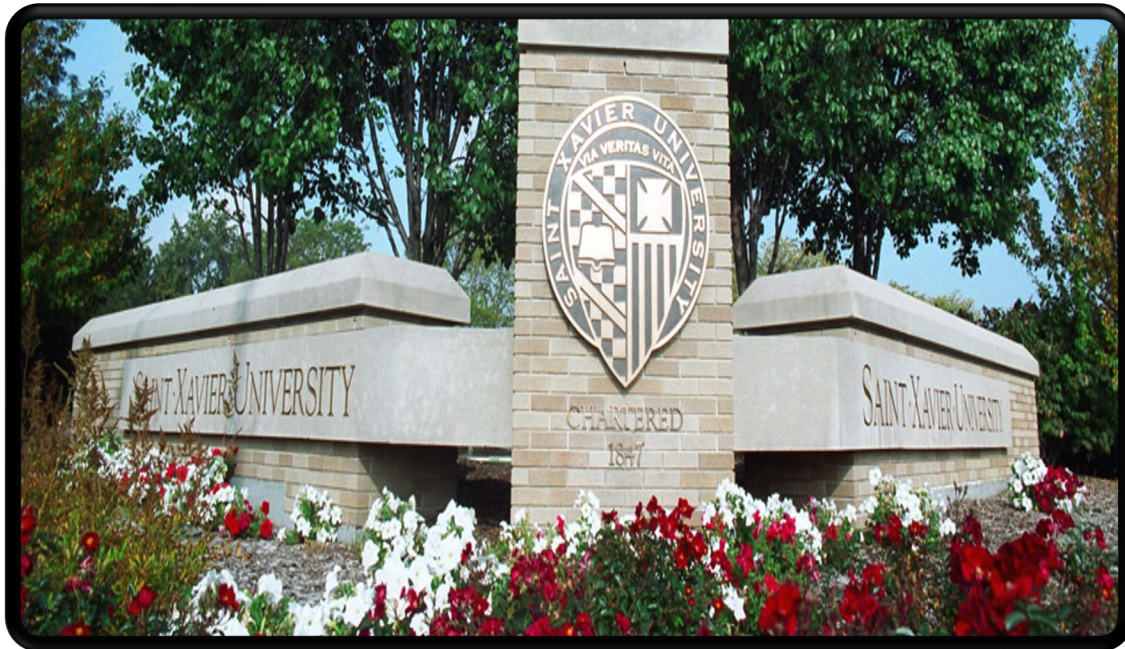


CENTER FOR ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES HANDBOOK



SAINT XAVIER UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES
DIVISION OF STUDENT SUCCESS
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WELCOME

Welcome to the **Center for Accessibility Resources**, an office within the **Division of Student Success**. We view disability as an integral aspect of diversity at Saint Xavier University and are committed to creating an accessible and inclusive educational experience for all students. We do this by partnering with students, faculty, and staff to design accessible environments and provide accommodations so that students can engage, explore, and participate in academic and personal opportunities that lead to successful career endeavors. Whether you are a student or instructor, are new to campus or are already quite familiar, have a long history of accommodations, or are just exploring disability-related accommodations for the first time, we invite you to learn more about our **Center** and to contact us with any questions you may have.

This handbook is intended to be a reference for current students, faculty, staff, prospective students, and parents of students about the processes and procedures of the Center for Accessibility Resources at Saint Xavier University. Information is presented in general; all accommodation requests are handled on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, this handbook provides guidance on the operations of the Center for Accessibility Resources (CAR).

However, this Handbook is not intended as a comprehensive resource. Due to the nature of our services and the broad spectrum of our academic resources and skills, it is not always possible to encapsulate every type of educational support that we are presently offering. For any questions about the information presented herein, please contact our office, at (773) 298-3956 or accessibilityservices@sxu.edu.

At Saint Xavier University, accessibility has been a long-standing tradition. Over the years, we have taken great pride in the achievements and accomplishments of our department and,



ultimately, our students. Therefore, the information contained within this Handbook is intended to help the reader understand the "what" behind how our department provides access and opportunities for students, and also the way the "why" in post-secondary education differs from high school and other universities.

This handbook was developed to serve as your guide to understanding the services and accommodations available through the Center for Accessibility Resources. This resource outlines important information concerning the rights and responsibilities of students and our institution, the Center for Accessibility Resources policies and procedures, reasonable accommodations, the application process, and documentation requirements for registering with our department.

