6.3 Student Accessibility Policy

The purpose of this Policy is to set forth provisions for the college’s compliance with relevant legislation and establishes the Canisius College’s intent that qualified students with disabilities be provided with reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access and equal opportunities with regard to the college’s programs and services. This Policy is intended to provide a method by which the college will process students requests for disability accommodations.

POLICY

It is the policy of Canisius College to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), applicable provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the New York Human Rights Law (“Human Rights Law”), and applicable local laws that forbid discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities. Accordingly, Canisius College provides reasonable accommodations to qualified students and applicants who have disabilities where such accommodations would not cause the college undue hardship. Canisius College strives to foster a culture where such students feel no hesitation about requesting accommodations that will enable them to participate in social, academic, and college-sponsored extracurricular programs.

Persons with disabilities are held to the same standards of conduct as other students and a disability will not excuse misconduct.

DEFINITIONS

Accommodation—Any change in the work environment, the educational experience, or the provision of services that enables a qualified individual with a disability to enjoy equal opportunity to perform the job, participate in the educational experience, or receive the provision of services.

Disability—The ADA defines an individual with a disability as any person who (1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities; (2) has a record of such impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment. The Human Rights Law has a broader definition of disability that includes any physical or mental impairment that prevents the exercise of a normal bodily function or is demonstrable by medically accepted clinical or laboratory diagnostic techniques.

Documentation—Those documents and reports that are required to be presented to the college by the person requesting an accommodation before any accommodation will be provided. Documentation consists of official written communications from a relevant qualified treating health professional (such as a physician, surgeon, psychiatrist, physical therapist, etc.). This communication must be current and must describe the diagnosis and nature of the disability, the major life function(s) affected, the functional limitations of the disability, and the prognosis. The professional may also make suggestions regarding the accommodations being requested, and the college may ask the person requesting an accommodation to provide input from the professional concerning appropriate and meaningful accommodations.

Essential Function—A task or responsibility that is central (not marginal) to the purpose of the job, the class, or the activity.

Hardship—An undue hardship is an action that requires significant difficulty or expense in relation to the size of Canisius College, the resources available, and the nature of the job, operation or activity.

Major Bodily Functions—Major bodily functions include, but are not limited to, functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine and reproductive functions.

Major Life Activity—Major life activities include, but are not limited to caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating and working and major bodily functions, which include functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine and reproductive functions. An individual’s ability to perform a major life activity is compared to most people in the general population.

Qualified Individual with a Disability—One who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of a particular job or meet specific academic/program requirements for participation in a college sponsored program, service or activity.

Reasonable Accommodations—An action that may be taken by the college to accommodate an individual with a documented disability, without imposing an undue hardship on the college.
**Substantially Limits**—An individual’s major life activity is substantially limited if he/she is unable to perform a major life activity that an average person in the general population can perform. An impairment that is episodic or in remission is a disability if it would substantially limit a major life activity when active. Mitigating measures taken by the individual will not be taken into consideration in determining whether the individual is substantially limited in a major life activity, except for corrective eyewear.

**PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES**

In order for students to receive academic or non-academic accommodations, students must self-identify and register with The GRIFF Center for Academic Engagement, complete the Accessibility Support intake form, and provide current documentation by a licensed or certified official that states the disability. In the case of most disabilities, the documentation should be no more than three to four years old and the assessment should be given at an adult level. Included in the written assessment should be a description of the current impact of the disability as it relates to the accommodations requested. A brief statement written by a physician on a prescription pad is not sufficient documentation.

The student must meet with a professional in Accessibility Support to discuss the accommodations, and to become familiar with the procedures. Through consultation and evaluation of documentation, each student’s needs are identified on a case-by-case, course-by-course basis. If documentation is outdated or further documentation is needed, Accessibility Support requires that the student obtain the needed information or assessment to receive services. No diagnostic testing is provided through Accessibility Support. There is a psychologist referral list available that highlights cost, locations, and insurance accepted. Students may register with the office at any point throughout their academic career. Documentation provided to Accessibility Support is not considered part of a student’s permanent academic record. Accessibility Support will keep files for a minimum of seven years, and then at that time will destroy the content, unless the student requests the information be returned. Applicable Accessibility Support forms are available at [https://www.canisius.edu/student-experience/student-support-services/griff-center/accessibility-support/policies-and-forms](https://www.canisius.edu/student-experience/student-support-services/griff-center/accessibility-support/policies-and-forms).

