

Disability and Academic Accommodations Handbook

CENTER FOR STUDENT SUCCESS
EVANGEL UNIVERSITY

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Purpose and Scope

Evangel University is committed to equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities and recognizes that reasonable accommodations or modifications may be necessary to ensure access to campus courses, services, activities, and facilities. Academic Support, a division of the Center for Student Success, is the office designated by Evangel University to review disability documentation, determine reasonable accommodations, and develop plans for the provision of such accommodations, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 as Amended (ADA).

This policy document sets forth the process by which students with physical, learning, or psychological disabilities request support; the documentation requirements for substantiating claims of disability; the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty in the academic accommodations process; and the process for appeal of disability accommodations grievances.

The policies outlined in this document shall apply to all academic programs at Evangel University, including traditional undergraduate programs, Adult Studies programs, and graduate and seminary programs.

Academic accommodations as approved by Academic Support shall be fully recognized in academic settings at Evangel University. However, the university cannot guarantee that accommodations established and recognized at Evangel will meet the requirements of other institutions. Students are advised that accommodations established at Evangel may not meet the documentation requirements of post-baccalaureate educational institutions or educational testing entities. Students who anticipate needing accommodations beyond Evangel, including for graduate or other higher education or on standardized or professional examinations, are advised to contact those institutions directly to determine requirements for accommodation.

Confidentiality

Academic Support will be the custodian of all student records obtained for the purpose of documenting the disability and providing accommodation. This information will be kept **confidential** and will not be shared without written permission except where disclosure is required by law or necessary to facilitate legitimate University processes, including granting appropriate accommodations, addressing direct threats, or investigating claims or charges. Files maintained in Academic Support are used solely for disability accommodations purposes and do not enter the student's official records with the university. Files will be maintained for five years after the student's last date of attendance; after five years, the contents will be destroyed though a record of the existence of the file will be maintained.

Definitions

Disability

For purposes of academic accommodations, Evangel University follows the terminology and definitions set forth in the ADA as of January 2009. Accordingly, the term “disability” means, with respect to an individual:

“A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual” (ADA, Sec. 12102)

Note that this definition of “disability” for ADA purposes is not guaranteed to align to the definition of disability for other purposes or government agencies, including, but not limited to, the Veterans Administration, the Social Security Administration, the Department of Labor, or any state or local government disability or vocational rehabilitation services. Qualifying for disability accommodations under the ADA does not, therefore, guarantee qualifying for disability-related services in other areas.

Individual "learning styles," "learning differences," "academic problems" and "test difficulty or anxiety," in and of themselves do not constitute a learning disability. Similarly, nonspecific diagnoses, such as "adjustment problems," "emotional difficulties," "mood disturbance," and/or "test difficulty/anxiety" in and of themselves do not constitute a disability. Both the Counseling Center and the Center for Student Success offer free services to assist students struggling with anxiety or other difficulties.

Accommodations

Academic accommodations consist of changes or alterations of the environment, curriculum, or testing formats that provide equal access for students with disabilities. Accommodations are determined based on the needs and functional limitations of the individual student and in consideration of the documented disability, and must have legitimate educational purpose (they cannot be based simply on applicants’ preferences). Accommodations are never retroactive; they apply only after the student has been approved by Academic Support and has informed professors in a timely manner of the requested accommodations. In determining accommodations, we consider the following:

- The **functional limitations** of the student’s disability/disabilities
- The **recommendations** of the licensed professionals who diagnosed the condition(s).
 - o Academic Support relies on the documentation by licensed professionals for diagnosis and description of functional limitations. Recommendations of accommodations by external parties are welcomed and will be taken into consideration; however, Academic Support is not obligated to accept the accommodations recommendations of external parties.
- **Federal guidelines**
- **Best practices of disability services** in higher education

- **Academic integrity:** accommodations must ensure equal access, but should not give a particular student an unfair advantage over other students
- **Appropriateness:** certain accommodations may be deemed unreasonable or inappropriate if they would lower program or university academic standards or outcomes or impose an undue financial or administrative burden on the university (in which case, the university will consider alternative accommodations)

Types of accommodations often authorized include, but are not limited to:

- Testing accommodations
 - o Extended time¹
 - (Note: Extended time does **not** imply extended deadlines. Students are expected to manage their own time to allow for completion of work by established deadlines.)
 - o No scantron (write directly on exam)
 - o Distraction-reduced testing environment
 - o Reader for exam
 - o Scribe for exam (or permission to type answers for exams)
- Alternative text (usually means electronic files of text that can be read aloud by a screen reader)
- Recording of lectures
- Permission to take pictures of whiteboard or on-screen notes during class
- Note-taking assistance
- Preferential seating
- Sign language interpreter
- Disability-related absences
- Assistance Animal
 - o Accommodation for an Assistance Animal follows a separate procedure. See the [Assistance and Service Animals Policies and Procedures](#) for details.

