



AccessAbility Services Academic Accommodation Grievance Guideline and Procedure

General Guideline:

Western Connecticut State University is committed to providing equal educational opportunities and achieving full participation of qualified students with disabilities. To request an accommodation, students must self-identify to AAS and provide adequate information regarding a disability. Documentation guidelines can be found on the AAS website at:

<http://www.wcsu.edu/accessability/documentationguidelines.asp>.

The Academic Accommodation Grievance Guideline and Procedure is designed to address disagreements or denials regarding requested academic services, accommodations, or modifications to university practices or requirements. Situations in which this grievance procedure should be used are:

- Disagreements regarding determination of a disability, documentation standards, and/or reasonable accommodations
- Difficulty receiving accommodations approved within the classroom
- Student complaint regarding AAS

The Academic Accommodation Grievance Guideline and Procedure exists to provide fair and equitable means in order for students to resolve disagreements regarding the provision of accommodations and services. The Academic Accommodation Grievance Guideline and Procedure is intended for students who have registered with AAS, or for students who have requested to be registered and were denied. Please note that the Academic Accommodation Grievance Guideline and Procedure does not replace and is not a substitute for other established university procedures such as judicial, grade appeal, housing, public safety, or other such policies and procedures. Students with disabilities are held to the same standards and must follow established policies and procedures as other students at Western Connecticut State University. Disability related documentation submitted to AccessAbility Services for the purpose of verifying a disability is considered an academic record. Based on this, the documentation is subject to the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This Act requires records to be maintained as private and specific disability related information to be shared only when there is a legitimate educational need to know.

Informal Accommodation Grievance Procedure:

- ❖ In the event a student is denied accommodations, AAS will provide the student with information regarding the determination. If the student is in disagreement with AAS's determination and recommendations for reconsideration, the student can first discuss, in person or writing the decision with the Director of AAS.
- ❖ In the event a student has difficulties receiving an approved accommodation within their class, the student should first use self-advocacy methods (when deemed appropriate by the student) to resolve the situation or event in question. The student should also contact the AAS director in writing or in person to consult and/or inform the AAS Director of the

situation and the steps the student has taken towards resolution. The AAS Director will work with the student, staff, and faculty member(s) to resolve the issue.

- ❖ In the event a student has a complaint regarding the AAS Director or the AAS staff due to actions, inactions, or treatment experienced the student may use self-advocacy methods (when deemed appropriate by the student) to resolve the issue directly with the AAS Director. This can be done in person or in writing as appropriate to the circumstances.
- ❖ If the student is not satisfied after the AAS Director renders a decision through the informal process, the student can choose to follow the formal complaint procedures below.

Formal Accommodation Grievance Procedure:

A formal grievance shall be filed as soon as possible and no later than ten calendar days after completion of the informal grievance process. For the purposes of calculating all time periods set forth in the grievance procedure, official university holidays and breaks in the university's academic calendar and/or dates that the university closes (such as inclement weather) shall be excluded in determining the time period. Further, if the last day of a time period provided is a holiday, a Saturday, a Sunday, or any other day the university is closed, the next business day shall be counted in the same time period.

- ❖ A student who has not achieved a satisfactory resolution through the informal process may submit a written complaint for review by the Chief Diversity Officer, or his/her designee.
- ❖ An appeal can be filed with the Chief Diversity Officer, who serves as the university's ADA/504 Coordinator, no later than ten days following the conclusion of the informal process and shall include the following information:
 - Accommodation Grievance Form
 - Description or copies of relevant documents or other evidence relevant to the grievance. A chronology of events is appreciated.
 - Any supporting documentation/information
- ❖ An appeal can be submitted to the Office of Diversity & Equity, University Hall 214.
- ❖ In response to a grievance, the Chief Diversity Officer (or designee) may take some or all of the following steps: meeting in person with the student; contacting AAS and other individuals (such as faculty members, and/or staff) to discuss the events given rise to the grievance; requesting additional relevant medical documentation; gathering other information through a fact-finding process.
- ❖ A completed review will be provided in writing within 30 university working days of receipt of the appeal or 90 university working days for an investigation to the student and party at whom the complaint is directed. The written findings of the appeal will include findings of fact and a proposed resolution, if any.
- ❖ The decision of the Chief Diversity Officer will be final and any actions taken in response will complete the grievance process.

Although students are encouraged to utilize Western's process towards resolving disability-related grievances, all students have a right to file a complaint directly with the U.S. Department of Education, or Office of Civil Rights (OCR).