



LAWRENCE ACADEMY
Academic Support Office
Frequently Asked Questions

(DAS – director of academic support; ASO – Academic Support Office)

Academic Support Office (General Information)

Q: Does LA provide *daily* 1:1 support to individual students?

A: No, not through learning coaching or the ASO. However, LA is a very supportive environment for many students to learn and grow. Each student has an advisor and smaller classes. Often, students develop close relationships with their teachers and advisors and find that support just as helpful and necessary as that of a skills coach.

Q: Does the ASO evaluate students for or diagnose students with learning disabilities?

A: No. The DAS does keep a list of evaluators in the area.

Q: Does the ASO or learning coach track the homework in every course offered at LA?

A: No, but learning coaches often review a student's homework assignments on Schoology with a student during coaching sessions.

Q: Will the ASO assist families with understanding the process of qualifying for accommodations at LA?

A: Yes.

Q: Will the ASO assist families with understanding the process of applying for accommodations on college entrance standardized tests?

A: Yes.

Q: Do parents of incoming students need to meet with the DAS in order to set up academic support?

A: No, the DAS will reach out to families if more information is needed or if questions come up as files are reviewed.

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Q: Does the DAS hold yearly “team meetings” with teachers to review a student’s progress or discuss evaluation results?

A: No; however, when necessary, an advisor may pull together a meeting with a student’s teachers and/or the director of studies and/or academic support.

Q: Does LA provide assistive technology for students?

A: Students who have an accommodation to use a speech-to-text program or audio program to listen to text are allowed access to our online web-based Kurzweil program (text-to-speech), which needs to be installed on a student’s computer. Students may scan documents or books anytime. Once the student is taught how to use the technology, it becomes his/her responsibility to access it. The ASO also has examples of other assistive technologies, such as Dragon Naturally Speaking (text-to-speech) and the Livescribe Pen. Students are encouraged to try them out; families are encouraged to learn about them and then purchase their own copy of specific software or hardware for use at home or independently at school.

Q: Is there “drop-in” help in the ASO during the school day?

A: No; however, there are several extra help blocks during the week when students can meet with their teachers. Students who work one block a week in the ASO have been scheduled to do so by the DAS for a variety of reasons. Other students may schedule an appointment to work with one of the learning specialists when needed.

Learning and Other Disabilities

Q: Does LA recognize that some students learn differently and may even have a diagnosed learning disability, ADHD, psychological, or health-related disability?

A: Yes.

Q: Does LA follow the IDEA or 504 Rehabilitation Act?

A: No. LA, because it is private institution, does not follow either of these laws.

Q: Does LA use or follow IEPs or 504 Plans written by school districts?

A: No; however, we request copies of them to provide additional information about a student.

Q: Is documentation of a disability required for students to have classroom accommodations?

A: Yes.

Q: What constitutes a disability and a need for an accommodation?

A: According to the ADA (Americans With Disabilities Act), individuals with disabilities have certain protections and the right to reasonable accommodations and equal access to programs and services. To access these rights, an individual is required to furnish documentation that the disability substantially limits a major life activity, such as hearing, moving, seeing, learning, speaking, etc., when compared to most people.

Q: What can be used for documentation of a disability and the need for accommodations?

A: A full neuropsychological or psychological/educational evaluation report, which contains specific tests to support a diagnosis in a specific area and is current (within three years for most tests and five years for others). Other documentation is necessary for certain types of health-related or physical disabilities that affect learning. However, in most cases, a doctor's note is not enough documentation for a learning or any other disability (for example, ADHD can be medically diagnosed; however, a medical doctor's note is not documentation of how it affects a person's ability to learn, nor does it support the need for accommodations). See our full Documentation Policy for more information.

Accommodations

Q: What accommodations are available for LA students who qualify?

A: The academic accommodations offered at Lawrence Academy for students with learning disabilities, ADHD, other psychological, and health-related disabilities that affect learning and classroom performance are:

- 50 percent extended time for in class quizzes, tests, and exams.
- Small group setting for assessments (i.e., final end-of-term written exams).
- Use of a calculator (according to the math department policy on calculator use).

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- No penalty for spelling errors when spell check cannot be used (foreign language exception – unless the correct spelling is an essential element for the exercise).
- Use of a computer for written expression tasks, including assessments.
- Use of audio books/digital text and/or text-to-speech software (i.e., Kurzweil) to access information from books, handouts, assessments, and other text material.

Reasonable accommodations for physical and other health-related disabilities will be discussed and approved on an individual basis in collaboration with the Health Office.

Q: What if my child's evaluation lists other accommodations?

A: Evaluations will often list several other accommodations, modifications, and recommendations for students that are not compatible with LA's educational program.

Q: How is information about a student's disability and need for accommodations communicated with faculty and staff working with the student?

A1: A learning profile is written for students with documented and diagnosed learning disabilities. Teachers have access to a digital copy. All evaluations are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the Academic Support Office. Faculty, coaches, and staff who need or want more information may view additional student information with the DAS' approval. No photocopies or printouts of evaluations are disseminated.

