



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
CHICAGO

# Handbook for Graduate and Professional School Students with Disabilities

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# Handbook for Graduate & Professional School Students with different abilities at the University of Chicago

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## Introduction and Purpose

### Student Disability Services

The university promotes the full participation of students with disabilities in all aspects of university life. This handbook is for students with disabilities, Deans of Students (and their designees), 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 manage their accommodations, and this handbook should serve as a resource in that regard.

### 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 every student and is committed to facilitating the full participation of students with a disability in the life of the University.

The Student Disability Services office mission is to provide equal educational opportunity for persons with disabilities in agreement 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 that 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 regarded as having such an impairment.

Equal educational opportunity means that **a person with a disability who qualifies 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

## **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 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 an accommodation is an interactive process that 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. 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 a reasonable accommodation is 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 to document the disability. As such, the cost of evaluations required under 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.

Physical Disabilities Documentation:

[http://disabilities.uchicago.edu/accommodation\\_process/updated\\_disability\\_provider\\_report\\_12\\_22\\_11.pdf](http://disabilities.uchicago.edu/accommodation_process/updated_disability_provider_report_12_22_11.pdf)

Learning Disabilities Documentation:

[http://disabilities.uchicago.edu/accommodation\\_process/LD\\_protocol\\_1\\_5\\_12.pdf](http://disabilities.uchicago.edu/accommodation_process/LD_protocol_1_5_12.pdf)

ADHD Documentation:

[http://disabilities.uchicago.edu/accommodation\\_process/ADHD\\_protocol\\_1\\_5\\_12.pdf](http://disabilities.uchicago.edu/accommodation_process/ADHD_protocol_1_5_12.pdf)

Psychological/Psychiatric Documentation:

[http://disabilities.uchicago.edu/accommodation\\_process/GS-Updated\\_Psych\\_protocol\\_Jan\\_2010.pdf](http://disabilities.uchicago.edu/accommodation_process/GS-Updated_Psych_protocol_Jan_2010.pdf)

## 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 along with Academic Services an Accommodation Determination Letter (ADL) outlining the accommodations. In the event the assessment declares the student's documentation insufficient (denied) for any reason, and the student wishes to appeal that decision, 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 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 three 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 potential 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 and Modifications

For Disability Services to provide reasonable accommodations and services, students with disabilities seeking these accommodations and services are required to provide current documentation of their disability.

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 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 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 and student life activities for which the student is eligible. 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 (adjustments) to a course, program, service, job, activity, or facility that enables a qualified student with a disability to have an equal educational opportunity.

The reasonable accommodations do not lower or modify essential requirements nor do they fundamentally alter the nature of a service, program or activity, or result in undue financial or administrative burdens. If necessary, the Dean of Students (or his or her designee) will consult with course instructors to understand the essential requirements/elements of a particular course. The accommodations must be effective, but need not be state-of-the-art or ideal. Students may always contact Student Disability Services if approved accommodations are ineffective as a disability accommodation and if the nature of the disability changes.

## Temporary Accommodations

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

1. Request for a reasonable accommodation is in the determination process.
2. A student previously received a reasonable accommodation in an educational setting.
3. The process to determine the appropriate academic modifications (adjustments) remains incomplete before the start of the quarter.

Usually temporary accommodations are for one-quarter only, though in exigent circumstances and with prior approval, provisional modifications 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 for a denied student accommodation request is that the documentation does not meet the University's guidelines; however, additional reasons may include that the requested accommodation:

- Conflicts with the academic requirements of the student's academic program.
- Fundamentally alters the program, course, or activity.
- Is not supported by the documentation.
- Poses a direct threat to the student or others.
- Constitutes an undue administrative or financial burden under the criteria established by the ADA and Section 504.
- Opposes the educational philosophy of the University.

## Grievance Procedure

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

[http://disabilities.uchicago.edu/accommodation\\_process/grievance.shtml](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 comply further with the documentation guidelines set forth on the Student Disability Services' website:

[http://disabilities.uchicago.edu/accommodation\\_process/forms.shtml](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 request for accommodations, Disability Services provides the student and his or her Dean of Students (or designee such as faculty and staff administering the accommodations for the student) with the Accommodation Determination Letter (ADL). Additionally, the student can expect Student Disability Services to address:

- Concerns about the implementation of academic accommodations as they arise
- Changes in the condition that may require a modification of accommodations
- Accommodations that are ineffective

### Role of the Dean of Students (or his or her designee)

A student can expect his or her Dean of Students (or his or her designee) to:

- Serve as the primary liaison for students receiving accommodations.
- Meet with students and discuss approved accommodations.
- Coordinate with Student Disability Services in the implementation of all accommodations listed on the Accommodation Determination Letter (ADL) provided by Student Disability Services.

### Role of Student Requesting 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 before meeting with his or her Dean of Students (or his or her designee). Next, the student should schedule an in-person meeting before or at the start of the quarter to discuss the implementation process of the accommodations. Finally, 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 not to provide accommodations until all of the documentation specified in the guidelines is provided.
- Inform his/her Dean of Students (or his or her designee) or the Director of Student Disability Services, as soon as possible, any time there is any difficulty utilizing accommodations.
- Inform the Director of Student Disability Services any time there is a change in condition that may require a modification of accommodations.