¹ Extended time is typically construed as being 1.5x the amount of time allotted for the particular timed exam, though it may vary based on individual need. Extended time does not imply extended deadlines for homework or delayed testing dates. Professors generally have a right to require that accommodated exams are taken at the same time as the class exam in absence of legitimate extenuating circumstances preventing it, in which case accommodated exams should be taken as closely as possible to the date and time of the normal exam period.

Policy and Procedures

Request for Accommodation

Students requesting academic accommodations are responsible for notifying Evangel University of their disability and their request for accommodations upon the start of each academic semester. For incoming students, this request can be made upon application or admission; however, students can file a request for accommodations at any point during the year. (See “Process to Request Accommodations”)

To initiate a request for academic accommodations, students must submit a Student Intake Form to the Academic Support office in the Center for Student Success. The student should notify Academic Support as soon as the need for the accommodation becomes evident, as the evaluation and approval of accommodations requests can take up to three weeks. If approved, Academic Support will provide the student with an Academic Accommodation Plan and an Academic Accommodations Memo to be shared with professors outlining the approved accommodations.

Students must initiate a request for every semester accommodations are sought. Requests to continue prior approved accommodations may be made verbally or in email to Academic Support (Student Intake forms are only needed for the student’s initial request).

Academic Accommodations

Accommodations for Documented Disabilities

Academic accommodations are based on a documented disabling condition, which can include one or more physical, learning, and/or psychological disabilities. To receive accommodations, students must provide documentation that meets Evangel guidelines as provided in this policy.

Reasonable accommodations are determined based on the nature of the condition(s) and resulting impact in the postsecondary environment. A student’s program of study and the courses a student is enrolled will also inform the types of accommodations that are appropriate.

While the law requires that priority consideration be given to the specific methods requested, it does not imply that a particular accommodation must be granted if it is deemed not reasonable or other suitable methods are available.

All documentation is reviewed on a case-by-case basis and accommodations are determined through an interactive process between Academic Support and the student. Documentation of a specific disability does not translate directly into specific accommodations. Accommodations must be linked to the functional limitations of the disabling condition, which can vary greatly among individuals with the same diagnosis. If a disability determination cannot be made on the basis of the documentation provided, further documentation may be requested. If a request for disability accommodations is denied, it will be accompanied by a written explanation of the rationale for that decision.

Disclosure of disability information is completely voluntary, and will not be shared with parties outside the university without written consent. Only persons interested in disability-related accommodations or services need provide disability information.

Accommodations for Medical Conditions or Pregnancy

Students who experience a **temporarily disabling condition** are eligible to receive temporary accommodations. Students who experience a short-term disability, such as an injury, accident, or surgery, which involves an anticipated recovery time of 3 or more months and which substantially limits one or more major life activities can receive temporary accommodations for the duration of their recovery time. Documentation of the injury or temporary condition and anticipated recovery time must be provided.

Students who experience academic hardship due to a **chronic medical condition**, including seizure disorders, or due to **pregnancy**, may request academic accommodations. Students who experience hardship due to chronic medical conditions, or other long-term (6 or more months) health conditions, may be considered for attendance accommodations. These medical conditions may often be “invisible,” but can have a significant impact on the student’s academic achievement. Accommodations for medical conditions or pregnancy and any resulting complications are made on a case-by-case basis, based on the functional limitations the student is experiencing. See Supplement A: Chronic Medical Conditions and Attendance Accommodations for a detailed explanation of the process to receive accommodations for chronic medical conditions.

Temporary Accommodations

Students who reasonably appear to qualify for accommodations but lack current documentation of the apparent disability may be granted temporary accommodations while adequate documentation is sought. Factors that contribute to consideration of apparent disability include the readily apparent nature of the disability, self-reporting of symptoms which reasonably appear to indicate the presence of a disability, and/or a history of receiving accommodations or other special assistance in prior educational settings. Temporary accommodations are granted at the discretion of Academic Support in consultation with the Director of the Center for Student Success, and apply only until adequate documentation can be obtained. If adequate documentation is not provided within one semester of granting the temporary accommodation, then the accommodation will be considered expired and will no longer be valid.

Other Accommodations

Accommodations may be appropriate in certain instances, even if the documentation provided does not rise to the level ordinarily required to establish accommodations. Such provisional accommodations are granted on a discretionary basis, in consideration of a review of all available evidence (including self-report, history of accommodations, and all available documentation), and in collaboration with the Director of the Center for Student Success, the student’s faculty advisor, and the Offices of the Vice-President for Student Development and Vice-President for Academic Affairs, as applicable.

Documentation which presents a diagnosis or otherwise substantiates a need for accommodation must be provided. Examples of such documentation include previous Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) or Section 504 plans, official school letters establishing a history of accommodations, professional evaluations that are not considered current or do not include all pertinent components

needed to establish disability status, or other professional screenings, evaluations, or diagnoses that do not rise to the level needed to establish a disability.

