

Disability Access Services Personal Care Attendant Guidelines

Personal Care Attendant (PCA) Responsibilities

The following information provides clarification on the responsibilities of the PCA, the student and Disability Access Services (DAS).

Student responsibilities:

- Informing DAS of the need for a PCA and providing appropriate documentation
- Employing the PCA (hiring, training, paying, replacing, ensuring back-ups, etc.)
- Ensuring the PCA abides by all OSU policies, including but not limited to the Student Code of Conduct
- Establishing a non-disruptive mode of communication between themselves and the PCA in the learning environment
- Ensuring the PCA is acting as a non-academic participant in the learning environment
- If living in the OSU residential environment with a PCA, follow the DAS Housing accommodation request procedures in Chapter 24.

PCA responsibilities:

- A PCA should be available (in the classroom or close by) as needed to assist the student with personal needs in the learning environment. Examples include repositioning the student or removing materials from a backpack.
- In rare circumstances, the PCA may assist in facilitating communication access between the Classroom/Lab Access Assistant (CA) and the student. The PCA and the student will work with the CA to develop a non-disruptive mode of communication. The student may utilize assistive technology such as a voice box, communication board, typing on a computer, and the CA will voice for the student.
- If a CA is unable to be present in the classroom, the PCA will read the student's comments or questions out loud.

- For meetings of a sensitive or private nature, the PCA should **not** be present unless the student requires the PCA to voice for them or needs immediate physical assistance.
- A PCA is a non-active participant in academic as well as the learning/living environments.
 - *Non-active participant in academic areas* means the PCA should not be auditing or taking the class, asking questions, making comments or taking an active role in the classroom or meetings, advocating for the student, taking notes, or recording classroom and meeting content.
 - *The learning environment* includes classroom, lab, research, testing areas, OSU academic resource departments/areas, group meetings to discuss projects or presentations, or meetings with faculty/TA's, advisors, or the student's cohort, and other academic events.
 - *The living environment* includes club participation, residential areas, dining halls, OSU non-academic resource support departments/areas, and other social events.
- A PCA must abide by all OSU policies, including but not limited to the Student Code of Conduct and UHDS rules and regulations, if appropriate.
- When an educational or OSU residential environment requires students, for safety or health-related reasons, to meet certain criteria such as a background check, inoculations, personal protective equipment, etc., the PCA must meet the same requirement(s).

DAS responsibilities:

- Requesting appropriate documentation from the student that supports the need for a PCA to determine eligibility for the academic and/or residential accommodation to allow the PCA access to the educational and/or residential environment
- Notifying faculty and/or UHDS of PCA attendance in the learning and/or residential environment
- Addressing faculty and/or UHDS staff and student concerns regarding a PCA in the learning and/or residential environment
- Facilitating discussion(s) between the faculty and/or UHDS staff and student regarding PCA related questions and/or concerns, upon request

Best practices for faculty when interacting with a PCA in the classroom:

- Address the student directly when interacting in the learning environment, such as looking at the student when speaking.
- If DAS has notified you that a student will be bringing a PCA to your class, there is a possibility that this student may also utilize a classroom assistant (CA). A classroom assistant provides academic support in the classroom, such as scribing in-class assignments, using a calculator, etc. This may mean that there are extra people in the class other than the enrolled student.

FAQ's or FYI's for Faculty:

Q: What is the difference between a PCA and a classroom/lab assistant?

A: A PCA provides personal care to the student in the classroom, such as repositioning of the student, removing materials from a backpack, assisting the student with communication, attending to the students' personal needs. A classroom/lab assistant performs only tasks that are associated with making academic activities accessible to the student (scribing, measuring, utilization of a calculator, etc.). Once a student requests their accommodations, DAS will provide information to the faculty regarding whether a PCA or classroom/lab assistant (CA) will be present in their class.

Q: How do I know if it is the student or the PCA who is answering a question in my class?

A: If the student's disability affects communication, the student will choose an effective way to communicate. The student may utilize assistive technology such as a voice box, communication board, typing on a computer, etc. The PCA should only read the student's comments or questions out loud from the computer or assistive technology screen.

Q: Who employs the PCA?

A: A PCA is employed by the student.

Q: Who employs the classroom/lab assistant?

A: A classroom/lab assistant is employed by DAS.

Q: If I have any questions or concerns regarding the behavior of a PCA in my classroom, who should I talk to?

A: PCA's are held to the same standard of conduct that every OSU student is held to. If you have concerns regarding a PCA's behavior, a discussion with the student in a timely manner is recommended first. If your concerns are not resolved after this discussion, please contact DAS. For violations to the Student Code of Conduct, please contact the Student Conduct and Community Standards office.