Personal Care Attendant Procedure

Disability Services

George Mason University makes every reasonable effort to accommodate individuals with disabilities as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. In keeping with this commitment, Personal Care Attendants (PCAs) may be necessary to address the personal needs of a student with a disability so that he/she can participate in the College’s activities, services, and programs.

An otherwise qualified student who requires personal attendant services must make arrangements to provide for his/her own personal attendant service. George Mason University does not assume coordination or financial responsibilities for personal attendant services.

Definitions

Personal Care Attendant (PCA) – is a person who has been hired to support a student with a disability to live a more independent life by performing personal care duties or services. A PCA works directly for and is employed by the student with a disability. The kind of tasks a PCA performs is comparable to those that a family member or medical personnel would perform and will vary from person to person. Possible tasks performed by a PCA may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Providing help with activities of daily living, such as, bathing, dressing, toileting, grooming
- Housekeeping
- Meal preparation or assistance with eating
- Positioning or transferring to and from a wheelchair
- Running errands
- Monitoring any medical condition by observing vital signs
- Reminding to take prescribed medications
- Transporting and/or escorting
- Assisting with maintenance of the housing environment, including light cleaning, laundry, and keeping the environment safe
- Turning pages and/or retrieving books
- Taking off and putting on coats
- Picking up and dropping off assignments in the event of absences by the student
- Opening doors
- Alerting to distracting repetitive movements
- Alerting to dangerous environments/situations
- Speaking with Faculty, Staff or other students on behalf of the student if necessary.
- Other duties as needed

Student with a disability - means an otherwise qualified individual who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, as specified according to the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (2008). For educational purposes, an individual who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such impairment or is
regarded as having such impairment; and who requires modifications to the educational program, adaptive equipment, assistive technology, or specialized instructional methods and services.

**Responsibilities of Student using a Personal Care Attendant**

A PCA works directly for the student with a disability. Students who use a PCA are responsible for securing, training, supervising and paying their PCA. Any student who wishes to bring or use a personal care attendant (PCA) on campus must:

- Be registered with Disability Services
- Qualify for an accommodation of a PCA
- Notify Disability Services about his/her need to have a PCA in the classroom
- Notify Housing and Residence Life about his/her need to have a PCA living in university housing, if necessary
- Secure, hire, manage, pay, and fire the PCA
- Submit appropriate documentation to the Disability Services that supports the necessity of having a PCA.
- Secure a PCA prior to attending any college-related activity.
- Ensure that each PCA registers with Disability Services and signs the Personal Care Attendant Agreement form each term.
- Ensure that if personnel changes occur during the term, he/she and the new PCA register with the Disability Services and sign a new PCA Agreement Form.
- Direct the activities of the PCA while at George Mason University.
- Have a back-up plan or alternative plan of action should the regular PCA not be available to work with him/her on a particular day or in a particular class.
- Follow the College's policies and abide by the Student Code of Conduct.
- Notify Disability Services of any changes in PCA.

**Responsibility of the Personal Care Attendant**

- Follow all applicable college policies, rules, regulations, procedures and the university Honor Code.
- Registration is required with Disability Services.
- Sign the Disability Services PCA agreement form.
- Allow the student to take responsibility for his/her own progress in class.
- Refrain from participating in class discussions related to the curriculum during class period.
- Refrain from engaging in or intervening in conversations between the student and faculty, staff, or other students as it relates to academics, unless requested by the student.
- Refrain from discussing any confidential information about the student with faculty, staff, or students without permission from the student.
- Stay outside of the classroom and wait for the student unless given permission by Disability Services through a Faculty Contact Sheet or an instructor to do otherwise.
- PCA may not go into a testing space, unless a situation arises (medical or physical needs) then assistants may enter the room to help, otherwise they will be asked to sit outside the testing room.
• The PCA should not provide answers or assistance with quizzes, tests, and in-class assignments. In addition, they should not participate in class discussions and lectures. They are not responsible for a student’s academic progress.

**Responsibility of Disability Services**

• Provide academic or program access accommodations for a student with physical/medical impairments.
• Provide reasonable accommodations to address the student’s disability within the classroom and service areas of the college.
• Include in Faculty Contact Sheets that a student will be accompanied by a PCA in the classroom and for all classroom related activities.
• Answer any questions from Professors/Staff regarding a student's needs for a PCA in the classroom.
• Answer any questions from Residential Life regarding a student’s need for a PCA in housing.

By signing this agreement, I am certifying that I have received and read the George Mason University’s Personal Care Attendant Procedure.

PCA Signature _____________________________________________ Date ______________________

Student Signature ___________________________________________ Date ______________________

Disability Services staff Signature _______________________________ Date ______________________