Provisional accommodations are provided by the university in keeping with Evangel's commitment to uphold the spirit of the law, and in the desire to avoid imposing an undue burden on students with disabilities whose documentation may not meet the formal requirements. The threshold of evidence required for provisional accommodations is therefore more flexible; however, responsibility still rests with the student to adequately demonstrate the existence of a disabling condition warranting academic accommodations. **This arrangement is not a substitute for a student with no documentation to receive accommodations, nor is it a replacement for a student whose documentation does not satisfactorily establish eligibility for accommodations. Students will not be granted accommodations based solely on self-report in absence of acceptable documentation.**

Documentation Policy

Students requesting accommodations must provide medical documentation showing the existence of a disability and evidence of the need for disability-related accommodations in the educational setting. **Accommodations will not be provided in absence of documentation.** Documentation must come from a qualified professional, and should indicate the link between the functional limitations experienced as a result of the disability and the requested accommodations. Sources of documentation include, but are not limited to: healthcare providers, mental health professionals, school psychologists, and documents such as a neuropsychological or psycho-educational evaluations.

Certain forms of documentation may not provide diagnosis but still may provide supplemental information that is pertinent to determining accommodations. Such documents can include Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), 504 Plans, Summary of Performance (SOP) documents, and teacher observations. Also, students can submit letters verifying accommodations received during their previous educational experiences (i.e. high school, college, etc.) as well as accommodation memos for standardized examinations (i.e. SAT, ACT, GRE, GMAT, MCAT). Such supporting documents serve to demonstrate history of accommodation; they are not a substitute for medical documentation in accordance with University documentation guidelines.

Please ensure that documentation is sent to Academic Support directly; documents sent to other departments on campus (e.g. Wellness Center, Admissions, etc.) often cannot be released to Academic Support without written consent. Written documentation should be as complete and legible as possible. We request that written documentation be typewritten letters or reports, signed on letterhead and that they be sent by mail, fax or emailed as a non-editable file directly from the provider.

Statement on IEPs

An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and/or Section 504 Plan can be submitted along with the medical documentation or psychological/neuropsychological evaluation; however, in many cases it cannot solely be used for determination of disability accommodations. Please note that IEP's and/or 504 plans were developed for secondary education and may not provide the necessary testing, diagnostic information, or information related to determining disability accommodations in higher education. However, some IEP's and 504 plans may provide very useful information that could be used in the process of evaluating reasonable accommodations in higher education.

Academic Support encourages students to submit IEPs and/or 504 plans for accommodations requests. While an IEP/504 plan on its own merit may not be sufficient for determination of disability accommodation, in many cases it will be helpful for consideration of provisional accommodations. Additional documentation may be requested if the IEP/504 plan does not provide sufficient information relevant to this determination. If submitting IEP's or 504 plans, please only submit the most recent versions.

Documentation Guidelines

This section adapted from the Office of Disability Services Handbook, Suffolk University

The following guidelines are provided to assist students in identifying the type of information and documentation that will inform the process of determining reasonable and appropriate accommodations. These guidelines are not exhaustive, but should help students prepare for their one-on-one meeting with Academic Support.

General Information on Documentation

Students are encouraged to submit any prior assessments and/or evaluative reports conducted by evaluators, physicians, medical professionals, etc., which may assist in verifying their disability(ies) and determining appropriate accommodations. **Documentation should be current (usually within 4 years)² and relevant to the requested accommodations.**

Prior receipt of accommodations (e.g., in high school or in another University setting) will inform the process of determining appropriate accommodations; however, they do not guarantee receipt of the same accommodations.

Professionals (e.g., physicians or other medical professionals) conducting assessment, rendering diagnoses of specific conditions and making recommendations for appropriate accommodations must be qualified to do so. Diagnoses, histories and recommendations for the postsecondary environment must be made on professional letterhead, dated and signed.

Specific information needed from a diagnostic provider:

Documentation should include the following information:

1. **Existing Condition(s)** - Information regarding the student's current condition(s) including any relevant history
2. **Presenting Concerns** - Information regarding the student's presenting concerns (ongoing difficulties and behaviors) that substantially impact functioning in a postsecondary setting.
3. **Background History** - Information regarding the student's history of any prior accommodations received (e.g., high school, another University setting, etc.) (if applicable).
4. **Medications/Treatment** - Information regarding the student's current medication(s) including dosage(s) and frequency (if applicable). Please include any known adverse side

² Students returning to college after some time away from an educational setting may not have professional documentation within the previous 4 years, particularly in cases of ADHD and learning disabilities. In such cases, documentation older than 4 years may be acceptable, but should date to a student's high-school years.

effects due to medications, a description of the student's current treatments or other interventions including frequency and a description of any auxiliary aids you use (e.g., hearing aids, assistive listening devices, visual aids, etc.)

