

UNIVERSITY OF DETROIT MERCY

Student Accessibility Services (SAS)

Location: McNichols Campus Library, Student Success Center, Room 319.

Office Hours: Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 5 PM or by appointment.

Contact by phone: (313) 993-1143

Contact by email: sas@udmercy.edu

FAX: (313) 578-0342

SAS Staff:

Director, Student Success Center: Felicia Hartinger

Access Specialist: Lauri Moore

The mission of Student Accessibility Services, in keeping with the University's mission to provide excellent student-centered undergraduate and graduate education, is to create an accessible community where students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to fully participate in all aspects of the academic environment and the University community.

Because of our belief in the dignity of each person, and through compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, amended in 2008, we strive to promote students' independence. Our vision is a community where disability is neutral; a community where all of its members are empowered to learn, to participate, and to experience University life fully.

Our Goals

- To ensure that all students with disabilities can freely and actively participate in all facets of university life.
- To provide and coordinate support services to maximize each student's educational potential and develop their independence to the fullest extent possible.
- To strive to increase the level of awareness among all members of the university community so that students with disabilities are equally able to perform to the best of their abilities.
- To identify and engage strategies that effectively offset disability and enhance academic accessibility. University of Detroit Mercy strives to ensure that qualified students with documented disabilities have equal access to courses, programs, and activities by approving reasonable and appropriate accommodations or adjustments to eliminate barriers that may exist.
- For academic adjustments to be considered reasonable and appropriate, they must focus on removing barriers to equal access, while not fundamentally altering the nature of the course, course components, course requirements, or technical

- standards. Academic adjustments can include modifications to academic requirements, as necessary, to ensure equal educational opportunity. The university is not required to lower or substantially modify essential requirements.
- Accommodations are determined on an individual basis based on each student's particular needs as identified in their disability documentation. Therefore, accommodations will vary from one student to the next.
 - 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.

Commonly Provided Educational Accommodations

- Sign language interpreters
- Tape recorders
- Test taking accommodations, such as: Giving exams in alternative formats (e.g., giving a written exam orally, or changing the way answers are recorded); Extending the time allowed; Permitting use of a dictionary or spell checker (unless test is designed to measure spelling ability); Providing quiet room for test taking in order to decrease auditory or visual distractions.
- Assistive listening devices
- Removal of architectural barriers
- Written materials in alternative formats such as large print, Braille, or the newest technology, when available. SAS will provide digital format texts for textbooks, that are not sold in that format, text to speech software options or digital textbooks, usually by the first week of classes when textbook information is available. Upon approval of the accommodation, the implementation will generally occur immediately, if possible, or the earlier of seven (7) days of the approval or within the first week of classes.
- 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 during the students *Accommodation Planning Meeting* with the understanding that their needs may change over time. SAS will make every effort to obtain a volunteer peer note taker, when a student is approved for peer note taker, within the first two weeks of a semester. 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.

SAS has implemented the use of *Accommodate*, a core electronic case management system that will assist students, faculty, instructors, and staff in requesting, approving, and implementing disability-related accommodations.

HOW TO APPLY FOR ACCOMMODATIONS

Step 1. Complete the *Accommodation Request Form*

If you are a currently enrolled student who is requesting accommodations for the first time:

- Go to: <https://www.udmercy.edu/current-students/support-services/disability/>
- Scroll down to the bottom of the webpage and click on the large box “REQUEST ACCOMMODATIONS”
- Complete the ***Accommodation Request Form***.
- Follow the prompts. This is step one of the “Interactive Process.” Every question must be answered in detail, or your application will not be accepted.
- Read ALL the directions.
- You will be contacted regarding the second step, after this first step is completed.

Step 1 reflects the student’s personal statement and is an important piece of information that is considered in the *Interactive Process*. It is especially important for a student who is requesting accommodations to self-identify or be able to express to SAS the impact of the disability in the academic setting. The student will be contacted within 5 business days of the receipt of a completed ACCOMMODATION REQUEST to discuss STEP TWO of the *Interactive Process*.

It is recommended that students complete Step One 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.

Step 2. The Disability Verification Form

Step 2: The ***DISABILITY VERIFICATION FORM, (DVF)*** will be sent to the student from the SAS office when Step One is completed. **The DVF must be completed by the student (Page one only) and the student’s medical professional (Pages 2-5).** 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.

Other forms or documentation supporting a disability may be required, depending on the type of accommodation requested. Any documentation describing accommodations received in prior settings is recommended and should be downloaded into the student's file on the Accommodate site.

Step 3. The Accommodation Request Meeting

Step 3: Once all forms and documents are received, **SAS will contact the student within 5 business days** to schedule an *Accommodation Request Meeting*, as part of the interactive process. During this meeting, we will have a two-way conversation about the disability and its impact in the academic setting and in daily living. It is a time when SAS will become familiar with the student's individual disability-related needs and when any questions can be asked about the process and how accommodations are implemented in classes and other campus environments.