A2: Students, with approved accommodations, are required to advocate for themselves by having their advisor, teachers, and learning coach (if applicable) sign an Accommodation Agreement Form at the beginning of the year/term. The learning profile is on the back of the form. The student and advisor receive a copy of this form once it is signed.

Q: Who is responsible to provide the accommodations?

A: Accommodations are provided by the classroom teacher; however, it is important for a student to communicate with his/her teachers regarding the best way to use an accommodation such as a computer or text-to-speech. When necessary, the DAS will assist teachers and students with the provisions of accommodations.

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Q: Do all students with a documented disability and accommodations meet with someone in the ASO?

A: All new students with a learning profile are required to meet with one of the full-time learning specialists in the beginning of the year. Students will have the opportunity to check in with their assigned learning specialist weekly (this is not necessarily the 1:1 support provided by a learning coach; often, there are 2-5 students meeting with a learning specialist at a time). Any student may request an appointment, but there is no “drop-in” learning center.

Academics/Curriculum

Q: Does LA provide related services (speech and language, OT, etc.) or write learning goals for students with learning disabilities?

A: No.

Q: Does LA offer specialized, paced, or remedial English, reading, or math courses, or intense reading instruction using a specific program (Wilson, OG, etc.)?

A: No.

Q: Does LA modify graduation requirements, the curriculum, assignments, or assessments (test, quizzes, and final exams)?

A: No. (Special Note: Language waivers will only be given in special cases with considerable documentation, after the student has attended our classes and after much discussion with several administrators, the student, and parents about the consequences of modifying the graduation requirement. All incoming students will need to be scheduled in a language, even if it was waived at a previous school.)

Q: Is there assistance within the classroom for students with learning disabilities, such as team teaching, 1:1 assistance, or small group/pull-out instruction?

A: No.

Learning Coaching

Q: Does LA have content/subject-based tutors?

A: No.

Q: What is the purpose of learning coaching at LA?

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A: The purpose of coaching is to support those students who experience difficulty with their academic performance due to learning disabilities or learning style differences. In addition, students who have gaps in basic academic skills and/or those who significantly struggle with self-management skills – such as active study skills, time management, organization, and task completion/planning – may benefit from the support of an academic skills coach. LA’s coaching is meant to be transitional, not remedial; we expect students will eventually not need a learning coach. See the Coaching Description for more information.

Q: How many times a week may a student see a coach, and how long are the sessions?

A: On average, one or two times per week; sessions are 50 minutes long.

Q: When are the sessions scheduled?

A: During a student’s open block; once it is scheduled, it is considered a commitment, not an open block any longer. (On occasion, we will schedule an early evening session between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m., if this schedule works best for the coach and student.)

Q: Is the coaching one to one or small group?

A: One to one.

Q: Is there an additional cost for coaching at LA?

A: Yes. See the Coaching and Policies Fees document on the webpage.

Q: Does LA require students to see a coach?

A: Yes. Sometimes during the admission process or as the school year progresses, it will be determined by the DAS, an admissions representative, a teacher, an advisor and/or the director of studies that learning coaching is necessary. A student’s learning differences, the need to review basic skills, or the need to learn specific strategies to access information and demonstrate his/her learning may be such that learning coaching will be required for a specific time frame.

Q: What if my child needs more than two sessions per week?

A: LA’s coaching is meant to be transitional, not remedial. We expect students will eventually not need a coach. If a student needs more than two sessions per week, LA may not be an appropriate placement.

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Q: Are LA coaching sessions for enrichment or grade enhancement or subject specific?

A: No. See the question regarding the purpose of coaching.

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Q: What are the qualifications of the learning coaches?

A: Most of the learning coaches are certified teachers or other professionals (i.e., a licensed counselor). Many have several years of experience working with high school students and have specific skill sets in the areas of learning disabilities, ESL (English as a Second Language), math, writing, reading, or self-management/executive functions. Some are part-time staff at LA and come to campus only for their sessions with students; others are LA faculty members.

Q: How do you match a student with a coach?

A: The student's learning needs and style and the coach's strengths are considered the priority when creating the match. However, the logistics of the schedule will also dictate who a student is eventually placed with. On the rare occasion of a "wrong" match, the DAS works with the student, parents, and coach to determine the next course of action.

Q: Does LA have a Peer Tutoring program?

A: Yes. It is student-led through our Cum Laude Society and supported by the Studies Office.

Study Hall

Q: Is there a scheduled structured study hall during the school day for students?

A: No, though students are invited to use ASO rooms for a quiet work environment when space permits.

Q: What is Structured Study Hall?

A: It is a very supervised and structured study space provided only for boarding students who are on structured study status (GPA is lower than 2.0 and/or received a grade below C- at the end of the marking term). All boarding freshman will be in structured study hall until the fall midterm, at which time their grades will determine their study status.