5. **Recommendations and Evaluator Qualifications** - Specific recommendations regarding academic and/or residential accommodations, auxiliary aids and/or services based on the impact of the condition(s) in the postsecondary environment

Please note: A diagnosis of a disability does not, in and of itself, meet the definition of a disability necessitating reasonable accommodations under the applicable law.

Appeal Process

Students

If the student's eligibility for services and/or request for academic accommodations is denied, Academic Support will provide the student written notification of denial, including the rationale for denial as well as information on the appeal process. Student appeals related to eligibility for services or the request for academic accommodations shall be directed to the Director of the Center for Student Success, who will consult with the Offices of the Vice-President of Student Development and/or Vice-President of Academic Affairs as necessary. The student must be able to establish that he/she appropriately requested, in a timely manner, the desired accommodation. If resolution cannot be reached via internal appeal, students may appeal externally by filing a complaint with the regional Office of Civil Rights. Students have a responsibility to file a grievance in a timely manner.

Faculty

Faculty who believe that an accommodation recommended by Academic Support would compromise fundamental course or program goals or requirements have the right to appeal the provision of those accommodations; however, recommended accommodations should be provided until the appeal is resolved. The faculty member should first address his/her concerns with Academic Support clearly documenting the fundamental academic goals and demonstrating how the recommended accommodations compromise these goals. If satisfactory agreement cannot be reached, the faculty may initiate a written statement appealing the accommodation to the Director of the Center for Student Success, who will consult with the Offices of the Vice-President of Student Development and/or Vice-President of Academic Affairs as necessary.

Rights and Responsibilities

Evangel University's basic responsibility is to identify and maintain the academic and technical standards that are fundamental to providing quality academic programs while ensuring the rights and confidentiality of students with disabilities. Evangel University also recognizes that shared governance and cooperation among faculty and campus administration is necessary to ensure that reasonable and timely accommodations are made for students with disabilities. In this process, the following rights and responsibilities apply.

Evangel University:

- a. Has the right to require students who desire academic accommodations for disabilities to provide documentation of disability to Academic Support.
- b. Has the right to establish what constitutes appropriate documentation of disability. Disability documentation will be maintained in confidential files in Academic Support; these files are for disability accommodations purposes only, not the students' official university record.
- c. Has the right to refuse a request for academic accommodations that it not supported by documentation that meets these guidelines; denial of accommodations will be accompanied by a written explanation of the rationale behind the decision.
- d. Has the responsibility to inform applicants and students about the availability of academic accommodations. The *Faculty Handbook* requires all faculty members to include a disability policy statement in all course syllabi. Evangel University's Academic Support recommends the following language for syllabi:

Disability Accommodations:

Evangel University is committed to equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American with Disabilities Act as amended (ADA). Academic Support, a division of the Center for Student Success, is the office designated by Evangel University to review disability documentation, determine reasonable accommodations, and develop plans for the provision of such accommodations.

If you have already established accommodations through Academic Support and receive accommodation memos, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations as soon as possible (advance notice is required; accommodations are not retroactive). If you have not yet established accommodations, but have a disability or health condition (permanent or temporary) that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, you are welcome to contact Academic Support staff in the Center for Student Success (ZM-208; 417-865-2815 x.8215) so that accommodations can be arranged. See the Disability and Academic Accommodations Handbook for further details.

Students with disabilities:

- a. Are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect in all their interactions with university personnel.
- b. Have the same obligation as any student to meet and maintain the institution's fundamental academic and technical standards (i.e. the student requesting/receiving disability accommodations must be "otherwise qualified" by the normal program standards).

- c. Have the same obligation as any student to meet and uphold the community life standards as described in the Student Handbook.
- d. Are entitled to an equal opportunity to learn. If the location, delivery system, or institutional methodology limits access, participation, or ability to benefit, the student has the right to *reasonable* alterations in those aspects of the courses (or program) to accommodate the disability.
- e. Are entitled to equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the academic community. This includes access to services, extracurricular activities, housing, and other services at a comparable level as that provided to any student.
- f. Have a right to appeal the institution's decisions concerning accommodations internally by filing a grievance with the Director of the Center for Student Success, who will consult with the Offices of the Vice-President of Student Development and/or Vice-President of Academic Affairs as necessary. If resolution cannot be reached via internal appeal, students may appeal externally by filing a complaint with the regional Office of Civil Rights. Students have a responsibility to file a grievance in a timely manner.

Process to Request Accommodations

Students with disabilities who require accommodations must seek assistance through Academic Support in a timely manner, usually upon admission or as soon as a disability becomes known. Any accommodations approved are not retroactive, so it is in the student's best interest to seek accommodations as early as possible.

