

Roberts Wesleyan University & Northeastern Seminary
Accessibility and Accommodations
Policy and Procedure
Handbook

Roberts Wesleyan University
Office of Disability Services
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Reviewed by: R. Lanni, *****

Welcome!

Dear Student:

Welcome to Roberts Wesleyan University and Northeastern Seminary and the Learning Center! Our mission is to work with and empower students who have disabilities in order to coordinate support services and programs that enable equal access to an education and university life. On behalf of the Learning Center staff, we look forward to working with you during your academic career at Roberts. Please use this handbook as an important resource for accessing services and accommodations. In order to provide the best program possible, we periodically change our policies, procedures, and services. The Learning Center website (<http://www.roberts.edu/student-experience/learning-center.aspx>) will always offer the most current handbook available since we update the website as changes are made.

Best wishes in your academic career at RWU!



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PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK

Only through early planning can you select a school that will meet your needs and ensure a smooth transition from high school to Roberts and Northeastern. This Handbook will inform you of services, policies and procedures available to students with disabilities at Roberts Wesleyan University (RWU) . This Handbook does not replace the information available in the RWU Student Handbook ([ROBERTS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY STUDENT HANDBOOK TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)) or the RWU website (www.roberts.edu).

The Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities, Rhonda Lanni, who functions on behalf of the student with a disability and Roberts Wesleyan University. If you wish to be identified as a student with a disability, please contact her M-F from 8-4pm at 585.594.6270 or at Lanni_Rhonda@roberts.edu.

Assistance with disability services is available for RWU students, prospective students, or qualified applicants for admission. At the request of the student, parents are a welcomed addition to the process of meeting with the Coordinator and assisting in the process of setting up accommodations.

The decision to use our services is a matter of individual choice. Students achieve a higher level of academic success when they demonstrate initiative and assertiveness, begin preparing early, and are aware of their strengths and weaknesses in the learning environment. RWU wants you to be successful. It is the student's responsibility to become informed about and to make use of the resources that are available.

THE LAW FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Two Federal Laws apply to postsecondary education for students with disabilities. It is the responsibility of all staff, faculty, and students to adhere to the philosophy of equal access to opportunity as described in these laws:

The Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act of 2008 states:

No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any such (public) entity.

Definition: Qualified individual with a disability

The term "qualified individual with a disability" means an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable modifications to rules, policies, or practices, the removal of architectural, communication, or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by a public entity.

Definition: The term "disability" means, with respect to an individual

- (A) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual;
- (B) a record of such an impairment;
- (C) being regarded as having such an impairment

The phrase *regarded as having an impairment* means—

- Has a physical or mental impairment that does not substantially limit major life activities but that is treated by a public entity as constituting such a limitation;
- Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits major life activities only as a result of the attitudes of others toward such impairment; or
- is treated by a public entity as having such an impairment

The phrase *physical or mental impairment* means—

- Any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological, musculoskeletal, special sense organs, respiratory (including speech organs), cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, genitourinary, hemic and lymphatic, skin, and endocrine;
- Any mental or psychological disorder such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.
- The phrase *physical or mental impairment* includes, but is not limited to, such contagious and noncontagious diseases and conditions as orthopedic, visual, speech and hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, mental retardation, emotional illness.

Major Life Activities: 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.

Major Bodily Functions: A major life activity also includes the operation of a major bodily function, including but not limited to, functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions.

Substantially limits means: To be substantially limited in performing a major life activity under the ADA an individual must have an impairment that prevents or severely restricts the individual from doing activities that are *of central importance to most people's daily lives*.

- An impairment that substantially limits one major life activity need not limit other major life activities in order to be considered a disability.
- An impairment that is episodic or is in remission is a disability *if it would substantially limit a major life activity when active*.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Section 504 subpart E states:

No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial

assistance. Please see the entire law at [Auxiliary Aids and Services for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities](#)

SERVICES OFFERED THROUGH THE LEARNING CENTER

Services offered to all students registered at RWU.

- Peer Tutoring
- Writing Support
- Technology
- Study Skills
- Time Management
- Diagnostic: Roberts Wesleyan is pleased to offer basic diagnostic assessment for students who have completed a learning-based screening and may need further assessment to diagnose a possible learning issue. This service is free to matriculated students.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations are individually based. Decisions about accommodations are guided by documentation such as a Doctor's report or a Psychological report. The use of an IEP or previous 504 plan is not recommended as it is relevant only to the site it was created for.

It is the belief of this Disability office that all students should be guided to be self-advocates. At times, a student may need additional guidance or support. The Disability Office will assist students in becoming better self-advocates and will advocate for students where necessary.

