

Academic Accommodations: Roles and Responsibilities

The successful and timely provision of academic accommodations requires the engagement and cooperation of many people across a university campus. Each have specific knowledge and expertise regarding the interactive process. Students, Disability Services Offices (DSO), Faculty, ADA Coordinators, and Designated Authorities generally have the following roles and responsibilities with regards to academic accommodations (this list is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all the rights and responsibilities of each role):

Student

- Request accommodation(s) and engage in the interactive process through their campus DSO.
- Submit accommodation requests in a timely manner and provide documentation, as necessary.
- Contact their DSO regarding issues, concerns, or delays in receiving approved accommodations.
- Notify their DSO immediately when discontinuing an on-going accommodation (e.g. note taking) the DSO is providing.

DSO Specialists

- Facilitate the Interactive Process with students requesting disability-related accommodation(s).
- Evaluate disability documentation and determine appropriate accommodations on a case-by-case basis for registered students with disabilities based on the specialist's education, training, and expertise in the accommodations field and provide an Accommodation Letter (AL) listing approved accommodations.
- Work with and assist faculty who have questions or concerns about implementing an accommodation listed in an AL.
- Timely engage in the fundamental alteration/undue burden process set by their campus.

Faculty

- Pedagogical experts; set academic standards for courses and determine curricula and assignments.
- Unless a concern is raised, provide accommodations listed in ALs upon receipt.
- Promptly contact the DSO with questions or concerns about accommodations.
- Timely engage in fundamental alteration/undue burden processes established by their campus.
- Refer students (in writing) to the DSO when students request disability-related accommodations but do not have an AL from their campus DSO.

ADA Coordinator

- Coordinate and lead efforts to ensure their campus is in full compliance with the ADA, other applicable disability-related laws, and all university policies related to disability — including the provision of academic accommodations.
- May provide assistance in making fundamental alteration decisions based on their training and subject matter expertise in disability case law, OCR settlement agreements, and industry best practices, as necessary, and in accordance with the process established by their campus.
- May investigate (formally or informally depending on individual campus procedures) disability-related complaints, including denial of academic accommodations, and make recommendations for appropriate resolution.

Designated Authority

- Determine whether a requested accommodation fundamentally alters a course or program and provide a written statement of reasons for making such a determination.
- Engage in a reasoned deliberation, or act on the advice of others who have engaged in such deliberation, including a diligent assessment of available options prior to making a fundamental alteration determination.
- Ensure the deliberative process includes a group of people who are trained, knowledgeable, and experienced in the relevant areas (e.g., DSO staff, faculty and/or department chair or dean, and the ADA Coordinator, as necessary).