1. Students must complete an intake form. Students must provide documentation of their disability and be able to describe how it impacts their participation in courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities of the University.
2. Academic Support and the student will discuss the interaction between the disability and the academic environment and determine possible reasonable accommodations. Consultation with faculty, staff, and outside professionals regarding essential elements and reasonable accommodations will occur as needed.
3. Following a review of the documentation, Academic Support will make a determination of the accommodations to be provided and present this verbally and in writing to the student. These accommodations will form the student's formal Academic Accommodation Plan, which will be kept on file in Academic Support.
4. If the student's request for accommodations is denied, Academic Support will provide to the student written notification of denial, including the rationale for denial as well as information on the appeal process. Student appeals related to eligibility for services or the request for academic accommodations shall be directed to the Director of the Center for Student Success, who will consult with the Offices of the Vice-President of Student Development and/or Vice-President of Academic Affairs as necessary.

5. Academic Support will ensure that disability-related documents are kept confidential and shared with University personnel on a need-to-know basis only.
6. The Director of Academic Support will prepare an Academic Accommodation Memo for that semester certifying that the student has a disability and stating the determined reasonable accommodations. The provision of accommodations is often shared among faculty, the student, and Academic Support. The memo details the provision of the accommodations: what they are, and when and how the accommodations will be provided. Faculty are expected to reasonably cooperate with the provisions of accommodations as necessary. **Faculty are not expected or required to compromise or fundamentally alter essential elements of their course or evaluation standards.**
7. **The student will be responsible for meeting with and delivering the Academic Accommodation Memo to each of their professors.** Students are encouraged to seek a time to meet privately with their professors, preferably in an appointment during designated office hours, to ensure confidentiality. If the professor is unavailable, or if the student has concerns about discussing their accommodations with the professor, the student should immediately request the assistance of Academic Support.
8. Students are responsible for contacting Academic Support if accommodations are not implemented in an effective and timely manner.
9. Academic Support will coordinate with university personnel and the student receiving accommodations to resolve disagreements regarding recommended accommodations.
10. **Students must request accommodations for each semester they are required.** Accommodations are not automatically issued at the start of the new semester without a student-initiated request. Since documentation will already be on file, this process is generally a matter of verifying that the approved accommodations are still relevant and appropriate, and issuing new Academic Accommodation Memos. Each semester, the student will need to deliver their updated Memos to their professors for the coming semester.
11. Students who do not request new accommodations will be considered inactive. Inactive files will be maintained for 5 years from the date of last activity with Academic Support. Students will need to schedule an appointment with the Director of Academic Support to re-activate their accommodations.

Appendix A: General Guidelines for Students

The Importance of Self- Advocacy

An important distinction between a student's high-school and college experience is the need for appropriate self- advocacy at the college level. Students with learning or other disabilities come from a wide variety of backgrounds and may have been accustomed to certain ways of securing disability support services. **However, at the college level, the responsibility falls on the student to identify their need (self-disclosure) and request assistance.** Note that parents of students are often the ones to contact Academic Support, which is acceptable and helpful in many cases; however, in their classes and interactions with individual professors, the student still needs to be able to identify and explain their situation and needs.

While it is not the responsibility of Academic Support to seek out such students on campus, we will do all we can to provide support, encouragement, and guidance for any and all students seeking our help; once contacted, we can begin to take all necessary steps to secure accommodations for each students' unique situation.

Student Responsibilities

- Know the procedures in this manual and be sure you are following the correct process in requesting services.
- File and submit request forms and documentation in a **timely manner.**
- Schedule your testing accommodations with the Testing Center in a timely manner. A 24-hour notice is expected to help ensure that an exam can be received and proctored. See the Testing Center Policy for further details.
- Keep Academic Support involved. We recommend students check-in at least once every 2 weeks. **The more we are aware of your situation and progress, the better we will be able to assist you.**
- **Discuss your accommodations with your professors.**
 - o This may include reminding them of exam dates for your alternative testing accommodations. (Refer them to Academic Support if they have any questions about your testing accommodations)
- If you believe you need your accommodations altered in any way, please notify the Director of Academic Support immediately.
 - o In some cases, you may be required to submit additional documentation for altered accommodations.
- Be cordial and respectful to your professors in your requests.
- If you have a problem or question, contact Academic Support immediately.
- Visit with professors when you have problems and questions.
- Always communicate in a clear and time-sensitive manner.

- Manage your study time to allow for your disability.
 - o Your accommodations are designed to help provide the opportunity to succeed; however, your circumstances may still necessitate dedicating more time to finish assignments. You are responsible for completing your assignments and meeting all required deadlines.
- Students with disabilities are obligated to abide by all community standards set forth in the Student Handbook.

Appendix B: General Information for Faculty

Evangel University is committed to equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities and recognizes that reasonable accommodations or modifications may be necessary to ensure access to campus courses, services, activities, and facilities. Academic Support is the office designated by Evangel University to review disability documentation, determine reasonable accommodations, and develop plans for the provision of such accommodations, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 as Amended. Academic Support staff are available to assist you in implementing any mandated accommodations. If you have any questions regarding disability and access please contact us.

