The Office of Disability Support Services is located in the Edward J. Pryzbyla University Center. A map of the campus can be viewed at http://welcome.cua.edu/cuamap.pdf; an accessibility map is located at http://disabilitysupport.cua.edu/map. There is a parking area located directly in front of the building with handicap spaces.

ADDRESS INFORMATION
The Catholic University of America
Disability Support Services
620 Michigan Ave., N.E.
207 Pryzbyla Center
Washington, DC 20064
Phone: 202-319-5211
Fax: 202-319-5126
E-mail: cua-disabilityservices@cua.edu
Web: http://disabilityservices.cua.edu

The Catholic University of America admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, age or disability.

HOURS
DSS follows the normal operating schedule of the university, including snow days and observed holidays. DSS is open from Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on all normal business days.
DOCUMENTATION

Students requesting support services are required to submit documentation to verify eligibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The documentation must include medical or psychological information from a certified professional. Guidelines outlining specific documentation needs are located on the DSS Web site and are available upon request. The aforementioned guidelines are provided so that we can respond appropriately to the individual needs of the student. In addition to providing documentation of a disability, students will be asked to complete an intake form. Once the student has been admitted, appropriate documentation and the intake form should be submitted to DSS prior to arrival. Eligibility must be established before services can be provided.

HOW TO REGISTER FOR SERVICES

1. Contact DSS by phone, e-mail or online to request an intake packet.
2. Submit the completed intake form with documentation of a disability.
3. Once documentation has been reviewed, a letter updating the student of the status of his or her file will be sent out.
4. Upon receipt of the approval letter, contact DSS to set up an intake appointment. At that appointment, appropriate accommodations will be discussed.

DSS reserves the right to determine eligibility for services based on the quality of the submitted documentation. All documentation is confidential and will be shared only with those who have a legitimate need to know.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The university recognizes that student disability records contain confidential information and are to be treated as such. Therefore, documentation of a student’s disability is maintained in a confidential file in DSS and is considered part of the student’s education record. Information related to a disability may be disclosed only with the permission of the student or as permitted by the university’s student records policy and federal law. At the same time, however, a student’s right to privacy must still be balanced against the university’s need to know the information in order to provide requested and recommended services and accommodations. Therefore, in the interest of serving the needs of the student, the provision of services may involve DSS staff disclosing disability information provided by the student to appropriate university personnel participating in the accommodation process. The amount of information that may be released is determined case by case, and will be made in accordance with the university’s policy on student records.
MISSION
The Office of Disability Support Services supports the missions of the Office of the Dean of Students and the university by providing programs and services designed to support and encourage the integration of students with disabilities into the mainstream of the university community. DSS assists in creating an accessible university community where students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to fully participate in all aspects of the educational environment. We cooperate through partnerships with students, faculty and staff to promote students’ independence and to ensure recognition of their abilities, not disabilities. The office also does the following:

- coordinates support services for students with all types of diagnosed disabilities,
- assists students in negotiating disability-related barriers to the pursuit of their education,
- strives to improve access to university programs, activities and facilities for students with disabilities, and
- promotes increased awareness of disability issues on campus.

Essential to the larger mission of the university, DSS promotes universally designed environments and facilitates full access through reasonable accommodations, training, collaboration and innovative programming.

PURPOSE
Disability Support Services at The Catholic University of America provides and/or assists all students who have documented disabilities with appropriate accommodations.

Disability Support Services
- evaluates and maintains disability-related documents,
- certifies eligibility for services,
- determines reasonable accommodations, and
- develops plans for the provision of such accommodations.

In post-secondary settings, it is the student’s responsibility to request individual assistance in advance. It is important to understand that not every student with a disability requires accommodations. It is equally important to understand that even though two individuals may have the same disability, they may not require the same accommodations. The Catholic University of America is a caring and supportive community with high academic and personal expectations for each student. The goal of the university and DSS is to enable each student to achieve his or her goals.

