



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

Campus & Student Life
Student Disability Services

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Handbook for Students with Disabilities at the University of Chicago: The College

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Introduction and Purpose

Student Disability Services

This handbook is written for students with disabilities, College Advisers, and Disability Services staff members, and establishes the policies and procedures for students who may utilize academic accommodations throughout their studies at The University of Chicago. Students are expected to be directly engaged in the interactive process of managing their accommodations and this handbook should serve as a resource in that regard. Student Disability Services is committed to creating opportunities for students with disabilities to be engaged in all aspects of university life.

Nondiscrimination Policy of the University of Chicago

To ensure the intellectual richness of research and education, the University of Chicago seeks to provide an environment conducive to learning, teaching, working, and conducting research that values the diversity of its community. The University strives to be supportive of the academic, personal and work related needs of each individual and is committed to facilitating the full participation of students with a disability in the life of the University.

The Student Disability Services office is committed to providing equal educational opportunity for persons with disabilities in accordance with the Nondiscrimination Policy of the University and in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and amendments. The law states that a person with a “disability” is:

Someone with a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual; or a person with a record of such impairment; or a person who is regarded as having such an impairment.

Equal educational opportunity means that **a person with a disability who is qualified for admission must have access to the same University programs, services and activities as all other students.** If necessary to provide equal opportunity, the University of Chicago will make *reasonable modifications* to its policies, practices and procedures, unless doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity or pose an undue administrative or financial burden.

In support of its commitment to provide equal educational opportunity, the University of Chicago provides a variety of services and accommodations to students with documented disabilities. This handbook contains the following information:

1. An overview of the services available;
2. An introduction to the primary contacts who serve students with disabilities; and
3. A description of the procedures that students must follow to receive accommodations and obtain services.

Disability Services Staff & Dean of Students & Associate Dean of Students in the College

Student Disability Services has two full-time positions, the Director and Associate Director; however, the Dean of Students and the Associate Dean of Students work with College Advisers who act as the liaisons for College students within their academic unit, and work directly with Student Disability Services staff, and faculty to coordinate and implement students' accommodations.

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Arranging Your Accommodation Accommodations Process

Notification of a Disability

A student must identify him/herself to Student Disability Services to begin the process of requesting accommodations. The University is not responsible for identifying students with disabilities or for contacting such students to begin the accommodation request process.

Request for Accommodations

Upon notification, Student Disability Services reviews with the student the documentation required in order to support the student's request for accommodations. It is in the best interest of the student to submit the documentation as soon as possible as the accommodation assessment may take up to ten (10) weeks. Requesting accommodations is an interactive process which requires the direct involvement of the student.

The process of determining eligibility and considering what is a reasonable modification (accommodation) is an interactive and collaborative process which requires the direct involvement of the student and Student Disability Services staff. Reasonable efforts are to be made both by the student requesting reasonable accommodation and the Student Disability Services to complete the disability determination process and the consideration of any reasonable academic modification expeditiously.

General Documentation Guidelines

To ensure that reasonable and appropriate services and accommodations are provided to students with disabilities, students requesting such accommodations and services must provide current documentation of their disability. Such documentation generally must include all the following:

- a clear diagnostic statement of the disability prepared by a licensed professional;
- a description of the manner in which the disability limits the student in a specified major life activity and the severity of the limitation
- test results (if applicable)

It is the responsibility of the student requesting the accommodations and services to document the disability. As such, the cost of evaluations required pursuant to these guidelines is to be borne by the student.

At the University of Chicago, there are the following documentation guidelines found on the Student Disability Services website (disabilities.uchicago.edu):

- Physical Disabilities Documentation
- Learning Disabilities Documentation
- ADHD Documentation
- Psychological/Psychiatric Documentation.

Assessment of Documentation

Student Disability Services assesses the student's documentation to ensure it conforms to University guidelines and, if approved, issues to the student and his or College Adviser an Accommodation Determination Letter (ADL) outlining the accommodations. In the event the assessment declares the student's documentation insufficient (denied) for any reason, the student is responsible for pursuing whatever additional documentation is required and to pay any costs thereof. The University of Chicago

reserves the right not to provide services or accommodations until all of the documentation specified in the guidelines is provided.

Disability accommodation determinations normally are based on information provided by the student to the University, including detailed and current medical documentation – within the last 3 years - from an appropriate professional regarding the nature and severity of the impairment and a description of the student’s functional limitations. For students with learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders, Student Disability Services will provide a listing of required tests and contact information of possible testers in the area. Once complete documentation is received, the University may consult with an external medical professional to review the assessment and any recommended accommodations.

Determination of Reasonable Accommodations

After assessing the documentation, Student Disability Services determines any appropriate academic modification for which the student with a disability qualifies. To determine the appropriateness of particular academic modification Student Disability Services considers:

- a) Functional limitations caused by the disability.
- b) Essential requirements/elements of the academic program, course and/or University sponsored student life activity.
- c) Past performance of the student with and without reasonable accommodation.
- d) History of disability-related difficulties in participating in academic and/or University sponsored student life programs.
- e) Previous modification (s) or adjustment (s) received by the student in an educational setting; and
- f) Review of the recommended reasonable accommodation.

