

# Personal Care Attendant Procedures

## Overview

Southern Methodist University (SMU) is committed to providing equal access to its facilities, programs, and services. SMU recognizes that students with disabilities may require the assistance of a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) to fully participate in university offerings. This policy guides qualified students with disabilities in the use and management of PCAs on campus.

## Definition of Personal Care Attendant

A PCA provides routine daily personal care tasks such as dressing, bathing, feeding, transfers, errands, monitoring medical conditions, turning pages, retrieving books, and other activities of daily living that enable students with disabilities to function independently.

PCAs are hired by students to assist with these tasks and are permitted to accompany the student to campus buildings, facilities, classrooms, programs, activities, and events.

Relief PCAs are expected to follow all of the same procedures as PCAs.

## Student Responsibilities

- Students must request PCA accommodations through the Disability Accommodations & Success Services (DASS) office as early as possible.
- For students planning to live on campus with a PCA, requests should be submitted at least **four weeks before the start of classes**.
- Student should ensure any motor vehicle used by a PCA is registered with SMU's parking office via the student's account. Student will assume any related costs.
- SMU discourages using family members, friends, roommates, or fellow students as PCAs due to the nature of the role; however, all PCA requests are reviewed individually.

- Once eligibility is confirmed, students must provide required documentation for their PCA to the DASS Coordinator, including but not limited to background checks\*, vaccination records, and specialized training certifications.
  - \*PCAs accessing campus housing must complete a background check; this is not required for PCAs of off-campus students. The student is responsible for arranging for and providing verification of the background check.
- Students are responsible for hiring, training, supervising, compensating, and ensuring backup coverage for their PCA.
- Students must ensure PCAs adhere to University policies, [Code of Conduct](#), behave professionally, and do not disrupt academic environments. PCAs should be non-academic participants.
- Students and PCAs should establish discreet communication methods to minimize classroom disruption.
- Sign SMU's PCA Agreement form prior to bringing the PCA on campus.

## PCA Responsibilities

- Follow all SMU rules, regulations, policies, and codes of conduct, and behave courteously and professionally on campus.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding the student's disability and personal information.
- Allow students to manage their academic progress and behavior independently.
- Refrain from assisting with academic tasks such as explaining assignments, tests, or participating in graded activities.
- Avoid interfering in conversations between students and faculty, staff, or other students.
- Failure to comply with these expectations may result in immediate removal of the PCA from campus.
- Assist the student with exiting the building safely in the event of an emergency

## Compliance and Conduct

The Student acknowledges that failure to comply with University policies may result in the loss of PCA privileges on campus. The student acknowledges that failure to ensure PCA compliance may result in that particular PCA not being permitted to continue in the role.

## Liability

The Student acknowledges that the University is not responsible for the actions, supervision, or conduct of the PCA.

## Duration and Termination

The University reserves the right to revoke PCA access if policies are violated.

### *PCA Removal Appeal Process*

If a PCA is asked to leave campus, the student may file an appeal regarding the removal of that particular PCA. (This is not equivalent to a denial of an accommodation for a PCA.) The appeal must be submitted in writing to the DASS Director within **10 business days** of notification. The appeal should include:

- Student and PCA names
- Date of incident or removal
- Detailed explanation of the circumstances and reasons the PCA should be reinstated

The DASS Director, or designee, will review the appeal, consult with involved parties, and render a decision within **15 business days**. The student will be notified in writing of the outcome. The decision of the DASS Director is final.

**By signing below, the Student acknowledges that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by the terms outlined in this Agreement and will ensure their PCA is aware of expectations and complies with University policies.**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

DASS Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_