**Auxiliary Aids**

A college student, living with a disability, who is in need of an auxiliary aid, must provide Accessibility Support with appropriate documentation. This documentation should be provided by the student to Accessibility Support in the interest of assuring that documentation is appropriate to and/or verify eligibility and to support requests for auxiliary aids on the basis of a learning disability that currently substantially limits one or more major life activities. Documentation serves as a foundation that legitimizes a student’s request for appropriate accommodations. In the K-12 school setting, teachers and/or counselors may have arranged support services for students with disabilities. In the college setting, the students themselves must identify the need for an auxiliary aid and give adequate notice of the need to Accessibility Support. Appropriate aids are selected after discussion with the student and Accessibility Support. Colleges are not required to provide the most up-to-date sophisticated auxiliary aids available; however, the aids provided should meet the needs of a student with a disability. Colleges have flexibility in choosing the specific aid or service it provides to the student, as long as the aid or service selected is effective.

**Examples of Auxiliary Aids:** Some of the various types of auxiliary aids and services may include:

- Alternative texts
- note takers
- sign language interpreters
- readers
- talking calculators
- Braille calculators, printers, or typewriters
- open and closed captioning
- specialized gym equipment
- calculators or keyboards with large buttons
- raised-line drawing kits
- assistive listening devices
- assistive listening systems
- telecommunications devices for deaf persons

**Auxiliary aids include:** Sign Language Interpreters or other effective methods of making orally delivered materials available to students who are deaf or hard of hearing; readers for students with visual impairments; classroom equipment adapted for use by students with manual impairments; and other similar services or equipment.

While funding for accommodations to ensure equal access is available from Canisius College, funding for auxiliary aids is often the responsibility of state vocational rehabilitation agencies and the student. The college does not provide prescription devices, or devices and services of a personal nature.

The need for auxiliary aids and services is deemed appropriate by the Director of DSS based on the documentation provided by the student. The student must follow these procedures in order to request auxiliary aids and services:

- The student must initially contact Accessibility Support to request auxiliary aids and services as early as possible each semester; and
- The student must provide the office with documentation of the disability, which supports the need for auxiliary aids and services. Accessibility Support will then determine which auxiliary aids and services are appropriate accommodations.

**Loan of Adaptive Equipment:** The college may loan some types of adaptive equipment and devices to qualified students free-of-charge. Equipment is loaned out on a daily, weekly, or semester basis depending on need and demand for equipment by other students.

The need for adaptive equipment is deemed appropriate by the Accessibility Support based on the documentation provided by the student. The student must follow these procedures in order to request adaptive equipment:

- The student must initially contact Accessibility Support to request to borrow adaptive equipment;
- The student must sign an equipment release agreement. The student will be instructed in the use and care of equipment by a qualified staff member. The student is held responsible for the equipment. The student must return item(s) in the same condition it was loaned. The student will be responsible for replacing item(s), which are stolen, damaged (outside of normal wear), lost, etc. If a student fails to return any equipment by the end of the semester, a hold is placed on the student’s registration until the student has returned or otherwise satisfactorily accounts for the equipment; and
- Students must meet with professors to inform them of in-class needs, preferably at the beginning of the semester.
Students may be encouraged to apply for funding from outside sources for auxiliary aids and adaptive equipment (e.g. Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR), New York State Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped, and/or NYS Readers Aid Program).

Alternative Text

Students with print disabilities, such as visual impairments and certain learning disabilities, may require textbooks and material in an alternative format. The following policy has been created to provide information and direction regarding alternative text services Accessibility Support provides, as well as guidelines relative to how these services may be obtained from this office. This policy is reviewed and modified on a regular basis to meet the ongoing needs of students with print disabilities at Canisius College.

