

UNIVERSITY OF DETROIT MERCY
Office of Equal Opportunity
Student Accessibility Services Policies and Procedures

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Overview

Part of the Office of Equal Opportunity, Student Accessibility Services facilitates accommodations, advocates for students with disabilities and serves as an educational resource for the University community.

Accommodations are individualized modifications or adjustments to the academic or campus environment. Student Accessibility Services uses an interactive process to determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations. Accommodations are based on the nature of the disability and are determined on a case-by-case basis. Examples of some accommodations are:

- Testing accommodations
- Notetaking
- Assistive technologies
- Alternative formats
- Interpreters and captioning
- Priority registration

- Priority seating
- Housing and meal plan accommodations

Reasonable and appropriate academic adjustments focus on removing barriers to equal access without fundamentally altering the nature of the course, course components, course requirements, or technical standards. Academic adjustments can include modifications to academic requirements to ensure equal educational opportunity. The university is not required to lower or substantially modify essential requirements.

Applying for Accommodations

Request Accommodations

Student Accessibility Services has implemented the use of Accommodate, an electronic case management system that will assist students, faculty, and staff in requesting, approving, and implementing disability-related accommodations.

If you are a current student requesting accommodations for the first time, go to https://udmercy-accommodate.symlicity.com/public_accommodation/ and complete the form.

The request form is part of the student's self-report and is an important piece of information that is considered in the process to determine appropriate accommodations. It is especially important for a student who is requesting accommodations to self-identify or be able to express the impact of their disability in an academic setting. The student will be contacted within five (5) business days of the receipt of a completed request to discuss the next steps.

It is recommended that students complete their request well in advance of when the accommodation will be needed. Without adequate notice of the need for accommodation, SAS cannot ensure the accommodation, if approved, will be in place when needed. Accommodations will not be applied retroactively.

Provide Documentation

In most cases, documentation from a licensed medical professional who is involved in the diagnosis and treatment of the student's disability is required to confirm and clarify a student's functional limitations.

Eligibility for accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, are based on

the existence of a physical or mental condition that substantially impacts academic and campus life. The documentation must include both the evidence of a disorder and indicate relevant functional limitations to a major life activity such as reading, writing, walking, seeing, and caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, eating, speaking, breathing, hearing, learning, concentrating, thinking, and communicating. Documentation with only a diagnosis but without a clear written report that addresses a student's functional limitations is not sufficient to make an appropriate accommodation plan.

A Disability Verification Form is available on the Student Accessibility Services website, or students may submit detailed documentation in other formats, provided it satisfies the requirements detailed in this section. Other forms or documentation supporting a disability may be required, depending on the type of accommodation requested. Any additional documentation describing accommodations received in other settings is helpful and welcome in determining appropriate accommodations.

Accommodation Meeting

Once all forms and documents are received, Student Accessibility Services will contact the student within five (5) business days to schedule a meeting. During this meeting, we will have a conversation about the student's disability and its impact in the academic setting and in daily living. Student Accessibility Services will become familiar with the student's individual disability-related needs, and students can ask questions the process and how accommodations are implemented in classes and other campus environments.

It is important for students to advocate for themselves and their needs. It is the student's responsibility to advise Student Accessibility Services if their needs are not being met or further adjustments need to be considered.

Students may contact the office with questions at any time during this process by emailing sas@udmercy.edu or calling (313) 993-1938.

Approved Accommodations

Once Student Accessibility Services has received all necessary information and documentation from the student, the final review and decision will take up to 7 business days. Students will be notified by email of their approved accommodations and the process for notifying faculty and other relevant campus authorities of those accommodations.

For any accommodations requiring additional support, the Access Specialist will communicate needed information to the student by email. Students can contact Lauri Moore at moorela2@udmercy.edu or (313) 993-1938.

Student Accessibility Services will work together with the student to find reasonable and appropriate alternatives to any requested accommodations that were not approved, including referrals to the Student Success Center, TRiO, or other support offices on campus to determine alternative strategies to meet the students' needs.

Approved Accommodations

Notifying Faculty

Students choose the courses in which they would like to use their approved accommodations. Once accommodations are approved, students should log into [Accommodate](#) and complete a Semester Request, choosing which accommodations they would like to use in each course. Student Accessibility Services will notify faculty by email of students' approved accommodations and coordinate any additional modifications needed.

Students at the School of Law, School of Dentistry, and Novi Campus do not need to complete a Semester Request and will receive separate information about how to share information about accommodations with their instructors.

Discuss Accommodations with Faculty

Disability information is confidential and students need not discuss their disability with faculty or negotiate the terms of an accommodation. However, students may wish to discuss how an accommodation is implemented in individual courses and should meet with their faculty to share that information within the first two weeks of classes.

Implementing Accommodations

Once approved, accommodations are generally implemented within seven (7) days. Students who are approved for accommodations are not required to pay the costs related to those accommodations. The provision of accommodations is not based on the availability of funds as long as their provision would not pose an undue burden or cause a fundamental alteration to the service, program, or activity.

Notetaking: Classroom lecture notetaking assistance may be provided through either shared peer notes or through the latest notetaking technology that promotes independent student notetaking. This will be determined on an individual basis with the student with the understanding that their needs may change over time. When a peer note taker is approved, the university will attempt to engage a volunteer within the first two weeks of classes. If the university is not able to obtain a volunteer note taker or provide acceptable notetaking technology within

the first two weeks of a semester, the University will hire a notetaker to ensure that this service is provided.

Disability Accommodations Appeal and Grievance Process

Students have the right to appeal decisions about their accommodations as well as to file complaints about how their accommodations are implemented. If students believe their accommodations are inappropriate, insufficient, or have been made in error, this process offers two processes to resolve issues with accommodations.

Informal Process

This process is designed to achieve resolution through discussion and agreement. Student Accessibility Services will contact the student within 5 business days to address the concerns and establish a plan for resolution.

The Student Accessibility Services will provide written notice to the student of the efforts on behalf of the University to address each complaint or concern, and to identify alternatives if a complaint or concern cannot be addressed within a reasonable period.

The agreed upon remedies will be documented, placed in the student's disability file, and promptly implemented as part of the student's accommodation plan.

Formal Process

Students may appeal their decision or make a complaint about their accommodations by contacting the Director of the Student Success Center at mitrovfl@udmercy.edu or submitting this [Disability Accommodations Appeal and Complaint Form](#). The Director will review the request as well as any additional documentation, consult with an impartial committee for their evaluation, and issue a written determination, typically within thirty business days.

A monthly report of all complaints and concerns will be generated for the Director of the Student Success Center to review to ensure that complaints and concerns have been fully addressed.

Reporting Discrimination, Harassment, or Retaliation

Students who believe they have been discriminated against, harassed, or faced retaliation as a result of their disability, the use of their accommodations, or related issues are protected by University of Detroit Mercy's Nondiscrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Policy. Students may contact any member of the [Nondiscrimination Team](#) or make a report online using the [Nondiscrimination Policy Reporting Form](#) to initiate the grievance process and request an investigation.