAC utilizes software (e.g. Blackboard, SPSS, etc.) as needed for exams.
- Unless the class is taking an online exam in a proctored environment, you do not need to take online exams at SAC to receive extended time accommodations.
- Professors should indicate the software needed for exams on the course proctoring instruction form.
- Professors should provide passwords needed via email prior to the exam.

Late Arrivals, No Shows, Rescheduling and Cancellations

By using exam accommodations, you are expected to:

- Arrive on time for your exams. If you arrive more than 15 minutes late for your exam, whether online or paper based, you must either use the remaining time or contact your instructor for authorization to reschedule. There is no guarantee that the instructor will permit a makeup exam. If instructor permission is given to make up an exam at a different time, forward the approval to au-sac@ashland.edu and a staff member will assist you with rescheduling. Contact your SAC if a makeup exam is needed for a disability-related reason.
- If, for any reason, you decide not to take an exam with SAC, you should be sure to email to cancel your exam request.
- If you do not show or contact SAC regarding an absence for a scheduled proctored event, SAC will notify the instructor and direct you to contact them for permission to reschedule. For students approved for Flexible Attendance Policy, the instructor must acknowledge the use of your Flex Plan and the flexibility permitted for the impacted assessment.

Policies Regarding Academic Misconduct

- All testing spaces within SAC Exam Services are monitored via a closed-circuit camera.
- You are NOT permitted to touch/move the proctoring cameras. If you are caught attempting to move a camera, you will be reported to the instructor and a report will be filed.
- A staff member may come into any testing location at any time to perform a random integrity check. Suspected academic misconduct will be documented by SAC and reported to the course instructor. Any unauthorized notes and any scrap paper used during the exam will be copied and returned with the exam to the instructor.

If you are eligible for a Reader on an exam:

- Readers will only read what is on the printed page and cannot be asked to interpret, define, explain or reword questions.
- Readers can be asked to repeat information, so do not hesitate to ask.
- Readers need feedback from you to be effective. Let your reader know what reading tone, rate, etc. works best for you.

If you are eligible for a Scribe on an exam:

- Scribes will write down verbatim what you have dictated. The scribe is **not** responsible for organizing or paraphrasing your thoughts into a final draft.
- Scribes are responsible for general spelling and sentence ending punctuation. You are responsible for directing the scribe for any spelling of specific class related terminology or punctuation within sentences, such as commas, etc.
- At any time, you will have the opportunity to review what the scribe has written either by reading or having it read to you.
- If there are corrections, you will direct the scribe to make them.
- An accommodation for the use of a computer keyboard to type exam answers may be substituted in place of a human Scribe.

Final Exams Policies

- SAC follows the final exam schedule from the university. However, due to space and staffing constraints, your final exam may need to be scheduled at a different time, or on a different day. SAC will work with you and your professor should this become necessary.

- YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR KNOWING YOUR FINAL EXAM SCHEDULE. Please contact SAC if you have any questions about your final exam schedule.

Note-Taking Assistance

Students eligible for note-taking assistance as an accommodation have two options:

Option 1: Technology (audio recorder, Livescribe Smartpen, laptop, etc.)

- Let your professor know you'll be using an audio recorder/Smart pen/etc. Make sure you have provided your professor with your Accommodation Letter.
- Consider placing yourself or the recorder near the front of the room for better audio quality.
- After you no longer need the recording, delete it from your device.

Option 2: Volunteer, in-class note taker

- The notes received from a peer notetaker are supplemental to your own notes.
- You are expected to attend and participate in all classes to the best of your ability and health.
- This accommodation is designed for synchronous (real-time) class meetings. If you are considering being evaluated for a peer notetaker for an asynchronous course, you must contact your SAC first.
- Notify SAC as soon as possible if the note-taker is not fulfilling their duties, or you no longer need assistance.
- Proactive requests are important. You may not receive class notes taken prior to your requesting note-taking services.
- Note: SAC cannot take steps to secure a notetaker for you until you have confirmed your request to use this accommodation.

Attendance Modifications

Generally, students are expected to follow established classroom attendance policies. However, some disabilities are severe and episodic in nature, resulting in the student having to miss class for medical concerns related to their disability. The Flexible Attendance Agreement is intended to be used with students who are registered with the Student Accessibility Center (SAC). This form is a proactive tool for instructors to establish a process for the student to complete missed learning if the need arises. The SAC encourages faculty to be flexible with the attendance policy in these instances; however, you are not required to alter any essential functions of the course. This form is intended to be a working, written plan between the student and the instructor.