CREATING AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

At Saint Xavier University, we pride ourselves on supporting a highly accessible and inclusive University, both on our campus, online, and through the broader culture and environment around disability as diversity. This is accomplished, in part, because of policies and procedures we have in place to ensure that all our students have access to the services and resources they need for a safe and successful academic experience.

Following an empowerment model, our area strives to deliver students with disabilities the maximum opportunities to fulfill their potential. We enhance the abilities of our students with disabilities by helping them understand how their disabilities can affect and impact them in their educational settings and, fortified with this understanding, learn how to become better self-advocates.

Our department is responsible for the academic accommodation determination and coordination process for students with disabilities. The Center for Accessibility Resources aims to identify educational barriers, problem solve to create equitable learning environments, communicate referral options for disability evaluation and academic assistance, and establish best practices for disability inclusion. As previously discussed, our University honors disability as one of the many forms of diversity on our campus and as

such, we actively collaborate with faculty, staff, and students to achieve equal access and equity goals.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Under the provisions of **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**, as amended, and **Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990**, as amended (**Amendments Act of 2008 - ADA AAA**), the Center for Accessibility Resources determines and provides reasonable accommodations on a case-by-case basis for academically qualified students with disabilities who have demonstrated a need for these services. These two legislative and federal laws, in addition to the best practices for this field, as continually reviewed and improved with guidance from **The Association of Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)**, apprise our University's civil rights mandates that comprise our disability-related services. In addition, we continually consult with and review relevant Office of Civil Rights rulings concerning persons with disabilities. More importantly, we reexamine best practice models and by using our specific memberships in various professional organizations and subscribing to a professional listserv with several journals, we stay up-to-date and knowledgeable of the most optimum ways to facilitate reasonable accommodations.

EXCEL ACADEMICALLY

A comprehensive list of academic support services exists within our University and various forms of assistive technology can be used in the Center for Accessibility Resources to help students reach their full potential. Serving students with learning, physical, psychological, hearing, visual and health impairments, we encourage them to participate in activities and events that help them achieve in the classroom and beyond.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the confidentiality of student educational records. All information shared with our department remains confidential. Information will not be released without your written consent. Exceptions would occur only as required by law. Disability-related information may be disclosed on a limited, need-to-know basis in order to provide accommodations and services with the permission of the student or as otherwise permitted under the University's student records policy.

Saint Xavier University is committed to providing students with disabilities equal access to the services, programs, and activities of the college. No student shall be denied services or be discriminated against solely based on his or her disability

MISSION STATEMENT AND GOAL OF THE
CENTER FOR ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES

The Center for Accessibility
Resources Mission Statement

The mission of the Center for Accessibility Resources at Saint Xavier University is to ensure that qualified individuals with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the programs, services, academic resources, and activities of the University.

This will be enacted through the identification of reasonable modifications to institutional policies, procedures, and educational services and the provision of effective auxiliary aids and services.

Overall Goal of the
Center for Accessibility Resources

In collaboration with faculty and staff, the Center for Accessibility Resources' primary goal is to engage the University community to empower students, enhance equity, and to respect and value the diversity of our students by being inclusive of their needs.

VISION

The Center for Accessibility Resources, in keeping with the Mission, holds the SXU community to the highest standards of equal access, inclusion, and diversity. Using the most up-to-date services, we are committed to the ever-changing needs of our students, and supports them in their pursuit of self-advocacy, independence, and academic success.

SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

The Center for Accessibility Resources is dedicated to helping students succeed academically and beyond in their educational programs and majors. Our area believes in providing all students with appropriate resources to help them monitor their collegiate pursuits. Every day we strive to create an inclusive and dynamic learning community for all students. The philosophy and goals of our area is as follows:

- 1) To help identify disability as diversity.
- 2) To foster a sense of independence in all students.
- 3) To empower students to be strong self-advocates.
- 4) To embrace our differences, for these alone are what make us so exceptional.

Students with disabilities at Saint Xavier University have access to the tools and resources that will enable them to manage day-to-day in their collegiate and personal lives. However, SXU does not offer a specialized program or curriculum for persons with disabilities, nor do we waive specific academic requirements based on a specific major/program. The available services for each student will vary depending on the nature of his or her disability(ies).

