

Educational Access Center FAQ's

What constitutes a disability?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act define a person with a disability as any person who has a physical or mental impairment, which substantially limits a major life activity such as: walking, talking, hearing, seeing, learning, working,Students with disabilities are "Otherwise Qualified" meaning they have met the admissions standards of the University.

How will I know if a student who has a disability is in my class?

Students who are working with the EAC and who have classroom accommodations will present you with a letter of accommodation. Please read the letter carefully and complete any attached forms. Have the student return the signed and completed paperwork to the EAC.

How does the DRC determine accommodations for students?

Students requesting accommodations must meet with a coordinator at the EAC and provide documentation of a disability. The initial meeting with the EAC is an in depth interview: the student describes his/her disability, strengths and weaknesses as a student, how her/his disabilities affect the learning environment, the effects of medications on learning, and any accommodations the student used in the past. Documentation provided by the student helps "fill in the gaps" and provides the coordinator with a full, well rounded picture of potential educational barriers for the student. Based on this collective information, the coordinator determines reasonable and appropriate accommodations.

What do I do if a student discloses a disability to me?

Many students are unaware of the resources available to them, or expect accommodations to automatically occur as may have happened in public school. If a student discloses a disability to you, refer the student to the EAC to discuss possible accommodations. Likewise, if a student gives you her/his documentation of a disability, do not accept it or read over it. Return it immediately to the student and refer the student to the EAC.

Is a student's disability related information confidential?

Yes! The fact that a student is receiving accommodations in your class, disability related documentation, and letter of accommodation is confidential information. Please be sensitive to a student's right to confidentiality—meet with the student privately to discuss accommodation letters; avoid drawing attention to or sharing that a student uses accommodations with others.

Can I refuse to accommodate a student with a disability?

No—if the student has a letter of accommodation, the student has a legal right to the listed accommodations. Refusing to apply the accommodations could put the University in legal jeopardy. If you feel the accommodations alter the technical standards of the course or program, **contact our office—do not discuss your concerns with the student.** The goal of accommodations is to ensure that the student has equal access to a course or program. The accommodations might alter how a student learns or demonstrates her/his knowledge. For example, a student who is hard of hearing might have a sign language interpreter in the classroom or a student who has dyslexia might use a computer to type out answers on an essay test. You do not have to accommodate a student who does not have an accommodation letter from EAC. If a student asks for accommodations, refer him/her to the EAC. We will review the student's documentation and discuss appropriate accommodations with the student.

Don't accommodations give students with disabilities an unfair advantage over other students?

Accommodations help remove educational barriers and give students with disabilities equitable access to the classroom. Accommodations allow students with disabilities to demonstrate their level of mastery in the subject. Accommodations help professors clearly determine whether the student has reached the learning outcomes for the class

What are my rights and responsibilities as a faculty member?

- Hold the same academic standards for students with disabilities as held for students without disabilities.
- Provide accommodations approved by the Educational Access Center.
- Consult with the Educational Access Center staff if questions or concerns arise regarding accommodations.
- Understand how a student with a disability receives/ processes information and/or demonstrates mastery of a subject might vary due to reasonable accommodations.
- Maintain confidentiality of students' accommodations and disability related information.

What are the student's rights and responsibilities?

- Meet University academic, technical, and institutional standards.
- Have equal access to educational and co-curricular programs, services, activities, and facilities.
- Inform the Educational Access Center in a timely manner that you are an individual with a disability and that you are requesting accommodations.
- Follow specific procedures for obtaining reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids as outlined.

What are the institution's rights and responsibilities?

Provide reasonable and appropriate access to all educational and co-curricular programs, services, activities, and facilities.

Is there a specific time line students must follow for requesting accommodations?

- No. While we strongly encourage students to set up accommodations at the beginning of the semester, a student might choose to try the class without accommodation. Also, some students find out mid to late semester that they have a disability or that services are available.
- Accommodations begin when you and the student have discussed the accommodations and each has signed the letter—accommodations are not retroactive.
- We require you and the student sit down and review the accommodation letter together. This allows the student and faculty to discuss the particulars of how each accommodation will be implemented.

Faculty Mentors

At some point in time, everyone has questions about working with students with disabilities and the accommodation process. In addition to the Educational Access Center (EAC) staff, Faculty Mentors can help guide you through the basics of the accommodation process, explore ways to create a more accessible classroom through universal design in teaching, or help you problem solve on ways to best work with students who are using accommodations.

Current Faculty Mentors represent the College of Education, the College of Engineering, the and the College of Arts and Sciences. Although each Faculty Mentor is associated with a particular college, they are each able to address questions from any faculty member across campus.

Feel free to call, e-mail, or visit with any of the mentors:

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Educational Access Center

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