Syllabus Statement

All syllabi need to have a statement reflecting Evangel University's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Academic Support recommends the following wording:

Disability Accommodations:

Evangel University is committed to equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American with Disabilities Act as amended (ADA). Academic Support, a division of the Center for Student Success, is the office designated by Evangel University to review disability documentation, determine reasonable accommodations, and develop plans for the provision of such accommodations.

If you have already established accommodations through Academic Support and receive accommodation memos, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations as soon as possible (advance notice is required; accommodations are not retroactive). If you have not yet established accommodations, but have a disability or health condition (permanent or temporary) that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, you are welcome to contact Academic Support staff in the Center for Student Success (ZM-208; 417-865-2815 x.8215) so that accommodations can be arranged. See the Disability and Academic Accommodations Handbook for further details.

Confidentiality and Disability Verification

All students who receive disability accommodations from Academic Support have provided extensive documentation of their disability. This documentation is evaluated and discussed with the student to determine reasonable accommodations that may be necessary for the student to fully benefit from the higher education experience. In determining reasonable accommodation for each class, the relationship between the disability and the specific course requirements is evaluated. **This documentation is considered confidential and will not be shared with faculty without the written**

consent of the student. It is not appropriate for faculty to request that students' share disability documentation or any related information that should be considered confidential directly with the faculty.

Academic Accommodation

Academic Support and the student will jointly develop a formal Academic Accommodation Plan that will outline the accommodations to be provided during a given semester. These accommodations are designed to ensure equal access to education without fundamentally altering the nature or standards of the course. Students with disabilities are expected to meet the same academic standards and expectations as their peers without disabilities. Accommodations are designed to maintain the essential components of the course and not dilute curriculum, while allowing the student to participate and benefit fully from the learning process.

While it is not unlawful, Evangel University strongly advises against faculty informally accommodating students without involving Academic Support. Please notify us if you feel a student would benefit from a particular accommodation. We recognize that faculty members may wish to assist a student toward success and commend that instinct to assist your students. However, instituting informal accommodations without the input of Academic Support can have negative consequences for the university. Requiring students to work with Academic Support to receive accommodations helps to uphold academic integrity, ensures that students in similar situations are treated consistently, prevents the creation of false or unrealistic expectations for that student in future courses, and helps us to provide the most relevant support possible for the student's unique situation.

Accommodation Memo

Academic Support will prepare an Academic Accommodation Memo to identify students who receive academic accommodations. This document will outline specific accommodations that have been determined to be reasonable.

Students are required to deliver and discuss Accommodation Memos with faculty before accommodations will be implemented. Academic Support strongly encourages students to present their Memos to faculty in person to facilitate discussion and interaction with their professors, but presenting the memos in person may not be practicable and is not strictly necessary (e.g. in an online course). When the student presents a Memo, faculty are encouraged to speak with him or her directly about individual academic needs. The student is the expert on his or her disability and can provide suggestions, based on experience in other classroom situations, which will enhance the classroom experience.

Accommodations are not retroactive. Faculty are not obligated to provide accommodations until such time they are notified to do so by presentation of the Accommodations Memo or by direct communication with Academic Support staff. Faculty are not obligated to accommodate prior exams, assignments, or any course-related activity which occurred before the Accommodation Memo was delivered and discussed.

Please note that disability accommodations are required by law to ensure equal access for students. The accommodations approved by Academic Support and outlined on the student's

Academic Accommodation Memo are **required** services. If you have concerns regarding these accommodations, you are encouraged to contact our office to discuss changes or implementation strategies. Any questions or concerns may be directed to Academic Support.

Concerns or Appeals

If a professor disagrees with an accommodation that Academic Support has determined to be appropriate for a particular student, the professor should promptly contact the Director of Academic Support. If, after good-faith discussion with Academic Support, the professor still disagrees with the accommodation, the professor may initiate an appeal of a recommended academic accommodation by submitting a written statement to the Director of the Center for Student Success, who will consult with the Offices of the Vice-President of Student Development and/or Vice-President of Academic Affairs as necessary. Appeals should clearly document the fundamental academic goals and demonstrate that the recommended accommodation compromises those goals.

If an appeal is made, the professor must continue to provide the accommodation until the conclusion of the appeal.

Appendix C: Tips for Designing Accessible Classes

The following suggestions are appropriate instructional strategies for all students and many are already utilized in your classes. These strategies are especially effective in assuring access for students with disabilities:

- Provide students with a detailed course syllabus that clearly addresses expectations at the beginning of the semester.
- Announce reading assignments well in advance; students may need time to receive their reading materials in alternative formats or to complete reading assignments.
- Start each class period with an outline of material to be covered that day and briefly summarize key points at the end of the lecture.
- Speak directly to students, using gestures and natural expressions to enhance understanding.
- Present new vocabulary and give course assignments in a variety of ways: in lecture, through examples, on the whiteboard, on handouts, on the Course Commons page, at websites, etc.
- Maintain an active Course Commons page for your course and use it to post daily notes of the lecture and assignments.
- Allow students to tape record your lectures and take pictures of any relevant notes or diagrams on the whiteboard during class.
- Provide opportunities for questions and answers during class and office hours. Schedule review sessions when circumstances permit.
- Discuss the format of your tests with the class and perhaps even provide a sample test.
- Provide copies of overheads and/or PowerPoint slides.

