



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, a Disability Service Provider within 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:

WCSU Staff Responsibility (Athletics/Health Service/Club Sports):

- ❖ Notify AccessAbility Services with a copy to Health Services and Student Affairs indicating the date of concussion, current symptoms, and expected time of required cognitive rest.

AccessAbility Services Responsibility:

- ❖ Notify faculty members of medical need for cognitive rest. Identify date of concussion and expected duration of absence.
- ❖ Coordinate accommodations, if necessary, after student self-identifies and requests support.

Student Responsibility:

- ❖ New students must complete and submit an **Accommodation Intake Form** to AAS.
- ❖ Students must submit documentation from a qualified health care professional, which indicates their 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 a Disability Service Provider within AccessAbility Services by calling 203-837-8225 or by stopping by the office located in White Hall, Room 005.
- ❖ 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.