Policy and Procedure

- Alternative text accommodations are provided to students who are registered with Accessibility Support and have been approved for this accommodation by the Director.
- Students requesting alternative text must be enrolled in the course for which the alternate text is being requested. Requests for alternative text must be received with each new semester as well as each new class. It is recommended that requests be made at least 4-6 weeks in advance of classes starting. If the student has trouble obtaining this information from the course instructor, the student must contact Accessibility Support as soon as the delay is known. The student is still responsible for purchasing the textbook(s) appropriate for each class.
- In order to receive alternate text materials, the student must verify that the instructional materials have been purchased and/or ordered. Accessibility Support will then order materials on behalf of the student.
- In order to secure a request for alternate text (e-text, Braille, tactile graphics, large print) please complete the on-line Alternative Text Request form. Please complete one form per each alternate text service needed.
- Alternate text requests should be submitted as soon as the student enrolls in a course. Late requests will be honored with the understanding that Accessibility Support will attempt to complete the work in a timely fashion. Turn-around times for alternate text requests are determined on a case by case basis. Upon receipt of materials to be formatted and converted, Accessibility Support will notify the student of the projected completion date.

Textbooks previously recorded:

- Each student requiring an electronic version of their text will be encouraged to sign up with the Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic lending library (RFB&D) and/or other agencies as suggested by Accessibility Support. The student is responsible for the lifetime membership fee.
- Each student will be encouraged to contact RFB&D or other agencies immediately to inquire if required textbooks are available on cassette tape or computer disk. If so, the student will be encouraged to order the books from RFB&D or other agencies.
- Accessibility Support will explore the feasibility of having the textbook recorded on campus or make other accommodations. The final decision as to which accommodation to use is the college’s; student preference will be taken under consideration, but not necessarily determine the final decision.
- If there is enough time to send the book out to be recorded, the DSS office will obtain the required copies of the book, if possible with funding from Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID). The DSS Office will arrange for RF&D or another agency to record the book and send the cassette tapes directly to the student as they are recorded.

Options for obtaining information in multi-media form: An option for Accessibility Support students may be to request that student materials be scanned and burned onto a CD ROM. The student may then request, providing his/her personal computer has enough memory (ideally 28 Megs of RAM), to obtain a copy of a speech program that will read the materials burned onto the CD ROM, at his/her own convenience. A mini disc player is also a possible option. Interested students should contact Accessibility Support.

- Defective tapes/discs: If for any reason a cassette tape or disc is faulty, or the recording or reading is not of good quality, the student should tell Accessibility Support immediately. If needed, Accessibility Support will arrange for the tape/disc to be fixed or re-recorded as soon as possible. If a reader’s speaking voice is not clear for any reason, the student should explain the problem to Accessibility Support immediately.
- Copyright issues: Because Accessibility Support does not have copyright clearance for books, tapes and discs, they cannot be distributed to students unless they own a print copy of the material.
- Returning Materials: The student will return all materials, including CD’s, tapes, players, etc. borrowed from Accessibility Support by the end of the semester.

Unformatted Text:

- When students choose to request unformatted e-text (text in its native format from the publisher) hard copy materials will not be required. Accessibility Support’s ability to deliver unformatted text is directly impacted by the student’s timing of request to Accessibility Support and the publisher’s response to the request for e-text.
- Accessibility Support will make every effort to work with publishers to receive e-text in a timely manner and in a useable format.
- All requests for unformatted e-text will be made for a preferred and useable format. Requests for formatted e-text will require the student to electronically submit the Alternative Text Request form online.