Supplement A: Chronic Medical Conditions and Attendance Accommodations

This policy adapted from the Office of Disability Services Handbook, Suffolk University.

Evangel University Attendance Policy: Student Handbook Statement

Evangel's faculty members seek to build a community of Christian scholars dedicated to pursuing truth. At the University level, that pursuit clearly involves more than merely gaining information; it also requires strong commitment to the process of inquiry and to one's colleagues. Class attendance alone cannot ensure that students and professors will become partners in scholarship; however, the prospects for that ideal are dimmed when students miss class. Therefore, professors expect regular attendance.

Course content and teaching styles will vary across the University. Such diversity enriches the educational process and provides a sound basis for developing community, which does not imply rigid uniformity. Therefore, the University does not prescribe a campus wide attendance policy, but rather each professor may set his or her own attendance policy in order to achieve course goals and objectives.

Attendance Accommodations Guidelines

This document provides guidelines for students and faculty in making determination of reasonable accommodations to attendance policies. Due to their highly individualized nature, all attendance accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis, contingent on the nature of the disability and the course(s) in question. *Note: accommodations for temporary medical conditions (less than 6 months) are covered in the Disability and Academic Accommodations Handbook.*

All attendance accommodations must be established in advance.³ Any approved accommodations apply from the date of approval onward; they do not apply retroactively.

Chronic Medical Conditions

Students who experience hardship due to chronic medical conditions, or other long-term (6 or more months) health conditions, may be considered for attendance accommodations. These medical conditions may often be "invisible," but can have a significant impact on the student's academic achievement. If the symptoms of the student's condition and/or the side-effects of their treatment cause "an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities" (ADA, Sec. 12102), then that student may be eligible for disability accommodations. This may include students who experience chronic conditions such as: asthma, arthritis, diabetes, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, Lyme disease, migraines, cardiac conditions, cancer, chronic fatigue syndrome, lupus, seizure disorders, or other medical conditions that cause impairment (this list is not comprehensive). Symptoms of chronic conditions can often be unpredictable. They may include random or cyclic acute episodes which can impact the student's ability to attend class.

Federal law requires colleges and universities to consider reasonable adjustments to attendance policies if needed to accommodate a student's disability. In making this determination, two issues must be addressed:

³ Exceptions may apply in the case of a student who experiences an unexpected medical condition; in which case, accommodations should be sought as soon as possible following the incident, and may apply to the medical circumstance recently experienced, on a case-by-case basis.

1. **Does the student have a documented disability that directly affects their ability to attend class on a regular basis?** Academic Support will make this determination based on a review of documentation pertaining to the student's disability and will provide verification of eligibility in an accommodation letter the student presents to the instructor.
2. **Is attendance an essential element of the course?** Would adjustment to the attendance policy result in a fundamental alteration of the curriculum? Instructors make this determination on a case-by-case basis in consultation with Academic Support.

Attendance as an Essential Element of the Course

Class attendance policies are determined by the course faculty or academic departments who teach the course(s). The number of allowable absences may depend on the interactive or participatory nature of the course. If attendance is determined to be an essential element of a course, students must work with the faculty to determine the maximum number of class that can be missed without compromising the integrity of the course prior to determining the appropriate accommodations.

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has provided the following guidelines to assess if attendance is an essential part of a class:

- Is there classroom interaction between the instructor and students and among other students?
- Do student contributions constitute a significant component of the learning process?
- Does the fundamental nature of the course rely on student participation as an essential method for learning?
- To what degree does a student's failure to attend constitute a significant loss to the education experience of other students in the class?
- What do the course description and syllabus say?
- Which method is used to calculate the final grade?
- What are the classroom practices and policies regarding attendance?

Attendance accommodations will be considered on a case-by-case basis. However, to preserve the integrity of the course, *in most cases* absences should not exceed 40% of class dates. There is no accommodation for unlimited absences; students who anticipate missing more than 40% of the course are encouraged to consult with Academic Support to consider withdrawing from the course.

Certain accommodations may be deemed unreasonable or inappropriate if they would lower program or university academic standards or outcomes or impose an undue financial or administrative burden on the university (in which case, the university will consider alternative accommodations).

Confidentiality and Student Records

Determination of eligibility for disability accommodations will be made by Academic Support, which will issue the student the appropriate accommodations memos. Students are expected to provide their memos to their faculty, and to discuss the nature and extent of their attendance accommodation with their faculty. **During this conversation, the student is not required to share their diagnosis or details about their disability beyond the frequency with which attendance may be impacted, and should never be asked to provide medical records, doctor's notes, or other disability documentation to the faculty.** Such information is considered confidential; documentation of disability-related information will remain with Academic Support.

