Personal Care Attendant Policy

Amherst College welcomes students with disabilities who have a documented need for assistance from the services of a Personal Care Attendant (PCA). The definition of PCA is a person who provides personal care/assistance (chronic or temporary) to a student with a disability or other health care needs with activities of daily living, including nursing services not administered through on-campus Health Services.

The services of a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) have an impactful role in a student’s quality of life. They can positively facilitate independent access to and participation in the College’s programs, services, and activities. The well-thought-out selection of the right agency/individual and ongoing effective communication between the student and their PCA is critical for a successful experience.

Protocol When Hiring Personal Care Attendants

Students who require PCA services can contract with a licensed agency or a licensed, private PCA. Because PCAs perform specialized medical services for which they have received specific training and for which they must be properly insured, the college does not permit students to serve as a PCA for their friends, roommates, etc. on campus.

Students are solely responsible for arranging and paying for the PCA’s services. Students must make arrangements to provide their PCA with the applicable policies, procedures, and guidelines listed below.

Any student who will work with a PCA on campus must do the following:

- Develop a clear job description and list of responsibilities the PCA will perform for assistance with daily living activities and provide that to Accessibility Services.
- Provide evidence of applicable agency/professional certifications, licenses, and insurance certificates to Accessibility Services a minimum of two weeks before the PCA comes to campus.
- Arrange for each PCA to have a CORI check completed by contacting Accessibility Services. Please note this process can take up to a week or more to complete.
● Provide evidence of PCA medical/immunization clearances (including those for COVID-19). For information related explicitly to COVID-19 testing and policies, please follow this link.

**Student's Responsibility**

● Submit appropriate documentation to Accessibility Services that supports the medical necessity of a Personal Care Attendant.
● Make arrangements with your PCA before attending any college-related activity (i.e., move in, Orientation, class attendance, etc.). Please note that PCA services are not available from Amherst College, including on an interim or emergency basis.
● Provide documentation that the PCA is qualified to perform the services, as listed above.
● Ensure that the agency representative and each individual PCA that you will be working with from the agency—or a licensed, private PCA—register with Accessibility Services. Accessibility Services will coordinate internally with Amherst College Police Department (ACPD), the Office of Residential Life, and Health Services to ensure each office has the information they need.
● Provide a copy of your contract with the agency/PCA to Accessibility Services.
● As required, register all PCA personnel changes with Accessibility Services.
● Direct the activities of the PCA while at Amherst College. You are solely responsible for ensuring the PCA fulfills their duties for your care, whether daily or periodically. You are responsible for the PCA and mitigation of their failure to meet the contracted obligations.
● Develop an alternative plan of action should the regularly assigned PCA not be available to work.
● Follow all Amherst College policies and abide by the Student Code of Conduct.
● Pay for all PCA services, including but not limited to housing and meal plans if the PCA will be living on campus.
PCA Responsibilities

- Comply with all Amherst College policies, rules, regulations, and procedures applicable to visitors or contractors, as well as all applicable local, state, and federal laws. Violations of college policies may result in the immediate removal of the PCA and/or a ban from campus.
- Behave professionally, respectfully, and courteously while on campus. PCAs are not permitted to disrupt students, faculty, staff, and visitors of Amherst College by making unwanted comments, gestures, etc. This is a zero-tolerance policy.
- Limit their presence on campus to the approved and contracted areas to the extent possible.
- Allow the student to take responsibility for their progress or behavior.
- Refrain from contacting or asking questions of faculty, staff, or others on behalf of the student.
- Refrain from intervening in conversations between the student and faculty, staff, or other students.
- Refrain from discussing any confidential information about the student with faculty, staff, or students.
- The PCA should not be involved with the student’s work related to any class assignments or tests.
- PCAs may access the student’s residence hall only while the student is permitted to be on campus.
- PCAs must check-in at ACPD 15 minutes before the start of their shift. The PCA should present a picture ID, sign out a building key card, a room key, and a parking pass. The PCA’s ID should be worn and visible while on campus. ACPD will also provide the PCA with a campus visitor pass. At the end of the shift, the PCA must sign out and return the pass and key to ACPD.

Acknowledgment to Wheaton College for providing the framework for this policy.