

# **Office of Disability Services**

## **Personal Care Attendant Guidelines**

### **Personal Care Attendant (PCA) Responsibilities**

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

#### **Student responsibilities:**

- Informing ODS 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 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

#### **PCA responsibilities:**

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- A PCA is not an academic participant (auditing the class, taking the class, etc.); therefore, the PCA should not be asking questions, making comments, taking notes, or recording activities. A PCA should be available (in the classroom or close by) to the student as needed.

### **Faculty:**

#### **What is the difference between a PCA and a classroom/lab assistant?**

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 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.). If ODS is aware, ODS will provide information in advance to the faculty regarding whether a PCA or lab assistant will be present in their class.

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

The student will choose an effective way to communicate. This may include technology such as a voice box, communication board, typing on a computer, etc. This could also include the PCA verbalizing the student's comments as long as it is clear it and is not the student's voice. In the classroom, the PCA and the student will have established a non-disruptive mode of communication between themselves. For example, the student may use a communication board to ask for help or a question. This could include classroom, lab, fieldtrip, and testing environments.

#### **Who employs the PCA?**

A PCA is employed by the student. A classroom/lab assistant is employed by ODS.

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

The student is held to the same standards as any other student. If you have concerns regarding the behavior of a PCA in your classroom, please contact ODS first. If your concerns are not resolved after this discussion, please contact ODS. For violations to the Student Code of Conduct please contact ODS or Student Conduct.