Accommodation Appeal Policy and Procedures

# I. Policy Statement

Kenyon College is strongly committed to providing an accessible and supportive environment for all its students in both academic and nonacademic programs. In accordance with this philosophy, the College offers a variety of accommodations that are available to students who have documented disabilities. Accommodations are an obligation of the College under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

A student is responsible for submitting all necessary documentation of a disability for review prior to receiving any accommodations. The College requires documentation be comprehensive and reflective of the students current functioning. To this end, there are established documentation standards, which must be met in order to evaluate the need for a student to receive accommodations. A student who requests and is denied accommodations, or who does not receive the recommended accommodations, may challenge decisions made by requesting an informal review or filing a formal appeal. Faculty or staff who feel that an accommodation would alter an essential element of their course or program may file an appeal using the same procedure. In order to ensure equity and an opportunity for a fair hearing and resolution of the appeal to all parties involved, the following proceedings are outlined below.

# II. Definition of Terms

A. Accommodations can be defined as any adjustment or modification which will provide a student with a disability equal access to the educational and/or co-curricular process. Accommodations can include, but are not limited to, auxiliary aids and/or services such as accessible texts materials, interpreters, test accommodations, academic adjustments and/or physical modifications.

B. Documentation guidelines used at Kenyon are based upon the Association of Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) guidelines. They were developed in collaboration with secondary school personnel and disability advocates and are designed to provide consumers with a common understanding of those components of documentation that are necessary to validate specific disabilities for the purposes of requesting accommodations at post-secondary institutions.

# III. Accommodation Appeal Procedures

Students with disabilities are responsible for contacting the Student Accessibility and Support Services (SASS) office if reasonable accommodations are not implemented in an effective or timely manner. Faculty and staff are also encouraged to contact SASS directly when an accommodation seems unreasonable according to the course or program requirements or standards. Grievances will be handled in a three-step process:

1. The Director of Student Accessibility and Support Services works directly with students with disabilities and faculty/staff to resolve disagreements regarding recommended accommodations. Resolution is sought through a meeting of the involved parties where concerns and options can be openly discussed.

2. If no resolution is obtained, the student or faculty/staff member may submit an appeal to have their case heard by the LEARN committee. The Director of Student Accessibility and Support Services (SASS) acts as chair of the LEARN committee. When the appeal involves the Director of SASS, the Dean for Academic Advising will serve as acting chair of LEARN. LEARN will meet with the faculty/staff member and student involved to discuss the accommodation in question and suggest possible alternatives that may accomplish the same outcome.

3. Students who believe they have been discriminated against on the basis of the disability may file a grievance with the Director of Equal Opportunity, Miriam El-Shamaa, in the Eaton Center. This should be the final step in a process which is driven by an intent to provide the most reasonable accommodation to meet the access needs of the individual.

Procedures for Obtaining Accommodations for Students

Accommodations for students may be appropriate in the academic and non-academic context. Depending on the nature of the disability and the accommodations requested, the advance notice you provide may impact the College's ability to provide accommodations in a timely manner. To ensure that accommodations and auxiliary aids and services are provided in a timely fashion, please contact Student Accessibility and Support Services as early as possible in the semester.

The following procedure should be followed for students requesting accommodations:

1. To register with the office and obtain accommodations, the student should call for an appointment with the Director of Student Accessibility and Support Services (SASS) at (740) 427-5453 or stop by the office on the lower level of Olin Library. Individuals must register by submitting documentation to the SASS office. Accommodations cannot be made without appropriate documentation. Documentation should include a diagnosis, a description of the functional limitations that may affect performance, a list of recommended accommodations, and the printed and signed name of a qualified professional certified to assess the disability (i.e. physician, psychologist, learning disability specialist or rehabilitation counselor). The Director of SASS reserves the right to request additional documentation or testing.

2. Once the appropriate documentation is submitted, the individual must meet with the director of SASS to determine an accommodation plan and sign a release of information for each of the professors/ staff members receiving an accommodation letter. The 'Accommodation Letter' will be sent to the designated professors/staff members and copied to the student.

3. The student is responsible for following up on the 'Accommodation Letter' with the instructor/staff member. It is suggested that the student make an appointment with such person during their office hours so that the time can be spent discussing specific accommodations and classroom considerations with them. The accommodations are initiated by speaking directly to the professor/staff member regarding the needs within the classroom/program. The SASS office will not disclose specific disability related information to an instructor/staff member without written permission from the student.

4. It is the student's responsibility to identify him/herself to a professor/staff member and to discuss the recommended accommodations. The implementation of accommodations is accomplished through a flexible, interactive process that involves the individual with a disability, the faculty/staff member, and the SASS office. The Director of Student Accessibility and Support Services is available for consultation in regards to any problems or concerns faced during the implementation process. Please be advised that it is unreasonable to expect the professor/staff member to make last-minute changes in arranging for classroom modifications, testing arrangements, or other accommodation. It is the responsibility of the student to contact the professor/staff member early in the process in order to allow adequate time for the accommodation process.