Formatted Text:

- Students may also have a need to request formatted/edited text. Requests for formatted e-text will require the student to electronically submit the Alternative Text Request form online.
- Alternate text production for formatted text will begin when Accessibility Support has received the online request form, the hardcopy textbook and the instructor’s course syllabus. Students will not have hard copy materials back from Accessibility Support upon completion of the conversion to alternative text.
- Accessibility Support will request e-text directly from publishers for all requests. If the alternate text request is for formatted text and there is no response from the publisher, the college will scan the hard copy materials and begin production. The time frame will be established on a case-by-case basis based on student need.
- In order to meet immediate needs of as many students as possible, formatted alternate text may be provided in stages based on the course syllabus and direction from the student making the request.
- Students can produce hard copy alternate text, such as Braille, from electronic files provided by Accessibility Support or large print by using the copy machine.
- In the event that a student drops the class, or there is a change in the alternate text need, the student is to notify Accessibility Support so the office can respond accordingly by either discontinuing or modifying the current and future job(s) in progress.
All students are reasonable: If a student with a documented disability believes that he/she has not been provided with a reasonable housing accommodation, the

To assist in fully and fairly evaluating each request and ensuring that the prior accommodation(s) are made, Accessibility Support will determine on a case-by-case/course-by-course basis the use of note takers as an appropriate accommodation. Students who receive this accommodation typically have a visual or hearing impairment, physical disability, traumatic brain injury, or learning disability. The note taker service is free to qualifying students with disabilities, and it is a paid position to the note taker.

Availability and Feasibility of Special-Need Housing Accommodation

- Is space available that meets the student’s needs?
- Is the student in special interest housing — can the requested accommodation be met within that area?
- Can space be adapted to provide the requested accommodation without creating a safety hazard (electrical load, emergency egress, etc.)?
- Are there other effective methods or housing accommodations that would achieve similar benefits as the requested accommodation?
- How does meeting this request impact housing commitment to other students?
- Is the cost of meeting the request prohibitive?

Appeal Process: If a student with a documented disability believes that he/she has not been provided with a reasonable housing accommodation, the student should direct his/her concern to the Dean of Students or designee. The student must provide in writing the nature of the concern and any other relevant information. The decision of the Dean of Students or designee is final.

Note Takers

Accessibility Support coordinates note taking services for students with a disability who are registered with the office. Based on the documentation of the disability, Accessibility Support will determine on a case-by-case/course-by-course basis the use of note takers as an appropriate accommodation. Students who receive this accommodation typically have a visual or hearing impairment, physical disability, traumatic brain injury, or learning disability. The note taker service is free to qualifying students with disabilities, and it is a paid position to the note taker.
How the Service Works: Accessibility Support approves note taker accommodations, and like all disability accommodations, are based on the student’s disability documentation, the current nature of their disability, and the specific requirements of the course or program. The service is meant to supplement class attendance and not replace it. Students eligible for this accommodation are asked to make a formal request every semester and for each class in which there is a need. It is strongly encouraged that students attend the first two classes to determine which classes are appropriate for use of a note taker. It is the student's prerogative whether or not to disclose their identity to their note taker. Students are also encouraged to recommend classmates who they know are responsible, take good notes, and attend class reliably.

Confidentiality: Student information shared with the Accessibility Support is considered confidential. Therefore, note takers may not know the identity of the person for whom they are taking notes. However, there may be instances where the student will want to share their identity in order to collaborate with their note taker. In this case, the note taker is expected to keep shared information confidential. The relationship, whether anonymous or not, between the student and their note taker(s) is important.

How to Use the Notes Effectively: For students utilizing the services of Accessibility Support, the note taking service is effective if students attend class regularly, actively engage in the class, and use the notes in a proactive manner. Below are some steps students may choose to take to make the most out of the note taker service.

Three Ring Binders: - Using a three-ring binder can be an effective way of keeping notes organized. Weekly notes can be hole-punched and organized as they are received along with the student’s own notes.

Reviewing the Notes: - Read the notes within two hours or less of receiving them. Once the student has read over the notes, he/she should try to paraphrase important points that the professor made in the lecture, fill in gaps points heard but not recorded, and find answers to any questions remaining unanswered. Answer the following questions:

- Are the notes readable?
- Is important information from the lecture, including blackboard, overheads or Power Point included?
- Is the note taker using headings, bullets, indentations, and underline or star (*) major points and key words? Do they leave white space for later additions?
- Do I understand the note taker's abbreviations?

Students using the note taking services who feel they are not receiving quality notes should contact Accessibility Support as soon as possible at (716)-888-2170.