When using the Flexible Attendance Accommodation, you are expected to:

- Please be aware that depending on the design of the course, you may have different flex plans for different course components (e.g., lecture, lab, recitation). The flex plan should reflect that, if applicable.
- Only use the flex plan for disability-related acute episodes or essential medical treatment. Absences and missed assignments due to common illnesses, personal conflicts, executive functioning, avoidance coping or other reasons will be held to the standard course policies.
- Communicate promptly (on the day of the flare-up or within 24 hours) with your instructors in the event of a flare-up which impacts a course. The flex plan may not be applicable in situations where you did not give your instructor prompt notice of the flare-up.
- If you go beyond the terms outlined in the flex plan, the standard course policies take effect. Contact both your instructor and your SAC in advance if you suspect that you will not be able to meet the terms of a flex plan. We will work with you and the instructor to determine the best path forward.

Curriculum Modification Policy and Procedure

SAC supports petitions for course substitutions in cases of foreign language, quantitative or other non-major specific course requirements as a reasonable accommodation *if* disability documentation supports the petition *and* if the course(s) in consideration is (are) not essential to your major.

If you choose to initiate a petition, you should adhere to the following procedures:

- Substitutions are not automatically supported for persons who may have had substitutions or waivers of a course requirement from other institutions. If you anticipate needing a substitution, you should begin the process at least a full semester prior to the semester you desire to take the course substitution(s). You are still responsible for fulfilling the credit hours for the course. If the modification is approved, you will be required to take an equivalent class determined by your academic advisor.
- Meet with SAC to review documentation and discuss procedures. There must be evidence in the documentation that the disability has a significant impact on the learning of the coursework in question. Each request is entertained on a case-by-case basis. 2) SAC can provide you with a verification letter in support of your request.
- Complete a Course Substitution and Waiver form, and submit all documentation to your academic advisor. The college – *not* SAC – reviews all curriculum modifications. Although SAC may provide a letter and assist with the application process, the decision ultimately rests with the college or department.

Lab Assistant Accommodations

If you have a lab assistance accommodation contact your lab instructor as soon as you schedule classes in order to provide them with your Accommodation Letter and discuss your need for assistance in the lab. The instructor may be able to arrange for an assistant or help you to make other arrangements in the class. If not, proceed to steps below.

Requesting a lab assistant:

- Contact SAC immediately after scheduling your classes to request an assistant. Let us know the class name and number (e.g. BIO 200, CHEM 122), and the name of the professor for the lab in which you'll need an assistant. Do not wait until a course has begun because there may be a delay or extreme difficulty in locating an assistant.
- SAC will work with your lab instructor to locate a lab assistant for you.
- SAC will send an email to both you and the lab assistant so that you two can discuss logistics.

Absences and Troubleshooting:

- Contact your lab instructor and assistant immediately if you cannot attend a lab session. If you fail to show up twice for a lab and do not inform the assistant ahead of time, the assistant is authorized to discontinue assistance. To reinstate services, you must meet with SAC.
- Contact SAC if you drop the class or no longer need a lab assistant.
- Contact SAC if your lab assistant does not attend lab, does not perform tasks properly or another issue comes up between you and the lab assistant.

Lab assistants will:

- Receive instruction, if needed, regarding your disability-related needs from you and/or SAC.
- Perform only those tasks directed by you. They will NOT prompt or guide you in performing a lab task unless the task is dangerous. You are responsible for all information about actual lab processes and procedures.

Alternative Textbook Formats

The SAC team is responsible for providing course materials in accessible formats.

Course reading materials can be converted to accessible formats for students with print disabilities. These formats could include:

- PDF image or searchable text
- Word document (.doc)
- Rich text format (.rtf)
- Paper enlargements
- Braille (6-month advance notice requested)

Process and Procedures:

- Contact SAC to schedule an Intake meeting to determine accommodations.
- Schedule a training session with the Testing Coordinator if necessary.
- Provide verification of textbook ownership – you can bring in the actual textbooks or send a receipt of purchase to the Testing Coordinator.
- Work with the Testing Coordinator each semester to update your classes and alternative format needs.
- Please check that materials are working and are in the correct format within 24 hours of receipt.