OBJECTIVES
- Direct support services to students with disabilities, including but not limited to advocacy, adapted materials, alternative testing, counseling, interpreting, note-taking and taped texts.
- Structure and deliver services in ways that promote individual growth, development and self-determination.
- Provide technical assistance to university departments. Assist departments in identifying accommodations and providing services and responses case by case.
- Provide awareness training to all members of the university community in order to improve the quality of services.
- Serve as an information and referral service on disability issues. Provide current and accurate information in disability products, programs and services to all inquiring customers.
- Provide an open and welcoming atmosphere, as well as employment opportunities, for students with disabilities. Create a place for students to meet, share, study, organize and congregate.
- Increase access and opportunities for people with disabilities through collaboration with university and community partners.
- Promote a broad definition of diversity that honors and appreciates disability as an integral part of human experience.
ACCOMMODATIONS
DSS works with each student to determine and implement appropriate accommodations based on documentation and personal interview. Some typical accommodations include:

**Classroom Accommodations**
- Access to teacher handouts, slides, overheads
- Additional time on in-class writing assignments
- Interpreter/transcriber for the Deaf and hard of hearing
- Notetaker
- Occasional exceptions to absentee/tardiness policy (for disability-related issues)
- Preferential seating
- Record lectures
- Relocate classrooms to ensure access

**Test Accommodations**
- Additional time when taking in-class quizzes and exams (not unlimited time)
- Alternative testing environment (if needed)
- Computer with or without assistive technology for tests
- Scribe
- Spell-check or points not taken off for spelling

**Print Accommodations**
- Materials in Alternative Format (Braille, Electronic, Large Print)

**SERVICES NOT PROVIDED**
The Catholic University of America’s Office of Disability Support Services does not provide the following:
- Comprehensive diagnostic evaluation for determining disabilities
- A reduced standard for academic performance
- Special classes for students with disabilities
- Assistive technology training
- Exemption from graduation requirements (however, some substitutions are allowed)
- One-to-one individual personal care services (including aides in a classroom)
- One-to-one individual assistance to and from class

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**
It is each student’s responsibility to:
- Meet the essential qualifications and institutional standards
- Disclose the disability in a timely manner to DSS
- Provide appropriate documentation
- Inform DSS of accommodation needs
- Talk with professors about accommodations
- Request accommodations each semester
- Maintain and return borrowed equipment
- Make arrangements for their personal care needs (personal care attendants or orientation and mobility training)
DSS works with CPIT (Center for Planning and Information Technology) to provide assistive technology at most computer labs as well as various other locations around campus. Each station has the following:

Software on each machine
- Organizing and outlining software (e.g. Inspiration)
- Screen reading software with speech output (e.g. Jaws)
- Text reading software (e.g. Kurzweil)
- Reading and writing software (Read and Write Gold)
- Screen magnification software (e.g. Dolphin Lunar Plus)

Hardware at each station
- Scanner
- Monitor (minimum 19”)
- Y cable to attach headphones
- CCTV at some stations

MATERIALS IN ALTERNATIVE FORMAT
Students who need print materials in an alternative format because of a disability that impacts their ability to read printed material can request their materials to be converted to an electronic format.

DSS is able to put print materials in formats for Daisy books, MP3, Kurzweil, TIFF, RTF or PDF. Some formats can take longer than others. Our overall goal is to be able to provide the materials to the student in the format requested as quickly as possible. In order to conserve time, students may choose the “fast scan” option of either a PDF or a TIFF format.

Students who plan to have their materials converted are strongly encouraged to provide their materials to DSS at least four weeks prior to the start of the semester. Material conversion can take up to six weeks depending on how many requests there are and the format that is being requested.

For prospective students interested in using materials in alternative format, we encourage them to become familiar with assistive technology and alternative format options prior to their arrival on campus.
TRANSITION

Key to becoming a successful college student is making the transition from high school to college. Students who understand their disability, strengths, limitations, and interests and are willing to seek out resources and additional help are much more likely to succeed at CUA.

It is important for parents and students to understand that academic demands in college are much more intense than in high school. Therefore, students with disabilities MUST be able to advocate for their needs, ask for help when necessary, and meet the same academic standards as students who do not have disabilities.