Being a Student Note taker: Accessibility Support coordinates note taking services for students who are registered with the office and who due to a disability, or disabilities, are either unable to take notes or need notes to supplement their own note. Students who receive this accommodation may have a visual or hearing impairment, a physical disability, a learning disability or traumatic brain injury.

Job Qualifications: Note taking services are effective for the student with a disability if the note taker attends class regularly and is actively engaged in the class. Students interested in being a note taker should:

- Attend class regularly;
- Have strong note taking skills;
- Have legible handwriting or be able to provide typed notes in Word format; and
- Deliver notes at a maximum of 24 hours after class ends to the DSS office.

Notes Should Include

- Main points of the lecture and presentations
- Explanations, examples, and comments given by the professor
- Information from the blackboard, overheads and Power Point
- Dates and details for upcoming exams, quizzes, papers, and other assignments
- It is not necessary to provide personal notes from readings or notes that the student has created for studying or writing papers.

General Guidelines

- Write only on one side of the paper
- Use a black or blue pen
- Keep notes within the margins of the page and leave a blank line at the bottom of each page
- At the top, please include the date, class # and page # in the upper right hand corner of every page. For example, 9/3/01, ENGL 101 A, pg. 1 of 5.

If a note taker would like to provide notes in an electronic format and the student wishes to remain anonymous, please send as Word attachment to Sierra Boner at rapones@canisius.edu

How to Apply to Be a Note Taker: Contact Accessibility Support to apply for a note taking position that has been announced in one or more of your classes. Accessibility Support also encourages past note takers to contact the office during the first week of classes to let it know of the classes that the note taker is available to take notes for. Accessibility Support will either let the note taker know at that point if there is currently a class available, or it will phone the note taker when one becomes available. Accessibility Support is located in Old Main 013 and is open during the academic semester Monday through Thursday 8 am to 8 pm; Friday 8 am to 5 pm. Intersemester and Summer hours are 8:30am to 4:30pm. If hired, and the note taker is not a Canisius College employee (i.e. work-study, CEEP Grant recipient), the note taker will need to complete necessary paperwork for the Payroll Office and provide a copy of two valid forms of identification, such as:

- a passport;
- driver’s license;
- birth certificate; or
- Social security card

Student’s who are currently working on campus need to fill out one form and do not have to provide two forms of identification.
Compensation: Accessibility Support is able to offer a stipend per class. Students who are U.S. citizens are eligible for employment as a note taker. Due to Federal Employment Laws, Canadian and International students may not eligible to become note takers. Stipends will be issued during the semester that the services are provided. In order to receive payment, all paperwork and proper ID documentation must be received in The GRIFF Center for Academic Engagement at least two-weeks prior to the end of the semester. All stipends will be issued just prior to the end of the semester and are available for pick up in Student Accounts located in the Bagen Hall, Room 106.

Effective Note taking: Note taking is a skill which takes practice and involves effort. Note taking is meant to provide a written record for review which requires an active effort on the part of the listener to condense, rephrase and organize information in a short period of time. Below are several steps that may help note takers improve note taking skills:

- Sit in the classroom where hearing and seeing are best, and where there are fewer distractions;
- Review the previous class notes and think through what has happened in class to date;
- Be alert for speaker emphasis through tone or gesture, repetition, and use of cue words such as remember, first, finally, usually, however, but, most importantly, etc.;
- Don’t try for a verbatim transcript, but do get down all of the main ideas and record some details and illustrations;
- Paraphrase and develop a suitable system of shorthand - be consistent in its use;
- Leave plenty of white space on the page for later additions;
- Use an outline format, indentation, underlining, circles, etc. to indicate relative importance of information; and
- Underscore or “™” major points.

Shuttle Service

Accessibility Support provides a shuttle service to students who are registered with the office. The shuttle is offered as a service to college students, but is not considered an accommodation based on the Americans with Disabilities Act. This service is available for students that are permanently or temporarily registered with the Accessibility Support.