Educational accommodations:

- **Notetaking:** Volunteer note takers are available to students with documented need. Note takers are appointed by the professor in a confidential manner. Note takers will assist a student in need but will not be held responsible for student success.
- **Testing Accommodations:** Testing accommodations can be provided on a temporary or permanent basis, depending on documentation. Temporary testing accommodations may be given to provide a student time to work on testing skills or anxiety reduction skills. Temporary accommodations would be updated each semester. Permanent accommodations are updated annually.
- **Alternate format course materials:** Materials in alternate format are for students with print-related learning disabilities or visual impairments. The Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the student has all course texts and materials in the format that provides them equal access and barrier-free learning, with the assistance of the student. Textbooks in alternate format are available based on supporting documentation provided by the student.
- **Technologies:** RWU is committed to staying current with adaptive technologies. The University offers writing support technologies in addition to technologies in areas such as

voice recognition and “readers”. Our technologies are continually changing to adapt to the newest advances. Please contact TLC or the Coordinator for specific information.

- **ADD/ADHD, Spectrum, Executive Functioning support:** Students with the diagnosis of ADD/ADHD and/or on the Spectrum are in need of specific skill development related to the diagnosis. This support is typically a long-term support meant to teach skills and provide positive follow through with each student enrolled. The supports help with executive functioning development in the areas of time management and organization.
- **Other services:** Other supports may include Interpreter services, temporary accommodations, course substitutions, or health related accommodations. Each of these items will be discussed in more depth during the initial meeting with the Disability Coordinator.

Residential Living Accommodations:

All Undergraduate students are expected to live in residence unless living at home with parents. The following accommodations are available to students in Residential Housing. Only if an accommodation cannot be made on campus will a request for off-campus living as an accommodation be granted.

- **Accessible Rooms and Bathrooms:**
- **Single Rooms:** Accommodations are based on documented need from a medical doctor or current therapist. See Medical Single Policy (page 12)
- **Diet and Meal Plans:** Accommodations are based on documented need from a medical doctor. Diagnosis must be provided. See Attached Dietary Needs Flowchart (page 14)
- **Emotional Support Animals:** Accommodations are based on documented need from a current therapist. Animal should be one that is already part of student’s life. See Attached ESA Policy (page 15)

REQUESTING SERVICES

Unlike in high school, students with disabilities do not automatically receive services, nor are they sought out by the university or identified in any way. It is the student’s responsibility to register in with the Office of Disability Services in the Learning Center to receive accommodations. Similarly, accommodations are not retro-active. For example, *if the student waits* to initiate the meeting with the Coordinator until October, the accommodations will not apply to the school work completed in the previous month.

Documentation is required before a 504 plan can be developed. Documentation can be faxed from the primary source (i.e., school, doctor's, etc.), or it can be brought in directly. The preferred documentation is a psychological report and/or medical letter from a physician. A letter from the physician needs to be on letterhead and provide not only a diagnosis but also limitations.

After receiving documentation, the student will meet with the Coordinator of Disability Services. The first meeting is used to determine needs and supports based on documentation. From the documentation and discussion, a legal 504 plan is developed. Once developed, each accommodation or support is talked about to ensure the student knows how to use the 504 plan. For students under the age of 18, a parent should plan to attend the meeting with their student.

For students over the age of 18, parents are welcome at the request of the student.

RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

A medical single will be defined in this policy as a medical need for a single room, or modified room, in relation to a medical, psychological, or physical need in accordance with the ADA law. The student requesting a medical single will need to show proof of a medical, psychological, or physical need. This documentation must be given on the forms provided and must come from a licensed medical doctor or therapist the student has been seeing for treatment. Required documentation can be found at [Medical Housing Form Roberts](#). Documentation over a year old, or provided by a specialist not being seen, will not be accepted.

A medical single will only be approved after the given documentation is reviewed and accepted **and** if rooms are available for a medical single.

Each year new documentation must be provided to keep the medical single. Prior to the designated deadline for a medical single, new documentation must be provided to the Disability Office. In addition, the student may be asked to meet again with the specialist to verify the need is still in place.

Rooms will be assigned on an “as available” policy. While some medical singles will be set aside to meet the needs of the students, there is limited space to meet all needs within a semester. Lack of rooms may limit the number of medical singles that can be assigned. This means, although student A provides documentation of need, if student B has a greater need, a room may not be assigned to student A for a specific semester. In addition, paperwork that is provided after the housing deadline will be reviewed and held for a future opening unless the medical need overrides the decision. Roberts Wesleyan does not provide housing for attendants or aides.

Process

1. Student must provide documentation, explained above, to the Disability Office for review. Documentation must be given on the forms provided by the University for this specific need. **Documentation will not be accepted from the Roberts Wesleyan Counseling Center.**
2. Returning students must provide complete documentation by two weeks prior to housing requests. (April) Requests received after the deadline will be reviewed as they are received and as space is available.
3. If a student is approved for a medical single in the Fall, the student does not need to reapply for the Spring. If a student is not approved for the Fall, the student will be placed on a waiting list and can reapply for the Spring semester. If space has opened, the approval process will begin again.
4. All students who sign up for a **single** room will be billed as a single. If the student is provided with a **medical single**, meaning the student is approved through Student Life and the

Disability Office and has been given a designated medical single, the fee will be removed as per ADA guidelines.