DSS staff works with high school staff, parents and students to help ensure a successful transition to college. We encourage you to review our transition materials for more information.

ADMISSIONS

The university is not allowed to ask, by law, if a prospective student has a disability. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions reviews each application on its own merit. Students with disabilities must meet the same standards as all other applicants. Documentation of your disability should not be sent with your application. Prospective students with disabilities are encouraged to write an additional personal statement.

WRITING THE OPTIONAL PERSONAL STATEMENT

HOW: Write about how the disability has impacted your learning, and how this may be seen in areas such as grade point average, ACT/SAT scores and grade fluctuation.

WHEN: Discuss when you were diagnosed and how that may have impacted your education. For example, if you were diagnosed later in your educational career, did your performance improve after the diagnosis and/or intervention? You may also want to include how frequently you used accommodations, such as taking more time on tests, help with notes, or the use of a calculator.

WHAT: Focus on what you did to compensate for your learning differences. Many students say that they "worked very hard" or "overcame" their disability, but this alone is not enough. The admissions office will want to know more information about the specifics of what you did to succeed in high school. Note whether or not you used accommodations, worked with a tutor, or used other resources. You may also wish to focus on what steps you plan to follow in the college/university setting to bolster your success.

WHY: Tell the admissions office why you would be a good addition to the CUA student body. Don’t be afraid to “toot your own horn” during the application process! Discuss special talents or skills, personal characteristics or unique qualities that you will bring to CUA that will make the campus a more diverse environment.

ACCOMMODATIONS ON THE ACT OR SAT

High school personnel (i.e., special education teachers, transition coordinators and school counselors) can help you obtain accommodations on college entrance exams, such as the ACT (www.act.org) or SAT (www.ets.org), by starting the process early.

You will need to have disability documentation that meets the guidelines of the testing service. Even if you are approved for accommodations in school, it does not automatically make you eligible to take the entrance exams with accommodations.

FINANCIAL AID OFFICE

Students interested in applying for financial assistance need to contact the Office of Financial Aid directly at 1-888-635-7788, cua-finaid@cua.edu or through their Web site at http://financialaid.cua.edu.

ORIENTATION

If you or a family member will need accommodations while attending Orientation, please contact the Orientation office directly at 202-319-5619, cua-orientation@cua.edu or at http://orientation.cua.edu/ to make them aware of your needs.

- Wheelchair-accessible parking while on campus
- Accessible housing
- Materials in alternative formats
- Sign language interpreter or transcriber
- If you will need accommodations for the placement tests, documentation must be received and approved by DSS prior to taking the test.
HOUSING SERVICES AND RESIDENCE LIFE

The offices of housing services and residence life strive to provide well-maintained, safe and modern multi-use residential facilities that meet student developmental needs, support the formation of community, and encourage the creation of seamless learning environments. Specifically the Office of Housing Services manages well-maintained, safe and modern multi-use residential facilities that are responsive to the changing needs of students. Residence Life assists you in building connections to the larger campus community, in hopes that you will become an active participant in campus life and gain a greater appreciation for community values and service.

Housing Services
Web: http://housing.cua.edu
Phone: 202-319-5615

Residence Life
Web: http://residencelife.cua.edu
Phone: 202-319-6631

COUNSELING CENTER

The purpose of the Counseling Center is to help students make the most of themselves as developing people — more comfortable and effective in your own life and in your relations with others. This could mean overcoming unwanted feelings and behaviors or enhancing what you are already doing well. The staff includes clinical and counseling psychologists, social workers and counselors experienced in working with college students. Psychiatric consultation is available when deemed necessary by the counselor.

Web: http://counseling.cua.edu
Phone: 202-319-5765

CENTER FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The Center for Academic Success seeks to address the academic and personal needs of students with all abilities in an integrated manner that is both supportive and challenging. The Center for Academic Success provides mentoring, centralized support services and focused engagement opportunities.

Web: http://success.cua.edu
Phone: 202-319-5655

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

The Office of Student Health Services provides primary health care to all students with emphasis on health maintenance and illness prevention.

Web: http://health.cua.edu
Phone: 202-319-5744