Reasonable accommodations are modifications that enable the student with a disability to have equal access to the student’s educational program or to the student life activities and for which the student is eligible. Academic modifications are not predetermined but, instead, are individualized based on the functional limitations caused by the student’s disability, academic program requirements and the student life activities.

Moreover, reasonable accommodations are modifications or adjustments to a course, program, service, job, activity, or facility that enables a qualified student with a disability to have an equal educational opportunity but does not lower or modify essential requirements, fundamentally alter the nature of a service, program or activity, or result in undue financial or administrative burdens.

If necessary, the College Adviser will consult with course instructors to understand the essential requirements/elements of a particular course. The academic modification adjustment must be effective, but need not be state-of-the-art or ideal. Students may always contact Student Disability Services if approved accommodations/modifications are ineffective as a disability accommodation and/or if their condition changes.

Temporary Accommodations

During the assessment and determination processes, Student Disability Services may issue temporary academic modifications or adjustment when the:

1. Request for a reasonable accommodation is in the determination process.
2. Student previously received a reasonable accommodation in an educational setting.
3. Process to determine the appropriate academic modifications or adjustments cannot be completed before the start of the quarter.

In nearly all cases, the temporary academic modifications or adjustments are for one quarter only, though in exigent circumstances with prior approval, provisional academic modifications or adjustments may continue into the next quarter. **Receipt of temporary accommodation does not imply that the student will qualify for reasonable accommodation on a long-term basis.**

Denial of an Accommodation

The most common reason a student is denied accommodations is that the documentation does not meet the University's guidelines; however, additional reasons may include:

- The requested accommodation is in conflict with the academic policies of the student's college or school.
- Providing the accommodations would fundamentally alter the program, course, or activity.
- The accommodation being requested is not supported by the documentation.
- Providing the accommodation would pose a direct threat to the student or to others.
- Providing the accommodation would constitute an undue administrative or financial burden pursuant to the criteria established under the ADA and/or Section 504.
- The accommodation is in opposition to the educational philosophy of the University.

Grievance Procedure

The University of Chicago Grievance Procedure can be found on the Student Disability Services' website:

http://disabilities.uchicago.edu/accommodation_process/grievance.shtml

Students requesting accommodations related to learning disabilities, attention deficit disorders, traumatic brain injury or psychiatric disability would need to further comply with the documentation guidelines set forth on the Student Disability Services' website:

http://disabilities.uchicago.edu/accommodation_process/forms.shtml

If there is a change in the student's condition, s/he may request modifications to previously-approved accommodations. The student will have to provide current supporting documentation for review at that time.

Managing Your Accommodations

Expectations for Implementation

Role of Student Disability Services

Aside from initially meeting with a student and assessing the student's accommodations, students can expect Student Disability Services to:

- Provide the student and his or her College Adviser with the Accommodation Determination Letter (ADL) which outlines the accommodations for which a student has been approved or denied.
- Meet with the student at the start of and throughout each term to discuss and implement accommodations.
- Support University faculty and staff in providing direct accommodations to students.
- Address concerns about the implementation of academic accommodations as they arise.
- Address any need for modification to accommodations which may result from a change in the student's condition or other factors.
- Address any accommodations which are ineffective.

Role of College Adviser

A student can expect his or her College Adviser to:

- Coordinate with and support Student Disability Services in the implementation of all accommodations listed on the Accommodation Determination Letter.
- Serve as a liaison for students receiving accommodations within the College.

Role of Student with Accommodations

It is the expectation of the University of Chicago and Student Disability Services that the student reads the Accommodation Determination Letter (ADL) and seeks any clarification (if needed) from Student Disability Services. The student should then schedule an in-person meeting with the Associate Director of Student Disability Services, Karyn LaTurner (karyn@uchicago.edu or 773-702-6000) before or at the start of the quarter to discuss how accommodations may be implemented. Additionally, students are expected to:

- Identify him/herself to the Student Disability Services Office to begin the process of requesting accommodations. The University of Chicago is not responsible for identifying students with disabilities or for contacting such students to begin the accommodation request process.
- Provide documentation that conforms to the University's guidelines. If the student's documentation is found insufficient for any reason, the student is responsible for pursuing whatever additional documentation is required and to pay any costs thereof. The University of Chicago reserves the right to withhold services or accommodations until all of the documentation specified in the guidelines is provided.
- Inform Student Disability Services and his/her College Adviser, as soon as possible, any time there is any difficulty utilizing accommodations.
- Inform the Associate Director of Student Disability Services, Karyn LaTurner (karyn@uchicago.edu or 773-702-6000), any time there is a change in condition that may require a modification of accommodations, or if the approved accommodations are ineffective.