DINING ACCOMMODATIONS

Students living in on campus housing are required to have a meal plan. The Metz Culinary Management staff is able to work with students with dietary restrictions. If accommodations cannot be made, students may request a meal plan reduction or waiver. Students must have a diagnosed dietary need in order to qualify for a meal plan adjustment. Students with allergies are allowed and encouraged to provide individual cooking items for use in shared kitchens. Personal kitchen items must be stored in the student's dorm. Students are responsible for their own transportation to grocery stores.

Roberts Wesleyan University is not able to provide an on campus living option that is 100% allergen free. Kitchens in residence halls are shared spaces. Students with severe, life threatening dietary restrictions may be considered for off campus living. A waiver for off campus living due to dietary restrictions must be approved by the Office of Disability Services. Students who need a dining accommodation must provide documentation to the Office of Disability Services.

1. Student must provide documentation to support their dining/dietary needs.

Documentation should include:

- a. Documentation guidelines for food *allergies*: Documentation must be provided from a licensed Allergist or ENT. Documentation must include allergen and the severity of the student's reaction to allergen. A list of foods containing the allergen should be included.
 - b. Documentation guidelines for other dietary *restrictions*: Documentation must be provided from a licensed medical professional such as a Gastroenterologist or registered Dietician. The documentation must provide a diagnosis with code, and provide a list of foods the student should avoid. The documentation should state what the student's reaction to exposure is along with the severity of the reaction.
 - c. A student on an *elimination diet* should provide documentation matching the requirements of dietary restrictions, along with a start and end date for the diet. The student will need to provide documentation each semester for continued accommodation.
2. After providing documentation to the Office of Disability Services, student must meet with the Food Service Manager to discuss accommodations needed as it relates to the medical documentation.
 3. If the Food Services is unable to accommodate student's dietary needs, the Office of Disability Service may grant a meal plan reduction or meal plan waiver.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AND SERVICE ANIMALS

Service animals versus Emotional Support Animals- A service animal is defined as an animal trained to provide a specific service related to the owner's disability. Service animals have been trained to meet a specific need such as helping pull a wheelchair or providing guidance to a person with a visual impairment. Service animals have extensive training to meet the needs of the owner. An emotional support animal has not undergone training to meet needs. This animal's purpose is to provide emotional support to the owner of the animal.

Service animals are covered under ADA and 504 laws, meaning the certified animal is allowed in all areas the student may need the animal to be in. An emotional support animal has **not** undergone training to meet the needs of the owner and thus is not covered under ADA or 504 laws. Emotional support animals are covered under HUD and FHA law in relation to housing only. This means, the approved animal is only allowed in housing and is not allowed in any other buildings on campus.

A pet is defined as an animal owned by an individual that has not undergone specific training nor meets an emotional need as verified by a licensed therapist. Roberts Wesleyan does not allow pets to live within student residential settings.

Policy Statement

Roberts Wesleyan University does allow service animals to be a part of campus life. A service animal must be registered with the Disability Office *prior* to coming on campus. *See Service Animal Policy*. Emotional support animals are not allowed in any campus building except for the owner's housing.

All requests for an emotional support or service animal must be made prior to the housing assignments deadlines in April to assure housing needs can be met. If housing needs for the student and animal cannot be met, the application will be denied for that specific semester.

If an animal is found on campus prior to the student requesting the animal to be an ESA, the application will be denied and will need to be removed from campus. Approval from the Disability Office AND Student Life must be in place before the animal can come on to campus.

Regulations

1. No dog under the age of one will be accepted. Due to small living spaces, only smaller dogs should be considered. All animals must arrive on campus with full vaccination records and licensing records if the animal is a dog.
2. Vaccination records must be updated annually. The owner must have a plan for flea control and animal waste disposal.
3. Certain dorms are only allowed to have certain animals due to carpeting and allergy issues. Please be sure to work with Student Life to assure housing is appropriate for the animal.
4. Approval for an ESA must be obtained each year.
5. The animal on the application must be house trained.
6. Letters provided by an online source will be denied.

