AccessAbility Services
Academic Accommodation Grievance Guideline and Procedure

General Guideline:

The Academic Accommodation Grievance Guideline and Procedure is used to address disagreements or denials related to academic accommodation(s), services, or modifications to university policies or requirements. This procedure may be used in situations such as:

- Disagreements about disability determinations, documentation requirements, or reasonable accommodation(s)
- Difficulty receiving approved accommodation(s) in the classroom
- Concerns or complaints about AccessAbility Services (AAS)

This process is intended to provide a fair and equitable way for students to resolve concerns related to academic accommodation(s) and services. This procedure does not replace or override other university processes, such as those related to student conduct, grade appeals, housing, or public safety. Students with disabilities are expected to follow all university policies and procedures, just like any other student at Western Connecticut State University.

Documentation submitted to AccessAbility Services to verify a disability is considered part of a student's academic record and is protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). These records must be kept confidential and may only be shared with university officials who have a legitimate educational need to know.

Students who need accommodation(s) in order to participate in this grievance process should contact the Director of AccessAbility Services (AAS).

Informal Accommodation Grievance Procedure:

- If a student is denied accommodation(s), AccessAbility Services (AAS) will explain the decision. If the student disagrees with the determination or recommendations for reconsideration, they may first discuss the decision with the Director of AAS, either in person or in writing.
- If a student is having difficulty receiving approved accommodation(s) in a class, they are encouraged to first attempt to resolve the issue through self-advocacy, if they feel comfortable doing so. The student should also contact the Director of AAS, either in writing or in person, to share details of the situation and the steps they have already taken. The Director (or designee) will work with the student, staff, and faculty to help resolve the issue.
- If the student is not satisfied after the informal process and the office's involvement, they may choose to proceed with the formal complaint process outlined below.

Formal Accommodation Grievance Procedure:

A formal grievance must be submitted as soon as possible, and no later than fifteen calendar days after the informal grievance process has ended. When calculating deadlines, official university holidays, academic breaks, and any days the university is closed (such as due to inclement weather) are not counted. If a deadline falls on a weekend, holiday, or any day the university is closed, the deadline will be extended to the next business day.

- If a student is not satisfied after completing the informal process, they may submit a written grievance to the ADA Coordinator (or designee) for review.
- The grievance must be submitted within fifteen days of the conclusion of the informal process and must include:
    - A completed Accommodation Grievance Form
    - A description of the concern and any relevant documents or evidence
    - Any additional supporting documentation or information
- Grievances should be submitted by email to Jennifer Labate at labatej@wcsu.edu or delivered in person to Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion, Old Main, Suite 302.
- After receiving the grievance, the ADA Coordinator (or designee) may take steps to review the concern, which may include speaking with relevant individuals (such as faculty members, and/or staff), requesting additional documentation, and gathering other information as needed.
- A written decision will be provided within 30 university business days of receiving the grievance, or within 90 university business days if a more extensive investigation is required. The response will include findings and, if applicable, a proposed resolution.
- The decision of the ADA Coordinator is final and concludes the grievance process.
- At any point, or after this process is complete, a student who believes they have experienced discrimination based on disability may file a complaint with the Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. This process is separate and is not used to appeal or change accommodation decisions, but to address concerns related to discrimination or harassment.

University guidelines, policies, rules, and regulations may be updated at any time without prior notice. notice. This is not intended, and should not be construed, to give rise to contractual rights and obligations.

While students are encouraged to use WCSU's internal process to resolve disability-related concerns, they also have the right to file a complaint directly with the U.S. Department of Education, or Office for Civil Rights (OCR).