



Pennsylvania College of Art & Design STUDENTS with DISABILITIES POLICY

All students are admitted to Pennsylvania College of Art & Design on the basis of evidence and experience which indicates the potential for success in the College's professional programs. This evidence has historically included a portfolio review, a personal interview, the submission of all previous high school and/or college records, a written statement of intent, and the submission of standardized test scores. In light of PCA&D's mandatory attendance policy, the high school attendance record becomes an important consideration when evaluating first-time foundation students. PCA&D does not unlawfully discriminate against otherwise qualified students with disabilities in its admissions procedures or educational programs.

Pennsylvania College of Art & Design's mission is to provide an opportunity for all its students to gain a professional-level education in the visual arts. After acceptance to the College, students with present disabilities who plan to request academic or other accommodations must identify themselves in writing to PCA&D's ADA and Accommodations Support Team as soon as possible. Disability documentation should confirm the existence of a disabling condition; identify current deficits that cause limitations, preferably in a college setting; and relate the current impact of the condition to the requested accommodations. Documentation should indicate the date of the most recent evaluations and include the signature, title, and credentials of the evaluators or professionals who prepared the documentation.

All requests for reasonable accommodations will be considered and evaluated. Reasonable accommodations that the institution deems likely to facilitate a student's access to the educational opportunities provided at PCA&D will be approved. Accommodations which present a fundamental alteration to the structure or content of PCA&D's professional programs of education in the arts, or which are determined to represent an undue burden on the College, will not be approved.

Students requesting accommodations must demonstrate that they are qualified students with current disabilities entitled to reasonable accommodations under section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act or the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 or the ADA Amendments Act of 2009. Documents in support of requests for accommodations are accepted by the ADA and Accommodations Support Team and evaluated by professionals as appropriate to the requested accommodations.

NOTE: *Pennsylvania College of Art & Design reserves the right to require additional testing or documentation for any student with disabilities at any point in the process of considering an accommodations request, or at any other point during the student's subsequent enrollment in any of the College's programs.*

Although colleges are required to provide reasonable accommodations as necessary, ADA laws do not require provision of devices or services of a personal nature including tutoring, coaching, training, devices for personal use or study, personal attendants and other related services.

The accommodations process can be involved. Students are responsible for timely requests for accommodations—as soon as possible after acceptance to the College or after the need for an accommodation becomes known to the student.



Process for Requesting Academic or Other Accommodations

Declaration of Disability

Applicants and accepted students may request a Disability Accommodations Request Form from the ADA and Accommodations Support Team. All records concerning disability accommodations are confidential and are housed secretly by the team. Team members will also act as liaisons between students with disabilities and College faculty. Faculty are only able to provide academic or other accommodations to qualified students upon written notification of College- approved accommodations.

Documentation Requirements

Learning Disabilities

Requests for accommodations related to learning disabilities must be supported by recent psychoeducational evaluations. This evaluation must be conducted by a psychologist, neurologist, neuro-psychologist, or certified educational psychologist.

A separate Guidelines for Psychoeducational Evaluations sheet describing the expected scope and content of these evaluations is available from the ADA and Accommodations Support Team. Students who will need to take these tests should share the guidelines sheet in advance with the professionals who will be testing them. Psychoeducational evaluations which do not contain specific prescriptions for accommodations applicable to College-level study or which do not address the question of how well a student might perform in a rigorous academic setting, with language that is accessible to a professional in higher education, will not be accepted.

A copy of the completed psychoeducational evaluation (signed by a qualified administering a/o interpreting professional) must be presented to the ADA and Accommodations Support Team. If there is a recent IEP or 504 plan, it may also be submitted but either document alone is insufficient to support a request for accommodations.

Physical or Medical Disabilities

Accommodation requests related to a physical or medical disability have similar documentation requirements. Recent documentation of the nature of the impairment or condition must describe how it limits one or more major life activities* and describe the probable impact of the impairment or condition on a student's ability to succeed in and benefit from PCA&D's educational programs. Prescribed accommodations should be related to enhancing the student's ability to succeed in and benefit from a college-level professional arts education.

This document must be in writing from a physician, physical therapist or other qualified professional. A recent copy of the IEP or 504 plan outlining accommodations successfully employed in a high school setting may also be presented but either document alone is insufficient to support a request for accommodations. Unless a learning disability is also present, the psychoeducational evaluation is not necessary.

