



ISAB

# Disabilities and Accommodations

Resource guide for International Students

Last updated: Spring 2025



# Table of Contents

<b>Disabilities</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Equal Access/Accessibility</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Weingarten Center &amp; Student Health and Counseling</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Accommodations</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Contact Information</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Registering with Disability Services at Weingarten Center</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Student Groups</b>	<b>11</b>

# Disabilities



As an international student in the United States, you will find that the word "**disability**" is used frequently and in ways that may differ from what you are used to in your home country.

## What is a disability?

In the U.S., disability refers to a **physical or mental** condition that substantially **affects** your daily or weekly life **activities** (e.g. learning, walking, eating, talking, hearing, etc.).

A disability can be:

- Visible or nonvisible.
- Permanent (e.g. dyslexia) or temporary (e.g. broken wrist).

## Non-visible disabilities

**Conditions** or impairments that are not immediately apparent to others (**lack visible signs or symptoms**), yet can significantly impact an individual's **daily life, functioning, or social interactions**.

- Examples: ADHD, anxiety, depression, deaf/hearing loss, visual impairment, autism, chronic pain, learning difficulties, etc.

If you face academic or daily challenges, exploring this resource guide can help you succeed in ways you may not have encountered before.

# Equal Access / Accessibility

Universities like Penn are legally mandated to provide **accommodations** for disabled students to ensure they have **equal access** in and out of the classroom.

“Accessible” means a person with a disability is afforded the **opportunity** to acquire the **same information**, engage in the **same interactions**, and enjoy the **same services** as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use.

– U.S. Department of Education's Resolution Agreement

It can be difficult to figure out what kind of support you need and how to access it. **The Weingarten Center & Student Health and Counseling at Penn** are your go-to places to seek help.

Some reasons students visit them:

- Feeling of having learning differences or other cognitive concerns.
- Issues performing well under regular exam settings.
- Struggle finishing assignments on time.
- Easily distracted or have trouble staying focused.
- Difficulties with memory (forgetting information).
- Find it challenging to stay organized.
- Feel anxious about your academic performance or learning abilities.
- Experience difficulties with reading (slow reading speed or comprehension).

# Weingarten Center & Student Health and Counseling

## What is the Weingarten Center?

The Weingarten Center provides academic support services and programs for undergraduate, graduate, and professional students in the following ways:

- **Academic Support Services**: consultation services for university-relevant skills such as reading, writing, study strategies, and time management. [Tutoring](#) options are also offered to undergraduate students.
- **Disability Services**: work closely with students who have, or suspect they may have, a disability to get access to accommodations and any necessary professional evaluations.

All Weingarten services are **free** and **confidential**.

## What is Student Health and Counseling?

Student Health and Counseling is the primary care and psychological care division of Wellness at Penn that helps any Penn undergraduate, graduate, and professional student as well as faculty and staff.

They provide the Penn community with services for mental health and counseling, crisis management, and consultations.

Both Student Health and Counseling and Weingarten **work collaboratively** to help students in their academic journeys.

# Accommodations

What are accommodations?

- **Legally-mandated** adjustments and/or services that give a student with **any form of disability** an equal opportunity to benefit from their Penn experience.
- Students who receive accommodations work with the **Disability Services staff** to coordinate their academic accommodations as well as accessible housing, dining, technology, etc.
- **Conditions** that a student may **request an accommodation** for (including, but **not limited to**): ADHD/ADD, Anxiety, Arthritis, Autism, Blindness, chronic illnesses, Deafness, Depression, Diabetes, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Migraines, among many others.

Examples of most common [Academic Accommodations](#):

## Exams

- Extra time (e.g. 50% more time)
- Use of a calculator during exams
- Use of a computer instead of handwriting exams
- Distraction reduced testing environment

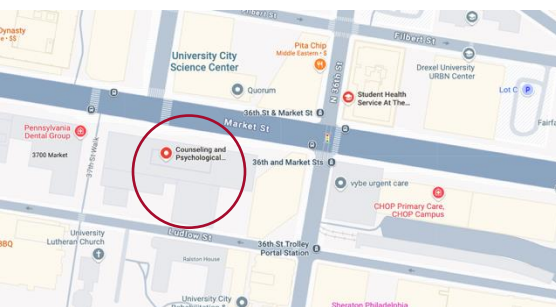
## Classroom

- Access to a copy of class notes
  - Extension of assignment deadlines
- Modified attendance policy
- Subtitles for audio content
- Audio versions of textbooks
- Permission to eat and drink during class

**Many more** are available based on individual needs. Appropriate accommodations for each student are determined through a conversation between the student and their assigned **Disability Specialist** at Student Disability Services.