Note: Textbooks assigned by your professors, and additional course materials (including Blackboard articles, recommended texts, etc.) can be converted upon request. We will not convert any supplemental texts not specified by your professors.

Assistive Technology Training

To access training on the use of your assistive technology, students registered with SAC should contact the Testing Coordinator. The Testing Coordinator can provide training on the following assistive technology media:

- Read/Write – read aloud software
- Echo Smart Pens
- Lecture recording methods – digital recording, iPhone or Android recording, etc.

SAC training and support is concentrated on the software and hardware that is available on all student-used computers on campus and the SAC exam environment, but we will do our best, (on a case-by-case basis), to support students' own non-SAC assistive technology that they might bring to those environments. If we are not able to provide sufficient training, support and/or problem resolution for students' other assistive technology, we will provide a workable alternative to ensure a reasonable accommodation scenario using SAC assistive technology. We can assist students with their technology needs for their personal devices in collaboration with IT, but personal assistive technology needs are not SAC's primary responsibility.

Sign Language Interpreting, Transcription and Real Time Captioning

SAC coordinates interpreting and/or transcribing services for registered students who are D/deaf or hard of hearing, and request this accommodation.

Interpreting/Transliterating – SAC works in collaboration with area Organizations to provide a team of American Sign Language Interpreters who will interpret/transliterate all academic related activities. Students requesting this accommodation should contact SAC for more details.

Transcription Services – SAC works with area organizations to accommodate requests for a Transcriber. Students requesting this accommodation should contact SAC for more details.

SAC Grievance Procedure

In the event of disability-related concerns, students and staff should attempt to resolve them by promptly communicating and discussing the issues in a calm and respectful fashion. The Student Accessibility Center is available to assist students in addressing disability-related issues or concerns with faculty as needed. Sometimes difficulties arise where the above approach is insufficient or otherwise not appropriate. In those circumstances, the University's grievance procedure is delineated below.

The Ashland University (AU) Disability Discrimination Grievance Procedure applies to all disability discrimination complaints alleging any action prohibited by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504"), whether carried out by AU or Seminary employees, students, or third parties. The Coordinator for Section 504 complaints is Julie Donatini. She can be reached at the Student Accessibility Center, 930 Claremont Ave Ashland OH 44805, jdonatin@ashland.edu, 419-289-5904. Should the complaint name Julie Donatini as a respondent, the Coordinator for that complaint will be Dr. Amiel Jarstfer, the AU Provost. As used in this procedure, the term Complainant refers to the individual who files a complaint and the term Respondent refers to the individual(s) named in the complaint as alleged to be involved in the discrimination or other incident giving rise to the complaint.

Filing a Complaint

A complaint can be filed by an AU student or an AU employee, including Seminary students and employees. Absent unusual circumstances, a complaint must be filed within 180 calendar days of the date of the alleged discrimination or other incident giving rise to the complaint. Further, the incident(s) alleged in the complaint must have taken place on AU / Seminary grounds or within its programming. A complaint is filed by emailing Julie Donatini at jdonatin@ashland.edu. If the complaint names Julie Donatini as a respondent, the complaint can be filed by submitting a letter outlining the alleged discrimination to Dr. Amiel Jarstfer, the AU Provost. Dr.

Jarstfer can be reached at ajarstfe@ashland.edu or Founders Hall Room 205 401 College Ave, 419-289-5051.

Investigation Process

The investigation process provides for the adequate, reliable, and impartial investigation of complaints, including the opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence.

Step One: Receiving the Complaint. The Coordinator receives the Complaint and determines whether the allegations meet the above requirements. If the complaint alleges events beyond the 180-calendar day deadline, incidents outside AU/Seminary grounds or programming, or actions not prohibited by Section 504, the Coordinator may dismiss the Complaint and notify the Complainant of the reasons for the dismissal. If the Complaint is not dismissed, the Coordinator will schedule a conference with the Complainant.

Step Two: Conference with Complainant. The Coordinator will conduct a formal conference with the complainant, permitting him or her to provide additional relevant information, if any. The Complainant may present any relevant evidence at this conference, including identification of any witness(es) the Complainant believes has relevant information. The Coordinator will make reasonable attempts to interview all such witnesses identified. Absent a request for an extension or other unusual circumstances, this conference will take place within seven (7) business days of receiving the complaint.