7. ESA animal cannot be dangerous, poisonous, or illegal. ESA animals are limited by size of living space and dormitory needs.
8. **The Roberts Wesleyan University Wellness Center is not able to provide the documentation for an ESA.**

Process

1. A letter must be received from your licensed mental health provider with the following:
 - . The letter must be personally addressed to me, Rhonda Lanni.
 - a. The letter must state the animal the provider is recommending.
 - b. The letter must state how the animal will help your issue in a specific way. IE how will the animal provide emotional support.
 - c. The letter must be signed by the licensed mental health provider with contact information and a licensure number.
 - d. The letter is given to the Disability Coordinator either by fax, email, mail, or by handing it in to the office. All needed information is at the top of this document.
2. If the letter is found to be valid, the next step is to review and sign a housing contract.
3. Once both documents are in, Student life will set up a move in date. On that date, vaccination and health records are required. If the animal is a dog, proof of licensing is required.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS OF STUDENTS

Responsibilities of students

- Students must check their email every day.
- Students must follow specific procedures as outlined in this Handbook.
- Students must disclose their disability to the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities to receive accommodations. By law, disclosure of a disability at the end of the semester does NOT allow the student retroactive accommodations.
- Students should provide disability documentation at least two weeks before the start of a semester. Some auxiliary aids and services require three weeks or more to obtain (e.g. e-textbooks, real-time captioning services, etc.). Housing accommodations should be requested when applying for on campus housing. Housing accommodation requests made after August 1 cannot be guaranteed.
- Students must return all documents and provide information requested at the beginning of each semester to assure the continuation of the 504 plan and the legal coverage provided by the plan.
- Students must meet with the Coordinator if a change needs to be made to the accommodations. A professor cannot make that change.

- For those auxiliary services funded by ACCESS-VR (Vocational Educational Services), the student is encouraged to request that the Coordinator assist in the application process.
- Students must meet the qualifications and standards, both academic and institutional, including the institution's student code of conduct and Technical Standards of their academic program.

Rights of Students with Disabilities

- Students have the right to equal access to courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities available through the university. This includes applications, websites, etc.
- Students have the right to reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids determined by the institution on a case-by-case and/or course-by-course basis.
- Students have the right to reasonable assurance that information regarding a disability will be handled with appropriate respect and be shared with others in the campus community only on a need-to-know basis or to achieve appropriate educational purposes.

RWU RESPONSIBILITIES

- Maintain academic, admissions, conduct and graduation standards.
- Establish reasonable and non-discriminatory policies and procedures regarding students with disabilities and the provision of services
- Select among equally effective and appropriate accommodations, adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids for each student on a case-by-case/course-by-course basis.
- Deny a request for accommodations, adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids or services if:
 - a) the request is unreasonable or inappropriate, and/or
 - b) the request is not made in a timely manner.
- Refuse to provide an accommodation, adjustment, and/or auxiliary that:
 - a) poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others;
 - b) constitutes a substantial change or alteration to an essential element of a course or program;
 - c) Fundamentally alters the nature of the service provided; and/or
 - d) Poses undue financial hardship or administrative burden on the institution.

GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Roberts Wesleyan University believes in the dignity and worth of all persons as created in the image of God. The College strives to be a place where all community members are respected, valued, and appreciated for their diversity. Discrimination includes but is not limited to distinction, preference, advantage for or detriment to an individual compared to others based on any status protected by law that is so severe or pervasive that it interferes with a person's employment, academic performance, or participation in programs/activities, and creates an environment in which a reasonable person would find intimidating, hostile, or offensive.

The Roberts Wesleyan University [Non-Discrimination & Non-Harassment policy](#) is available online. Students who experience discrimination should follow the grievance process in this policy

A student may request a review of the actions of the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities by contacting the Director of The Learning Center and/or the ADA Committee within 30 days. When filing a request for review,

- Students should provide written notice of grievance and why alternatives should be granted. Formal appeals include a written statement regarding the nature of the complaint, results of meetings with the Coordinator, and requested resolution. All formal written appeals will be promptly investigated, and a decision will be rendered within a reasonable time of the date of receipt. The Coordinator is bound by FERPA to speak to only those people allowed by the student in writing.
- The RWU ADA committee will meet with the student for an interview and discussion within ten business days when the college is open. During the meeting, the ADA committee will determine whether or not a temporary accommodation will be granted.
- Confidentiality, Consents, and Record Keeping are provided as part of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Please visit the following website for details on FERPA, student rights and release of information.
<https://rwc.roberts.edu/registration/ferpa.aspx>
- Similarly, “to the limits of the law”, the Coordinator protects each student’s right to privacy, except as permitted by the student expressly for providing support services for that student. Please note that the Coordinator will maintain a record of the student’s disability information to document institutional responses to requests for accommodation.

Note: The grievance process for students seeking accommodation relief is specific to students with disabilities. Other academic and student grievance fall under the procedures in the RWU Student Handbook. However, due to the nature of disability law and the requirement that accommodations are provided in a timely manner, this policy supersedes all other grievance policies and procedures related to student accommodations.

Thank you for taking the time to review the Disability Handbook. If you are looking for a specific piece of information that is not found here, please contact Rhonda Lanni at lanni_rhonda@roberts.edu so that the information can be added for the next person in search.