# Contact Information

## Student Health and Counseling Contact



### 3624 Market Street, First Floor West

- You can walk into Student Health and Counseling Drop-in hours and talk with a counselor.
- If you suspect you have ADHD or some other learning disability, The counselor will connect you with an ADHD specialist or provide you with resources directly for neuropsychological testing.
- Students may also call 215-898-7021

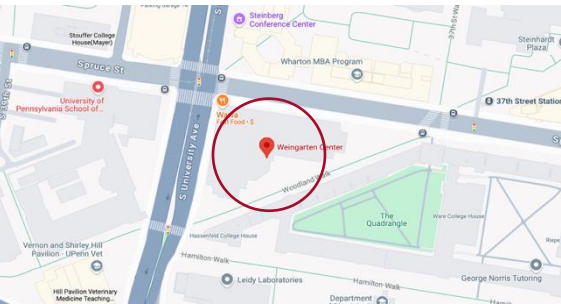
### Drop-in Hours

- Monday: 8 AM – 8 PM (last appointment at 7:30)
- Tuesday: 8 AM – 8 PM (last appointment at 7:30)
- Wednesday: 8 AM – 8 PM (last appointment at 7:30)
- Thursday: 10 AM – 6 PM (last appointment at 5:30)
- Friday: 8 AM – 5 PM (last appointment at 4:30)
- Saturday: 10 AM – 3 PM (last appointment at 2:30)
- Sunday: Closed



# Contact Information

## Disability Services (Weingarten Center) Contact



**Stouffer Commons, 3702 Spruce St**

- Students can stop by and ask general questions about Disability Services, including how to start the registration process, how to complete a Semester Request, and assistance with scheduling tests.
- Students may also call 267-788-0030.

### Drop-in Hours

- Monday–Friday: 10 AM – 4 PM at the Weingarten Center



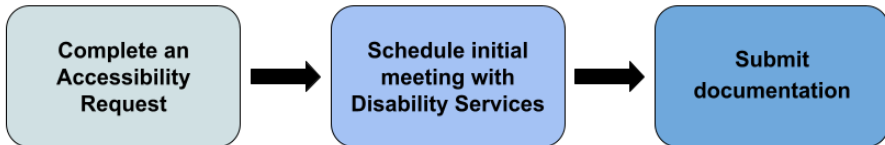
# Registering with Disability Services at Weingarten Center

Students **DO NOT** need **diagnosis documentation** to **begin** the registration process. Diagnosis documentation will be eventually necessary for approval of accommodations, and Disability Services supports students in accessing testing and diagnostic evaluations.

## 3 ways of getting started:

1. Call 267-788-0030
2. Go to the Weingarten Center in person during drop-in hours
3. Follow videos/steps here: Getting Started – Weingarten Center

## 3 Steps for first-time request for disability services:



1. Complete an Accessibility Request through the [MyWeingartenCenter Student Portal](#)
  - Video: [How to Complete a Self-Identify Form](#)
  - You do not need to have documentation ready at this stage.
  - You will get an email assigning you to a Disability Services staff member and to schedule a meeting.
2. Schedule initial meeting with a Disability Services staff member.
  - Video: [How to Schedule a Learning Consultation Meeting](#)

# Registering with Disability Services at Weingarten Center

## 3. Submit documentation of disability

- If you have documentation ready before your meeting you should submit it.
- If you **DO NOT** have documentation ready during your initial meeting with your assigned Disability Services staff member, the Disability Advisor will **provide guidance about necessary medical documentation.**

## Documentation

- Review Disability Services [documentation guidelines](#)
- 2 options for documentation from outside of the United States or non-English language:
  1. Ask your healthcare provider (therapist, doctor, psychiatrist, etc.) if they can fill out documentation in English.
  2. Students can translate documentation themselves and provide both the original and translated versions.
- Fillable PDF Form: [Documentation PDF Fillable](#)

## Scholarship Information

- If a student does not have a diagnosis and/or their insurance does not cover psychological testing, then they can meet with a specialist from Disability Services for scholarship referral.
- The student will be encouraged to complete a scholarship request form if they lack the funds for testing: [Scholarships for Students with Disabilities – Weingarten Center](#)

# Registering with Disability Services at Weingarten Center

## Learning Specialists for academic support

Whether accommodations apply or not to you, any student can access Weingarten's learning specialists to support you with:

- Time and Project Management
- Organization
- Academic Reading, Research and Writing
- Problem-solving
- Exam preparation

Access [MyWeingartenCenter](#) to schedule a Learning Consultation.

# Student Groups

## The Disabled Coalition



<https://pennclubs.com/club/the-disabled-coalition>

## Advocates for Neurodiversity (AND)




<https://pennclubs.com/club/advocates-for-neurodiversity-and>

## NeuroQueer




<https://pennclubs.com/club/penn-neuroqueer/>



Your academic journey is a path uniquely yours, and recognizing your strengths and challenges is a crucial part of the learning process. If you ever find yourself facing difficulties that seem beyond the ordinary, remember that seeking help is a sign of courage and self-awareness.

Disabilities, mental health, and challenges that aren't always visible to the naked eye can be perceived with stigma in many cultures. If you suspect you may have a disability, this guide will help you get started.

Understanding your unique learning style and any potential challenges allows you to access the support and accommodations you need to thrive. Testing, diagnoses, and accommodations is not about labels; it's about leveraging available resources for fair and equal academic success.



Handbook developed by: International Student Advisory Board (ISAB) in collaboration with the Weingarten Center, Student Health and Counseling, and Advocates for Neurodiversity