Step Three: Conference with Respondent. The Coordinator will conduct a formal conference with the Respondent, permitting him or her to provide any additional relevant information. The Respondent may present any relevant evidence at this conference, including identification of any witness(es) the Complainant believes has relevant information. The Coordinator will make reasonable attempts to interview all such witnesses identified. Absent a request for an extension or other unusual circumstances, this conference will take place within seven (7) business days of the conference with Complainant.

Step Four: Additional Interviews as Needed. The Coordinator may interview other witnesses, seek additional evidence, or conduct any additional investigatory meetings as necessary to obtain relevant information. Absent a request for an extension or other unusual circumstances, this process may take up to seven (7) business days from the conference with Respondent.

Step Five: Decision. The Coordinator will use a preponderance of the evidence standard to determine whether the evidence demonstrates that the allegations are substantiated and whether the Respondent is responsible for the alleged discrimination or other conduct giving rise to the complaint. Absent extension requests or other unusual circumstances, the Coordinator will prepare a written decision within twenty-eight (28) business days of the complaint's submission. The

written decision will summarize the allegations, delineate the findings of fact, explain the rationale for the decision, and list the remedies, if any, to be implemented. This decision is final and neither the Complainant nor the Respondent have an opportunity to appeal this decision.

Informal Resolution: Depending on the nature of the allegations, the Coordinator may offer an informal resolution process to Complainant and Respondent at any time after receiving a Complaint. Such a process may include informal mediation, remedial or supportive measures, or/and other dispute resolution alternatives. Participation in the informal resolution process is voluntary and not a required step to be taken prior to filing a formal complaint. Either Respondent or Complainant may opt out of the informal resolution process at any point before the resolution is finalized.

Complaint Outcome

The Coordinator will notify both the Respondent and Complainant as to the complaint's outcome by providing them with the written decision. Copies of the complaint, the investigative materials, the written decision, and any other documentation of proceedings will be maintained for five years with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Should the written decision substantiate allegations of discrimination or harassment, AU / Seminary will take steps to prevent recurrence of the discrimination or harassment and to correct its effects on the Complainant and others, if appropriate.

Retaliation is strictly prohibited. This means that AU employees or students, including Seminary employees or students, may not intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Section 504 or because an individual has made a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under Section 504.

Individuals have a right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at any time. OCR may be contacted at 1350 Euclid Ave, Suite 325, Cleveland, OH 44115.

Instructor Disagreement with an Accommodation

Instructors have the right to object to an SAC approved academic adjustment or auxiliary aid in their classroom if they have concerns that the accommodation poses a fundamental alteration of the course learning outcomes. Below are the steps to engage in a process to raise a concern for discussion and review. In all cases the approved accommodation will need to be active and implemented during the dispute resolution process until an alternative decision, if any, is made to modify or alter it.

Instructors should review student accommodation letters when they are received. If the instructor has concerns about the stated approved accommodations, within 5 working

days of receiving the letter, they must engage with the SAC Director to seek a consultation and explain how implementing the stated accommodation poses a fundamental alteration to the course.

SAC and the course instructor should meet to discuss the accommodation and the perceived impacts of implementation in the course. The SAC director will conduct a review of the student's file, decision process, and approved accommodations in light of the concerns raised by the instructor. They will work with the instructor to evaluate the perceived impacts and, if necessary, consider potential alternative accommodations in order to minimize impacts on delivery of the course.

If an agreement cannot be reached between the instructor and the SAC director, the instructor will have 10 working days from receiving any notice from SAC to dispute SAC approved accommodations to the Department Chair and the Associate Dean of the specified College for appeal. The instructor must submit the following information in writing: outline the specific accommodation of concern and describe in full detail (including course syllabus with outlined learning objectives and course policies) how this specific accommodation poses a fundamental alteration of the course.

The Department chair, in consultation with the Associate Dean of the College, will have 10 working days once the case is received to engage with instructor, SAC, student and render a final determination.

Glossary of Terms

Disability. Under federal law, a person with a disability is one who: 1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; 2) has a record of such impairment; or 3) is regarded as having such an impairment.