- The Accessibility Support Shuttle runs Monday through Friday during the academic year when classes are in session only.
- Arrangements for the Accessibility Support Shuttle should be made through the office. For registrations, please call the office at (716) 888-2170 or stop in the office at Old Main 013. When making arrangements be advised that schedules must be coordinated with the schedule of other students already using this service. Students may need to be flexible with their pick-up and drop-off times. Scheduling may be affected by high traffic hours, weather conditions, emergencies and other conditions that may cause scheduling changes. Also, all Canisius College vehicles must adhere to traffic laws, consider weather conditions and/or may need to respond to emergencies that may cause a delay in service.
- Students who need shuttle service beyond the hours available through the Accessibility Support should call Public Safety dispatch (716) 888-2330 and arrange for a ride.
- The Public Safety shuttle runs until 2 a.m. The Public Safety vans have enough space for a student with a mobility issue to be able to access the van. In cases where the student is unable to access the van, the student should call the Public Safety dispatch (716) 888-2330 to arrange for an alternative method of transportation.
- For students in wheelchairs, shuttle service for afternoon and evening classes/events may be arranged through the Accessibility Support with at least two days notice. In case of an emergency, please call Public Safety (716) 888-2330 and they will assist with the situation.

Students who need to cancel, or reschedule a pick-up, please phone The GRIFF Center for Academic Engagement at (716)-888-2170.

Testing Accommodations

The Griff Center Proctor Site is a designated area for students that need testing accommodations due to a disability or to make up a missed exam. Test accommodations are determined on a case-by-case/course-by-course basis after review of a student’s official documentation. These accommodations include (but are not limited to) the following:

Each student is unique, and accommodations may vary from student-to-student, and may include accommodations that are not listed here.

- “Test,” as used in this context, refers to quizzes/examinations taken during the semester including final exams in conjunction with an academic class. A student should discuss his/her specific needs for testing accommodations (e.g., extended time, separate location, use of a computer, etc.) with Accessibility Support in a timely manner before tests are to be administered.
- Extended Time – a factor in reading testing material, processing information, or writing answers. [The amount of time allotted is based on the student’s official documentation.]
- Reader – questions may have to be read to the student by a proctor due to visual difficulties or cognitive problems.
- Scribe – proctor will write or type the student’s answers for them if they have a physical disability where their own writing capabilities are affected.
- Adaptive Equipment – screen enlargers, talking computers, word processors, or Braille printers can be used during the test if needed.
- Modification of Test Response Format – enlarging answer sheets or transcribing answers onto a computer scan sheet are techniques that may be used.
- Environmental Control – a separate quiet testing room and earplugs to eliminate any additional noise or interruptions. This helps to relieve anxiety and encourage concentration.

Testing Environment and Academic Integrity: Accessibility Support and the Griff Center enforce the highest level of academic integrity while administering exams. The Griff Center requires that students maintain the same level of academic integrity and respect that is conveyed within the classroom - in the Griff Center Proctor Site. If the proctor suspects that a student is cheating, the exam will be confiscated and the incident will be reported to the professor.

To create a positive academic environment that is conducive to test taking, we ask that the student adhere to the following guidelines:

- The following items are not allowed in the testing rooms: electronic devices (unless permitted by the course instructor), book bags, notebooks /books, purses, jackets, etc.
- All materials – including scrap paper – must be returned to the proctor upon completion of the exam.

Scheduling an Exam
Professors should supply enough copies of the exam to cover the anticipated number of test takers. If an unknown number of students will be taking the exam, please supply two copies per exam.

Delivery of all materials to The Griff Center Proctor Site is the responsibility of the professor. The exam and completed Testing Proctor Form is to be delivered to The Griff Center Proctor Site (Old Main 317) prior to the scheduled exam time. Exams will be secured in the office. Professors are encouraged to personally deliver the exams to The Griff Center Proctor Site in order to possibly clarify questions or concerns. However, delivery of the test in a sealed envelope from an individual authorized by the faculty member will be accepted. Tests can be emailed to ACCESS@canisius.edu or emailed directly to Sierra Bonerb, rapones@canisius.edu, as long as the completed Proctor Form has been handed into the office beforehand. Campus interoffice mail is not encouraged.

The Griff Center Proctor Site will keep an exam for up to two weeks after the scheduled exam date. Please remember to indicate on the Proctor Checklist Form if the un-used exam will be picked up or if it should be shredded. The professor will be notified if the student arrives late or does not show up to the scheduled test.