The SAS office is always open to questions at any time during this process and can be reached at sas@udmercy.edu or call (313) 993-1158 or 1938. See the UDM SAS website page for detailed information.

Without adequate notice, SAS cannot ensure the approved accommodation will be in place when needed. Accommodations will not be applied retroactively.

It is very important for students to self-advocate. It is the student's responsibility to advise the SAS if needs are not being met and/or further adjustments need to be considered.

Step 4: After the Accommodation Request Decision

After receiving all the information needed during the Interactive Process, the final review and final decision will take up to 14 business days. SAS will complete the final review within 7 business days and the student will receive the final decision letter within 7 business days, thereafter.

- SAS Access Specialist will communicate via email, the protocol related to approved accommodations and to answer any further questions within 7 business days of the SAS Coordinator sending out an Official notification of approved accommodations. The Access Specialist will provide ongoing support with any accommodation as needed; students can contact Lauri Moore at moorela2@udmercy.edu or (313) 993-1938.
- SAS will work together with the student to find reasonable and appropriate alternatives to denied accommodation(s). The SAS will refer the student to The Student Success Center, SSC, and/or other support offices on campus to determine alternative strategies to meet the students' needs.
- SAS will officially notify professors of whom the student chooses. Students

will always be copied or otherwise have access in their Accommodate case file to those notifications.

- SAS staff is always available at sas@udmercy.edu to answer any on-going questions you may have. You will receive a reply to your email by the next business day.
- Students with approved accommodations should contact SAS as soon as possible, if any issues related to disability accommodations arise.

Step 5: Discuss Accommodations with Professors

Disability information is CONFIDENTIAL. Like any other personal information, Students have the right to discuss anything with anyone. However, you will never need to discuss the details of your disability with anyone other than the SAS Staff.

Students must email or schedule an appointment to meet with each professor in the first two weeks of classes to discuss how accommodations will be used in their class.

Step 6: Semester Requests – McNichols Campus Students Only

Students enrolled at the UDM McNichols Campus who want to use their approved disability accommodations for the upcoming term, must complete a SEMESTER REQUEST. **This does not require re-enrollment and will only take seconds to complete on the Accommodate website.** Failure to follow these instructions AT THE BEGINNING of every term can delay or prevent students from receiving their accommodations. A SEMESTER REQUEST should be completed prior to every term that a student is enrolled in at the UDM McNichols campus. Once a SEMESTER REQUEST is submitted the student will receive a letter from the SAS confirming the approved accommodations for the upcoming term. The student will then e-mail sas@udmercy.edu with the list of professors with whom they choose to use their accommodations. SAS will then send an official letter with the approved accommodations to the professors of the students choosing.

SEMESTER REQUEST: For students who are already approved for accommodations and want to use them for the upcoming semester:

- Go to: <https://udmercy-accommodate.symplicity.com/>
- Click: **STUDENT** box.
- Click: **ACCOMMODATIONS** from the left menu.
- Click: **Semester Request**.
- Click: **ADD NEW**.
- Select Term: Winter 2024.
- Select: **APPLY SEARCH**.
- Select: **SUBMIT FOR ALL ACCOMMODATIONS**.
- The Semester Request has been completed.

Complaints or Concerns Regarding Disability Accommodations - ADA/504 Grievance Process

Students who believe they have not received agreed upon accommodations or who are dissatisfied with the delivery or level of accommodations they have received, have the right to file a complaint to have their concerns addressed. The ADA/504 Grievance Process provides both formal and informal paths for resolution of grievances. A grievant has full discretion to initiate either the Informal Process or the Formal Process by filing a written grievance with the designated Officer indicated.

Informal Grievance Process: This process is designed to achieve resolution to a grievance through discussion and agreement. It is not designed to make findings as to violations of University Policy or governing law.

To engage in the Informal Grievance Process, the student should submit their complaint in writing to the Coordinator of Student Accessibility Services including their name, student ID#, contact information and the date and description of the problem or concern.

The Coordinator of Student Accessibility Services will investigate grievances and contact the student within 5 business days to involve them in an interactive process to address the identified 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 of time.

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 Grievance Process: If the complaint is not resolved in the informal grievance process, the student may file a formal written complaint to the Coordinator of Student Accessibility Services:

Director, Student Success Center/Student Accessibility Services: Felicia Hartinger

University of Detroit Mercy McNichols Library, Room 319

4001 W. McNichols Rd. Detroit, MI 48221-3038

Contact by phone: (313) 993-1143

Contact by email: sas@udmercy.edu

FAX: (313) 578-0342

The written complaint should include the students' name, student ID#, contact information, date, detailed description of the problem or concern and provide any supporting information. The student should provide any supporting information.

An impartial committee will review submitted documents within 14 business days of submission.

A meeting with the student may be required if additional information is needed.

The student will receive written notice of the University's efforts to address each complaint or concern within 30 business days of receipt of the formal grievance.

In the case that the impartial committee cannot come to a consensus within a reasonable timeframe, the SAS coordinator will meet with the student to discuss alternatives.

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