Specific Accommodations Responsibilities and Guidelines

Note-taker

Any student approved for a note-taker as an accommodation should make this request through Student Disability Services at least fourteen (14) business days prior to the beginning of the term (or as soon as possible). Business Days do not include Saturdays, Sundays or Holidays. In those instances where requests cannot be made fourteen business days prior to the start of the term, the student should make the request as soon as possible.

Note-takers may be other University of Chicago students who are paid to provide this service. In some rare instances it may be impossible to find and assign note-takers or the class may not lend itself to note-takers (such as an acting class, for example); on those occasions, Student Disability Services will work with the student and instructor to find a suitable manner by which notes may be provided.

Students who have been approved for note-taking services should request a note-taker for individual courses by submitting the online [Note-taking Request Form](#), located on our website at disabilities.uchicago.edu.

Students should report any difficulties to the Associate Director as soon as possible.

Students should inform the Associate Director when dropping a class.

Students should promptly inform the Associate Director if this service is no longer required.

A student requesting a note-taker after the term has commenced must understand that it may take up to fourteen (14) business days or longer before a note-taker is assigned.

Alternate Exam Arrangements

Students approved for exam accommodations must coordinate with each of their instructors to determine if alternate arrangements for specific exams will be coordinated through Student Disability Services, or directly by the instructor.

If a given instructor prefers to have Student Disability Services proctor an exam, the student must do the following:

No later than five (5) business days prior to the exam, the student must complete the online [Exam Request Form](#), located on our website at disabilities.uchicago.edu.

Students should understand that late/last-minute requests may compromise the ability of the University to provide reasonable accommodations. (Business days do not include Saturdays, Sundays or Holidays)

Students must promptly inform the Associate Director if the alternate arrangements for any exam are no longer needed.

The student should keep in mind that the instructor, College Adviser/Dean of Students and Student Disability Services are only required to allow/provide accommodations specifically listed in the ADL.

Books/Texts in Alternate Format

Texts Purchased for Class

As soon as possible, a student approved to access printed texts in alternate formats as an accommodation must send an email to text.sds@uchicago.edu with all of the following information:

- a. The full title of the text
- b. The edition (if applicable)
- c. The full name of the author
- d. The 10 or 13 digit ISBN number
- e. Specific instructions as to what text is needed (all or only certain pages)
- f. Prioritization of requests by indicating the month/day/year by which each converted document is needed
- g. Whether the text/document is located on CHALK, in the library, or elsewhere.

Student Disability Services will first determine the availability of an electronic text via the publisher or other organization. If texts are not readily available in an electronic format, the student will need to provide Student Disability Services with a hard copy of the text as soon as possible (we understand that students may not provide hard copies of library and/or CHALK documents).

Requests for books/texts in an alternate format will be completed as soon as possible, on a first-come, first-served basis. The number of pages and the number of other pending requests may impact how quickly conversions may be completed and made available.

Students also should keep in mind that:

- Scanning textbooks into alternate format may require permanently separating the pages of the book from the binding.
- Student Disability Services is not responsible for purchasing books or other texts for students.
- Student Disability Services is not responsible for contacting instructors or departments to obtain book/text information.
- The student is responsible for obtaining the converted books/texts and unbound materials from Student Disability Services.

Library Texts for Class

A student approved to access printed library texts in alternate formats as an accommodation must provide the information listed below to text.sds@uchicago.edu as soon as possible.

- a. The full title of the text
- b. The edition (if applicable)
- c. The full name of the author
- d. Library Call Number
- e. Specific instructions as to what text is needed (all or only certain pages)
- f. Prioritization of requests by indicating the month/day/year by which each converted document is needed

Requests for converted library texts should be made as soon as possible, and will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. The number of pages and the number of other pending requests may impact how quickly conversions may be completed and made available.

Students also should keep in mind that:

- Student Disability Services is not responsible for contacting instructors or departments to obtain book/text information.

- Student Disability Services understands that some instructors do not determine which texts will be used until just before the start of classes, or in some instances even later. However, Student Disability Services cannot be responsible for late conversions, which are due to instructors' decisions.

Interpreting/Captioning Services

A student approved for interpreters or captionists must make the accommodation request through the Associate Director of Student Disability Services (karyn@uchicago.edu) at least ten (10) business days prior to the start of the quarter (or as soon as possible) and also should include additional services for tutorial sessions, meetings (of an academic nature or related to student life activities) and recruiting purposes. Business days do not include Saturdays, Sundays or holidays. Requests made after the term begins may take up to ten (10) days to fulfill.

Due to the very limited availability of qualified interpreters/captionists, in some rare instances requests for such services after the term has begun, and/or last-minute requests for special events may not be filled. Additionally, students are expected to immediately notify the Associate Director (karyn@uchicago.edu):

- If this service is no longer required.
- If difficulties are experienced with the interpreting/captioning service.
- Of any planned absence from class (at least 48 hours prior).

Other Accommodations

If you have been approved for accommodations other than those outlined in this handbook, please meet with the Associate Director of Student Disability Services, Karyn LaTurner, so that you may fully understand how to best manage those concerns.