Evacuation Plan for Individuals with Disabilities

Canisius College’s policies and procedures require that everyone evacuates campus facilities any time the fire-alarm system is activated and/or upon notification by Public Safety and/or the emergency coordinator. These policy guidelines and procedures apply to both real emergencies and drills and must be followed by all members of the college community, including individuals with disabilities.

Evacuation Procedures for Individuals with Disabilities

Special considerations may need to be made in emergency situations for individuals with disabilities. How an individual with a disability responds to an emergency depends on the type of emergency, the specific disability, and the location of work, classes, or campus residence. Ultimately the individual with a disability is responsible for his or her own safety in emergency situations. It is wise for the individual to plan ahead for emergencies. Pre-planning includes developing an evacuation plan with the Director of DSS and then discussing the specifics of the plan with members of the college community, including, but not limited to, supervisors, co-workers, faculty, fellow students, residence hall staff, and/or other residents.

Responsibilities of Individuals with Disabilities: Pre-Emergency Preparation

In an emergency situation, it is critical to the health and safety of individuals with disabilities that they are familiar with their needs during an evacuation. Individuals are expected to convey these needs to the DSS Office, their supervisors, co-workers, faculty, fellow students, residence hall staff, and/or other residents, within the first week of each semester. The following guidelines are general suggestions and not as an official plan of action. Individuals with disabilities should contact the DSS Office to arrange for an evacuation plan each semester. The safety of individuals with disabilities depends on their judgment and knowledge of general safety precautions.

- Individuals with disabilities should be familiar with the layout of buildings and the location of exits in every building in which they work, have class, or reside on campus.
- Individuals with disabilities should be familiar with the distinct emergency alarm system in each room and/or building (e.g. horn, strobe lights).
- Individuals with disabilities should be familiar with the safest evacuation sites in each building (see suggestions below).
- Whenever possible, individuals with disabilities should try to have designated persons or “evacuation assistants,” such as supervisors, co-workers, faculty, fellow students, residence hall staff, and/or other residents, assist them during the evacuation. Evacuation assistants can assist individuals with disabilities in evacuating the building or, as needed, help them reach and access a safe evacuation site (see suggestions below) before alerting emergency personnel of their location in the building and the nature of their disability.
- Individuals with disabilities should tell their evacuation assistant about specific evacuation needs (e.g. use of a wheelchair or a respirator, breathing or mobility difficulty, or stamina difficulties.)
- Individuals with disabilities should practice the procedures at the beginning of each semester.

Resident students with either permanent or temporary disabilities should make their room information and needs known to the DSS Office, the hall director (HD) and the resident assistant (RA) assigned to their floor. Because HDs and RAs may not be in the building at all times, it is also recommended that, as needed, students make their needs known to one or more students residing on the same floor in their residence hall. Identifying needs to more than one individual will help to facilitate evacuation in the event of an emergency. In the event that none of these people are available during an evacuation, contact the Public Safety Office at 711 or (716) 888-2330 or contact another resident student for assistance. HDs, RAs, and other students can provide assistance by helping the individual reach the safest evacuation site and then advising the emergency personnel where the individual is located in the building and the nature of the disability.

Resident students with disabilities must notify the DSS Office as well as residence hall staff if they permanently move to another room.

It is recommended that a floor meeting be conducted by resident assistants during the early part of each semester to discuss disability concerns and to instruct everyone on emergency procedures. In addition, resident staff training will include notification of the location of individuals with disabilities in each building and procedures for assisting students.

Responsibilities of Individuals with Disabilities: Evacuation Procedures During an Emergency/Drill

Individuals who are able to negotiate stairs with no or minor assistance should do so when evacuation is required. Follow the pre-emergency preparation guidelines listed earlier. If danger is imminent, it is recommended that individuals with disabilities wait until the heavy traffic has cleared before attempting egress. However, should individuals with mobility disabilities decide to proceed on their own, caution should be used in negotiating the stairwells.
Individuals who are not able to negotiate stairs should enlist the help of their evacuation assistants to reach and access a safe evacuation site (see suggestions below). They should note the location of the area they are in (e.g., northwest corner, 5th floor) to facilitate evacuation. Evacuation assistants will then alert emergency personnel of the individual’s location and the nature of the disability.

