



AccessAbility Services Post-Concussion Guideline and Procedure

General Guideline:

Western Connecticut State University is committed to reasonably accommodating qualified students with disabilities. The University, via AccessAbility Services (AAS), may provide reasonable accommodation to provide students with post-concussive support. **Accommodations will only be made by AAS once a student has met with an appropriate professional and has documentation to demonstrate that they have been appropriately diagnosed and are undergoing treatment.** Medical consultation with and diagnosis by a professional with appropriate training is an essential component of care for immediate concussions as well as treatment of post-concussive symptoms.

A concussion is a brain injury best defined as a complex pathophysiological process affecting the brain, induced by biomechanical forces. Students with concussions are presumed to be in a state of brain energy crisis, where an increased need for brain glucose to facilitate healing is accompanied by a reduction in cerebral blood flow. The combination of increased brain energy need and decreased brain blood flow is referred to as a “mismatch” and results in a brain energy crisis. The foundation of a concussive injury is neurometabolic, where additional physical and cognitive activities during a period of attempted recovery may cause symptoms to reemerge. Concentration difficulties can often accompany concussion symptoms, in addition to, headaches, nausea, dizziness, emotional irritability, and sensitivity to light/sound.

In order to request and receive post-concussion assistance, students must provide AAS with documentation regarding their disability and need for accommodations. In consultation with the student, the Director of AAS will review the documentation to determine the appropriateness of the accommodation. Students requesting accommodations should contact AAS immediately at 203-837-8225 (voice), 203-837-3235 (TTY), or via e-mail at aas@wcsu.edu.

Procedure:

Immediately Following Injury:

- ❖ New students must complete and submit an **Accommodation Intake Form** to AAS.
- ❖ Students must submit documentation from a qualified health care professional, which indicates there need for accommodations due to a concussion.

Documentation should include, but is not limited to the following:

- Date of injury and initial diagnosis
- Date(s) of current and prior evaluation(s)
- Reason for evaluation
- Information regarding the presenting issues that significantly restrict functioning in an educational setting
- Discussion of evaluation instruments used
- Summary of evaluation findings including standard scores and percentiles such as tests of information processing/cognitive abilities, executive functioning, and academic achievement
- Statement of current medical diagnosis or impairment
- Explanation of the functional limitations to major life activities posed by disability
- Specific recommendations regarding accommodations with evidence from evaluation results
- Identification of Evaluator (name, title, and signature)

- ❖ Students should schedule a time to meet with the Director of AccessAbility Services by calling 203-837-8225 or by stopping by the office located in Higgins Annex, room 017.
- ❖ Once the appropriate information is received, AAS will review the request and the student will be contacted with appropriate next steps.
 - A temporary accommodation may be provided for both physical and cognitive rest. The student is responsible for work missed and should work with the instructor on developing a plan for missed work. During this process, students are encouraged to have open communication with their instructors regarding coursework deadlines.
 - Student will be encouraged to work with Academic Advisement and/or AccessAbility Services on academic skills such as time management, course follow through and organization strategies. Academic Advisement and/or AccessAbility Services are available to assist students on developing academic plans.

Weeks One and Two Following Injury:

- ❖ If symptoms remain, and with concurrent medical supervision, it may be helpful to explore further accommodations including extended time on examinations.
 - The student should contact AccessAbility Services to request additional accommodations, as needed.

Weeks Three and Beyond:

- ❖ If post-concussive symptoms persist beyond a third week, the student should consider the potential for a class incomplete, withdrawing from one or more classes, or taking a medical leave. A medical leave of absence would be a reasonable consideration if the student continues to experience post-concussive symptoms for greater than three weeks and if coursework missed becomes too onerous to make up.

Any questions regarding the post-concussion request guideline and procedure should be directed to Elisabeth Morel, Director, at 203-837-8225 (voice), 203-837-3235 (TTY), or via e-mail at morele@wcsu.edu.