Reasonable accommodations are individualized and based on the nature of the documented disability and the requirements of specific courses. Accommodations are designed to meet the needs of students without fundamentally altering the nature of the University's instructional programs. The accommodations process is an interactive partnership between students, faculty, and the Center for Accessibility Resources. All accommodation requests

must be submitted in a timely manner. **The student is ultimately responsible for being a self-advocate and discussing accommodation requests with instructors.**

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

As was previously reiterated, in post-secondary education, **requesting accommodations** is the student's responsibility to self-identify his or her disability status and register with the Center for Accessibility Resources prior to requesting accommodations. Incoming first-year students or transfer students are encouraged to apply for accommodations no later than the **end of July** (or by **April 1st** if requesting Housing Accommodations). This helps our department accommodate the large numbers of new students applying for our services each fall. Even if you are unsure about using your accommodations, it is always better to establish eligibility early, so accommodations can be implemented more quickly should a student require these later on.

Since the process of providing accommodations involves assessing your needs for specific courses and/or campus living situations, it is necessary to review and revise your accommodation plan on a semester-by-semester basis. All accommodation requests must be submitted in a timely manner; thus, students must initiate the accommodation planning process immediately after admission to the university. The outline below illustrates the procedures that the Center for Accessibility Resources office utilizes:

Step 1: Schedule an Intake Meeting: Students must schedule an appointment with our Accessibility Resource Specialist or Director by contacting our department directly or using Navigate. Appointments can be held in-person or virtually (via Zoom or phone).

Step 2: Provide Documentation: Submit current, comprehensive documentation of a disability(ies) for which you are requesting appropriate and reasonable accommodations. All documentation must be provided by a professionally trained educational diagnostician, physician, psychiatrist and/or psychologist. Please note, if the student does not have documentation, you can still schedule a meeting with the director of the CAR office to discuss documentation requirements, testing/diagnosis options, and potential accommodations.

Step 3: Intake Meeting: During the intake meeting, student will need to provide documentation, if documentation have not been previously submitted one. We will also discuss your disability-related needs and create a formal plan for appropriate accommodations. Please allow 60-90 minutes for this meeting.

Step 4: Letter of Accommodation (LOA): Once accommodations have been established, Letters of Accommodation (LOA) will be sent to your professors. Please allow 1-2 weeks for processing, depending on the volume of requests.

Step 5: Discuss Accommodations with Professors: Students are encouraged to have a conversation with their professors about the accommodations and how they will be implemented in the class.

DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES

It is the student's responsibility to provide documentation of his or her disability(ies).

Documentation must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Generated by a licensed professional in the specific area of disability(ies);
- 2) Sufficiently comprehensive, ideally, identifying the testing mechanisms, procedures and findings, and the recommended accommodations;
- 3) Defines the functional limitations that the student will experience in an academic environment;
- 4) Within the last three to five years to provide an accurate representation of the current disability(ies) and its impact on academic endeavors;
- 5) Recommends appropriate academic accommodations.

Although documentation of disability(ies) is required, a more critical factor in establishing eligibility for accommodations is the student's description of challenges presented by the disability in the academic environment. If the initial documentation does not provide enough information to determine the extent of the disability and reasonable accommodations, the disability services director has the discretion to require additional documentation. Students are responsible for the costs related to obtaining documentation.

ENHANCING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Students who wish to disclose their disabilities may receive various academic accommodations coordinated through the Center for Accessibility Resources in L-108. Some accommodations available to students include (but are not limited to):

- ❖ Extended time for tests
- ❖ A distraction-reduced testing environment
- ❖ Preferential classroom seating
- ❖ Priority registration
- ❖ Books in an alternative format
- ❖ Readers and scribes
- ❖ Permission to record lectures to supplement note-taking
- ❖ Note-takers
- ❖ Use of word-processors for test

TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

Testing accommodations for students with disabilities must be the sole responsibility of each student and be arranged in accordance with the faculty member and the staff in the Center for Accessibility Resources prior to the testing date. The student must present each faculty member with a testing accommodation form at least three, preferably five, days in advance of the scheduled exam. The instructor should return the completed form (along with the test to be completed and any specific instructions) to the Center for Accessibility Resources in A-219 at least two days prior to the exam. The Center for Accessibility Resources is not a general testing center and does not proctor tests except for students with documented disabilities.

TEMPORARY MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Students with temporary impairments or medical conditions may qualify for provisional academic accommodations. These conditions may include surgery, accidents, severe illness, concussion, or other medical condition that temporarily impairs regular attendance and/or academic performance. When this occurs, students will need to fill out various eligibility forms from our office to receive accommodations (including excused absences). The appropriate provider(s) should indicate the length of recovery on these forms.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS

Students with disabilities registered with the Center for Accessibility Resources have the following rights:

- ❖ Equal access to courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities offered through the University.
- ❖ An equal opportunity to work and to learn and to receive reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services to diminish the effect of the condition on academic functioning.
- ❖ Appropriate confidentiality of all information regarding their disability and to choose to whom, outside of the institution, information about their disability will be disclosed, except as disclosures are required or permitted by law.
- ❖ Information, reasonably available in accessible formats.
- ❖ The right to exercise the informal and/or formal grievance process for students with disabilities.