Student Responsibilities

As with other class-related accommodations, it is the student's responsibility to disclose that they have approved accommodations through Academic Support by providing an accommodation memo to the faculty of each course in which they would like to use their accommodations. All attendance accommodations must be established in advance.⁴ **Approved accommodations apply from the date of approval onward; they do not apply retroactively.** Students who experience medical conditions of an episodic and unpredictable nature, such as seizure disorders or Crohn's disease, are encouraged to establish accommodations in advance as a precautionary measure.

Since the attendance accommodation will vary from course to course, the student should discuss the use of this accommodation in their respective courses. During that meeting, the student and instructor will discuss the extent to which accommodations to the course attendance policy may be reasonable for a particular course. **The student is not obligated to share details of their diagnosis beyond the estimated frequency with which attendance will be impacted;** documentation of medical conditions is confidential and should only be provided to Academic Support.

Only disability-related absences are covered under the agreed upon attendance accommodation. Absences due to common illnesses, personal conflicts, or other non-disability reasons should be held to the standard course attendance policy. The student should be in contact with both Academic Support and their faculty in advance if they suspect that they will not be able to meet the terms of the agreed upon attendance accommodation.

Communication is the Key!

Students are expected to maintain regular communication with their instructors about disability-related absences, and should inform their instructors of disability-related absences in advance or as soon as possible. If the student does not provide prompt communication about a disability-related absence, the absence may not qualify for coverage under the agreed upon attendance accommodation.

Suggested Accommodations: Guidelines for Faculty

Students will be issued an accommodations memo from Academic Support specifying their eligibility for attendance accommodations. Prior to determining the appropriate accommodations, the student and instructor should determine how many disability-related absences are reasonable without compromising the integrity of the course.

To facilitate this discussion, the student and faculty should review and complete an Attendance Agreement to clearly set out expectations. Following this meeting, the student and instructor should have a clear understanding of what accommodations, if any, can be made for disability-related absences. *Academic Support is available to consult with instructors and students on issues concerning disability and attendance and can facilitate the completion of this agreement.*

Attendance accommodations will be determined on a course-by-course basis. Some possible examples of reasonable attendance accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

⁴ Exceptions may apply in the case of a student who experiences an unexpected medical condition; in which case, accommodations should be sought as soon as possible following the incident, and may apply to the medical circumstance recently experienced, on a case-by-case basis.

- Allowance for disability-related absences without impacting the student's grade
- Extended time to complete coursework affected by disability-related absences without penalty to the grade (in most cases, the extension will be equivalent to the amount of time missed during disability-related absence)
- Exam postponement (equivalent to the amount of time missed during disability-related absence)
- Alternative assignments (must provide equivalent learning outcomes to original assignment)
- Alternative modes of participation (including, but not limited to, media-assisted communication such as Course Commons, Skype, FaceTime, etc.)

When a class is missed due to a disability-related absence, a general rule for determining a reasonable timeframe for a makeup or postponement of an assignment (such as a paper, exam or quiz) is the time equivalent to that which was missed. In certain courses, it may be appropriate to consider an alternative assignment, reading or project to make up for a missed class discussion or project. The decision to provide alternative assignments is at the discretion of the instructor based on course requirements. Additionally, the ability to submit course work missed due to a disability-related absence without grade penalty may be an appropriate accommodation.

Accommodation Procedures: Step-by-Step Guide

1. Approval of attendance accommodations

It is the student's responsibility to request accommodations through Academic Support, following the procedures outlined in the Disability and Academic Accommodations Handbook.

2. Complete Attendance Agreement for each course

The student will meet one-on-one with the faculty for each course they are seeking accommodations in, and will present their memo from Academic Support. The student and faculty should work together to complete the Attendance Agreement, and discuss how attendance, due dates, and participation are designed in the course, and what reasonable accommodations can be made without compromising the integrity of the course. The completed and signed Attendance Agreement must be returned to Academic Support. If the student has any concerns, they should contact Academic Support to facilitate this discussion.

3. If agreement cannot be reached

If the student and faculty are not able to determine how many disability-related absences are reasonable or the appropriate level of accommodation, they should contact Academic Support, who will provide additional consultation. In the event of such consultation, the student, faculty, and Academic Support will work as a team to attempt to determine a reasonable level of accommodation. If an accommodation plan is determined, the student and faculty will complete an Attendance Agreement. If it is determined that the requested accommodation will substantially alter essential course components, the request will be deemed unreasonable. If a request is deemed unreasonable, Academic Support will communicate this in writing to the student. In this event, the student may choose to follow the appeal procedures outlined in the Disability and Academic Accommodations Handbook. If no agreement can be reached, further consultation will be made with the Director of the Center for Student Success, following the procedure outlined in the Disability and Academic Accommodations Handbook.