Exam refers to quizzes, tests, and final examinations taken during the semester for the courses in which the student is enrolled.

Reasonable accommodations are modifications or adjustments to the tasks, environment or to the way things are usually done that enable individuals with disabilities to have an equal opportunity to participate in an academic program or a job

Student refers to any person who is currently enrolled whether full-time, part-time or visiting, on a leave of absence or pursuing undergraduate, graduate, or professional studies, whether or not in pursuit of a degree or of any form of certificate of completion.

A qualified student with a disability is someone who can meet the program's admission, academic, and technical standards (including essential nonacademic admissions criteria) either with or without accommodations.

Working Days refers to days that the University is open for business, Monday - Friday during the hours of 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Other Accommodations

Accommodations for Campus Programs

To request accommodation for attendance at or access to a University-sponsored program or event, please contact the department responsible for the event at least two (2) working days in advance. For some accommodations, greater notice may be required (for example to arrange for sign language interpreters or to request materials in alternate format)

Housing Accommodations

Ashland University is committed to offering housing options that are appropriate and beneficial to each member of our community. We believe that community is so essential to the academic experience that we require students to live on campus for 4 years. In our residence halls, students are fully engaged with the community while learning to share space and be considerate of others. We carefully evaluate all housing requests and work closely with Residential Life to identify appropriate, on-campus living spaces. Students who make requests for single rooms solely as a request for a quiet, undisturbed place to study should instead request a single from Residential Life as part of the application process. Due to the shared facilities and resources in a residence hall, even a private room does not guarantee a quiet, distraction free space. SAC collaborates with the Office of Residential Life in providing appropriate reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities who live on campus. These accommodations are made on the basis of availability, and should be requested as far in advance as possible or upon onset of disability. Students should be familiar with the residency requirements and the Residential Life Housing Accommodations information.

Meal Plan/Dining Accommodations

In order to evaluate accommodation, SAC will need information about how a student's disability/diagnosis is likely to impact them here at Ashland University, specifically access to campus dining facilities or use of a meal plan. All students living on campus are required to have a meal plan. Consultation with AU's dining hall director must take place to review the request and determine how Dining Services can meet the needs of the student. Possible outcomes/accommodations: Dining Services is able to meet the student's needs; Dining Services is partially able to meet the student's needs and a reduced meal plan is recommended as an accommodation; Dining Services is not able to meet the students specific needs. An accommodation of a waiver to the meal plan requirement will be made.

Personal Aid/Care Attendant

AU does not provide attendant care for students, although AU does assist students in securing additional housing space for certified attendants if necessary. It is the student's responsibility to secure the services of certified attendant care and make all necessary arrangements, including payment for such services. AU will assist a student's certified attendant in accessing housing, dining, and entry to university buildings, as appropriate.

Emotional Support Animals

Ashland University abides by both state and federal law regarding its housing policies. Under the Fair Housing Act, “individuals with a disability may be entitled to keep an assistance animal as a reasonable accommodation in housing facilities that otherwise impose restrictions or prohibitions on animals. The assistance animal must be necessary to afford the individual an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling or to participate in the housing service or program. Further, there must be a clear relationship between the individual's disability and the assistance the animal provides.” ESA’s which are defined under the Fair Housing Act, provide necessary emotional support to individuals with disabilities, and alleviate one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person’s disability, who have established the need for such an animal. ESAs are not required to have special training for work or tasks. The regulations permitting assistance animals pertain only to on-campus residential living facilities. Assistance animals are not permitted in non-residential facilities, including but not limited to academic buildings, offices, and classrooms.

There are three requirements that need to be met in evaluating a request for an ESA. First, the student must establish that they have a disability that limits one or more major life activities as defined under state and federal law. Second, the animal must be necessary to afford the student with an equal opportunity to use and enjoy campus residences. Third, the student must provide information that demonstrates why an ESA is a reasonable accommodation for their disability. In other words, there needs to be an identifiable connection between your disability and the assistance the animal provides. SAC requires a student to provide information from a medical professional, a psychiatrist, psychologist, or other person who is qualified to diagnose and assess your disability. They should be familiar with you and able to identify the major life activity or activities in which you experience a limitation or limitations. These healthcare professionals should also describe the connection between your disability and your need for an ESA and describe how the animal is of benefit. However, SAC may also consider information from other sources.