** As defined by ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2009 (ADAAA), qualifying disabilities are ones that substantially limit one or more major life functions including but not limited to walking, seeing, hearing, breathing, caring for oneself and /or the impairment of major bodily functions (e.g., functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, neurological, respiratory, circulatory and reproductive functions).*



Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Accommodations for students with ADD or ADHD will be considered only when prescribed in a recent diagnosis from a physician or licensed psychologist with formal training in the assessment of these conditions. The diagnosis should include a statement of the student's medical needs. It should describe, as fully as possible, the impact of medications on the student's ability to handle the pressures of a deadline-intensive, complex problem-solving curriculum typical of a professional arts education. Unless a secondary learning disability is also present, the psychoeducational evaluation is not necessary.

Psychological Disabilities

Requests for accommodations as a result of an impairment caused by mental illness will be considered if the impairment substantially limits a student's ability to function in the normally rigorous art college environment. Recent documentation describing how the impairment limits or has an impact on the individual's ability to function as a student in PCA&D's professional arts programs must be provided in a written statement from a licensed mental health practitioner. Prescribed accommodations should be related to increasing or enhancing the potential for success in and ability to benefit from PCA&D's educational programs.

If there is a recent IEP, this document may be submitted as well though the IEP alone is insufficient to support a request for accommodations. Unless a secondary learning disability is also present, the psychoeducational evaluation is not necessary.

Confidentiality and Additional Requests for Documentation

All documents prescribing accommodations are considered confidential and are not part of the student's permanent academic record kept by the Registrar. When documentation supporting a request for accommodations is requested and/or received, a student will be asked to sign a release form. This form gives the ADA and Accommodations Support Team permission to involve appropriate individuals (including personnel within the College and the student or applicant's physician, therapist, counselor, etc.) in the process of considering the request for accommodations. It also allows the team to notify appropriate faculty or College personnel of any subsequently approved accommodations.

Consideration of a Request for Accommodations and the Appeal Process

Once all necessary documentation is received, a meeting of the ADA and Accommodations Support Team will be scheduled. Students or applicants requesting accommodations are invited to dialogue with the committee when a meeting is called regarding their needs and additional personal information. However, the decision to accept, decline, or modify requested accommodations is made by the team in conjunction with contracted professionals.

The student will be notified, in writing, of any accommodations approved by the team. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the team, a written appeal may be submitted. The Provost and the Vice President of Student Affairs will discuss the appeal and send a written response to the student. Their decision, at this stage, is final and may not be appealed further.



Faculty / Administrative Notification

After a student registers for courses and files an Accommodations Information Release Form, the team will inform appropriate faculty and the Registrar of any academic or other accommodations that PCA&D has accepted for the student. If a student wants additional staff or faculty notified, a space on the Accommodations Information Release Form is provided for their names.

Student Progress and Academic Success

To ensure success, all students are responsible for self-advocacy with their instructors. At PCA&D, it is the student's responsibility to gain a clear understanding of each instructor's curricular and attendance expectations (which may be in addition to the requirements of the College's attendance policy) and act consistently to meet them. Additionally, students with disabilities and approved accommodations should initiate regular meetings with instructors to monitor their own progress—particularly if they are having greater-than-normal difficulty with course materials.

If a student's approved accommodations include special provisions for taking exams, it is the student's responsibility to work out the details with the instructor IN ADVANCE of any exam date. Exam dates are published in an instructor's syllabus. All students receive copies of instructors' syllabi at the beginning of each course every semester.

ALL students should note that PCA&D places a particularly high programmatic value on regular class attendance—it is mandatory. The College-wide attendance policy - published annually in the *Pennsylvania College of Art & Design Catalog and Student Handbook* and in all faculty syllabi - states that after multiple absences in any course in any semester, failure is possible. Faculty and major-specific policies are the final arbiters of this decision in every course in the College's various programs.

Liability

Faculty, administrators, and staff are given information about accommodating students with disabilities based on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2009 (ADAAA). They are required to read and subscribe to the above PCA&D Students With Disabilities Policy. Once the appropriate persons—faculty, staff, administrators—are notified of accommodations approved by PCA&D for a student with disabilities, failure to participate in implementing these accommodations may make individuals personally liable.

Contact information for questions and/or submission of documentation and communication with the ADA and Accommodations Support Team:

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