## **Specific Accommodations Responsibilities and Guidelines**

### **Note-taker**

Any student approved for a note-taker as an accommodation should make this request by meeting with or sending an email to his or her Dean of Students or his/her designee at least fourteen (14) business days prior to the beginning of the term. Business Days do not include Saturdays, Sundays or Holidays.

Note-takers are other University of Chicago students who are paid to provide this service. In rare instances, it may be impossible to find and assign note-takers, or the class may not lend itself to note-takers (such as a gym class, for example). On such occasions, the Deans of Students (or his or her designee) works with the student and instructor to find a suitable manner to secure course notes. Additionally, students must:

- Report any difficulties to the Deans of Students (or his or her designee) as soon as possible. Students must send an email to the Deans of Students (or his or her designee) if intending to be absent for three or more consecutive class sessions.
- Students must promptly inform the Deans of Students (or his or her designee) if this service is not needed or required for a particular course or quarter.
- Understand that requesting a note-taker after the term has commenced that it may take up to fourteen (14) business days or longer before a note-taker is assigned.

### **Alternate Exam Arrangement**

Any student approved for Alternate Exam Arrangements as an accommodation should meet with his or her Dean of Students or their designee in the first week of the term to identify exam dates and times, and discuss the implementation process of the accommodations. The student should provide his/her Dean of Students (or designee) with the following information in an email as soon as it becomes available:

- a. The full title of the course
- b. The instructor's first and last name
- c. The time the exam begins and ends for the entire class (for calculating extra time, if applicable)
- d. The instructor's phone number and email address
- e. The first and last name of the student making the request

Additionally, students should:

- Understand late/last-minute requests may compromise the ability of the University to provide reasonable accommodations.
- Promptly inform the Dean of Students (or designee) if the alternate arrangements is not needed or required for a particular course or quarter.
- Instructor and the Deans of Students are only required to provide accommodations specifically listed in the ADL.

### **Books/Texts in Alternate Format**

#### ***Texts Purchased for Class***

Disability Services processes requests for books/texts in an alternate format on a first-come, first-served basis and as timely as possible. The number of pages and the number of other pending requests may impact how quickly

conversions may be completed and made available. The student should provide his/her Dean of Students (or designee) with the following information in an email as soon as it becomes available:

- 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 as to what text is needed first by indicating the month/day/year each converted document

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; or proof of purchase so that Student Disability Services may request an accessible version of the text from an external organization.

Student Disability Services processes requests for books/texts in an alternate format on a first-come, first-served basis and as timely as possible. The number of pages and the number of other pending requests impacts conversion completion and availability. 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 Student Disability Services 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 as to what text is needed first by indicating the month/day/year each converted document

Student Disability Services processes requests for converted library texts on a first-come, first-served basis and as timely as possible. The number of pages and the number of other pending requests impacts conversion completion and availability. Students also should keep in mind that Student Disability Services is not responsible for contacting instructors or departments to obtain book/text information.

### **Interpreting/Captioning Services**

A student approved for interpreters or captioners must make the accommodation request through Student Disability Services, at least, ten (10) business days before the start of the quarter 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) business days to fulfill.

Student Disability Services may not be able to fill requests for interpreters/captioners 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 Director ([gmoorehead@uchicago.edu](mailto:gmoorehead@uchicago.edu)) if,

- Service is not needed or required for a particular course or quarter.
- Difficulties with the interpreting/captioning service.
- Planned absence from class (at least 48 hours prior).

## **Other Accommodations**

Students approved for accommodations other than those outlined in this handbook, should meet with their Deans of Students (or his or her designee) or the Director for Student Disability Services to coordinate the implementation of those accommodations.

## **Accommodations for Temporary Conditions**

Student in need of support due to conditions of a temporary nature should contact Disability Services at 773.702.6000 or [disabilities@uchicago.edu](mailto:disabilities@uchicago.edu).

## **On-Campus Transportation Services**

An injured student who needs transportation should contact Transportation & Parking Services at 773.795.6108 or [bus@uchicago.edu](mailto:bus@uchicago.edu) between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday (except holidays).

The University also provides Dial-A-Ride, a complimentary curb-to-curb transportation service for students with long-term limited mobility. Students requesting this service must first register with Student Disabilities Services by contacting 773.702.6000 or [disabilities@uchicago.edu](mailto:disabilities@uchicago.edu). Service must then be arranged with Transportation & Parking Services at least three business days prior to an individual's transport needs. To arrange for this service, contact 773.795.6108 or [bus@uchicago.edu](mailto:bus@uchicago.edu).

## **Accessible On-Campus Parking**

Student requiring accessible on-campus parking for months or less, should contact Transportation & Parking Services at 773-702-8969 or [parking@uchicago.edu](mailto:parking@uchicago.edu). Students who require accessible parking for more than three months should contact Disability Services at 773.702.6000 or [disabilities@uchicago.edu](mailto:disabilities@uchicago.edu).

## **Disability Services Staff and Deans of Students**

Student Disability Services has two full-time staff, the Director and Associate Director. Deans of Students (or their designees) act as the liaisons for students within their academic unit and work directly with students, faculty and Student Disability Services staff to coordinate and implement students' accommodations.

### **Director for Student Disability Services**

#### **Associate Director for Student Disability Services**

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