If possible, individuals should also contact the Public Safety Office at 711 and (716) 888-2330 during an emergency in order to provide their name, location, and reason for calling. It is also important to indicate specific evacuation needs (e.g., use of a wheelchair or respirator, breathing or stamina difficulties) that should be considered for evacuation. Public Safety will notify emergency personnel of the individual’s location. Phone lines normally remain in service during most building emergencies. If the phone lines fail, individuals can signal from the window by waving a cloth or other visible object. Emergency personnel will then enter the building to evacuate individuals who require assistance.

Vertical (Stairway) Evacuation: Stairways can be used by those who are able to evacuate with no or minor assistance. A stairway must be large enough for a person using a wheelchair to sit without obstructing the flow of traffic as people exit the building via the stairway. Obstructing the flow of traffic could place the individual with a disability and others in danger.

Individuals who are not able to use stairways: Unless danger is imminent, remain in a room with an exterior window and a telephone, closing the door if possible. If able, proceed to a stairway that is not in immediate danger (example, exterior stairs in Old Main). As needed, individuals can signal from the window by waving a cloth or other visible object or if possible, call Public Safety at (716) 888-2330 with the exact location.

Horizontal Evacuation: Move away from the area of imminent danger to a safe distance (e.g., to another wing, the opposite end of the corridor, or the outside if on the ground level).

Information on Various Disabilities for Evacuation Assistants

Below is background information on various types of disabilities that supervisors, co-workers, faculty, fellow students, residence hall staff, and/or other residents should become familiar with if asked to be an evacuation assistant for individuals with disabilities.

If individuals have a mobility impairment and/or use a wheelchair, they will most likely require some type of assistance for evacuation. Elevators should not be used unless directed by emergency personnel. In most instances, it is not wise to attempt to carry the person in the wheelchair because most wheelchairs are not constructed for lifting and can be quite heavy (e.g., power wheelchairs can weigh in excess of 300 pounds). Evacuation of a person who uses a wheelchair is best left to emergency personnel with extensive training in evacuation procedures and the proper equipment.

Individuals with visual impairments should already be familiar with their surroundings after mobility and orientation training. However, if they are not aware of emergency exits, offer assistance to guide them to the nearest emergency exit. Provide assistance by using the sighted-guide technique of offering an elbow. While walking, alert individuals as to where they are and inform them of any obstacles, debris, doorways, or narrow passages. Once to safety, orient individuals to their surroundings and determine if further assistance is needed.

Individuals with hearing impairments may need to be alerted to emergency situations. Two options to obtain their attention are: write a note to alert them of the emergency and instruct them where to go, OR turn the light switch on and off to gain their attention.

Individuals who have seizure disorders should alert their supervisor(s), faculty, residence hall staff, and/or health services about their condition and their wishes for responding to their seizures. They should let others know what to expect if a seizure occurs during an emergency evacuation.

Exclusions

- Persons with documented disabilities are not entitled to receive accommodations that would fundamentally alter the class or activity, or that would excuse performance of the essential components of a class or activity.
- Temporary, non-chronic impairments, medical conditions, illnesses and injuries are not disabilities covered under the terms of this Policy.
- The college is not obliged to grant specific requested accommodations if other reasonable accommodations may suffice to give the requestor equal opportunity and access.
- Individuals who pose a direct threat to the safety and health of others are not protected under the law or this Policy, and are not entitled to receive accommodations.
- Individuals who are not disabled, but who are regarded as having a disability, are not entitled to accommodations.
- Use of illegal drugs, or misuse of drugs or alcohol is not protected activity, and such activity will not be considered as an accommodation.

Complaint Procedures

For procedures on filing a complaint of disability discrimination, refer to the Canisius College Discrimination and Harassment Policy.

RELATED POLICIES

Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy
Electronic Accessibility Policy
Assistance Animals Policy
Service Animal Policy