Students with disabilities registered with the Center for Accessibility Resources have the following responsibilities:

- ❖ Self-identify as an individual with a disability via notification from the CAR prior to when an accommodation is needed and seek assistance as necessary in a timely fashion.
- ❖ Meet qualifications and maintain essential institutional standards for courses and programs.
- ❖ When needed, provide requested documentation from an appropriate professional that demonstrates how your disability limits your participation in courses and programs.
- ❖ Comply with Saint Xavier University's policy for academic integrity by accurately portraying accommodation needs to instructors.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CENTER FOR ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES

The Center for Accessibility Resources reviews and maintains documentation to confirm eligibility for services and determines reasonable accommodations based on the disability barriers in the educational setting, as stated in the documentation and the student's shared experience. The Center for Accessibility Resources' roles also include the following:

- ❖ Notify instructors of approved accommodations upon student requests.
- ❖ Provide self-advocacy training for students related to their accommodations.
- ❖ Collaborate to problem solve accommodation implementation concerns.
- ❖ Support faculty and instructors with resources, consultations, and trainings.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SAINT XAVIER UNIVERSITY

Saint Xavier University has the right to:

- ❖ Identify and establish standards for courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities, and to evaluate students on this basis.
- ❖ Request and receive current documentation that supports requests for accommodations.
- ❖ Select among equally effective accommodations, adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- ❖ Deny a request for accommodations if the documentation demonstrates that the request is not warranted, or the student fails to provide appropriate documentation.
- ❖ Refuse an unreasonable request for an accommodation that imposes a fundamental alteration on a program or activity of the university.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FACULTY

Upon receiving accommodation notifications from the Center for Accessibility Resources, faculty will collaborate with the student and the CAR to implement the approved accommodations. Faculty roles also include:

- ❖ Identify learning outcomes and essential functions of courses and programs.
- ❖ Consult with the Center for Accessibility Resources regarding any accommodation-related questions or concerns in a timely manner.
- ❖ Maintain confidentiality related to student accommodations.
- ❖ Engage in a collaborative process with the Center for Accessibility Resources to develop creative, reasonable modifications that do not interfere with essential course or program elements, as needed.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

The Center for Accessibility Resources strives to ensure the safety of all SXU students, especially those who have mobility impairments, visual impairments, or are deaf or hard of hearing. As a result, the CAR collaborates with faculty and Public Safety to coordinate evacuation procedures for persons with disabilities. A copy of the **Emergency Evacuation Procedures** for persons with disabilities can also be obtained in the CAR. In addition to the procedures described in our document, we encourage you to identify primary and secondary routes to exits, stairwells, or other safe areas in buildings where you will take classes. It is also important at the beginning of each semester to discuss these procedures with your instructors, so that you and the instructor are clear about what needs to be done in case of a potential emergency.

APPEAL AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

If a student requests a particular academic accommodation and the request has been denied by the Center for Accessibility Resources, the student may formally appeal the decision by requesting a review of the determination. The formal appeal will be reviewed by the Dean of Students. To move forward with a formal appeal, a letter requesting reconsideration should be sent to the Dean of Students within 10 working days of the denial. Included in the letter should be a statement giving the Director of the Center for Accessibility Resources permission to release all confidential information related to your request to the Office of Student Life.

FACULTY CONSULTATION

The Center for Accessibility Resources staff are available to consult with faculty in the following areas:

- ❖ Learning differences or concerns for students in their classes
- ❖ Study strategies including time management, note taking, test taking, etc.
- ❖ Effectively working with students with different types of disabilities
- ❖ Understanding appropriate academic accommodations
- ❖ Assisting with information about other campus resources (Counseling Services, Student Success Program, etc.)
- ❖ Consultation with legal counsel when appropriate
- ❖ Incorporating Universal Design into coursework and physical spaces
- ❖ Assisting students with adaptive technologies and software

The Director and other staff members welcome inquiries from faculty to consult on any number of topics. We will always do our best to help you with serious concerns or general queries. Students are also welcomed to call or stop-in for assistance and support at any time.