

## **PROCEDURES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

*These procedures provide operational steps and a delineation of roles and responsibilities for carrying out the Seattle University Section 504/ADA Policy and Appeal Procedure. Additional information on issues related to disabilities can be obtained from the Affirmative Action Officer or the ADA Coordinator.*

*Specific procedures at the Seattle University Law School will differ. Please contact the Law School directly for disabilities access information.*

### Accommodation policies

1. Seattle University provides reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities in academic situations in order to ensure equal opportunity for participation in all its programs and activities.
2. Accommodation decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, considering the particular needs of the student, the demands of the situation, and the essential nature of the activity or program.
3. Reasonable accommodations will be provided without cost to the student.
4. Accommodations cannot be approved that require a change in the essential requirements and/or nature of the course, curriculum, or activity involved or that create an undue financial or administrative burden.
5. Services of a personal nature or for personal use will not be provided.
6. It is the responsibility of Disabilities Services staff to determine the disability status of students and to coordinate the provision of reasonable accommodations.
7. The Dean of each college or school will designate an administrator who will provide information to faculty regarding disabilities-related policies and procedures, guidance for faculty decision-making related to students with disabilities, and support for the appropriate implementation of accommodations within the school.
8. It is the responsibility of the department or school that operates the program, class or activity to determine the essential requirements and standards of its curriculum and/or activities. (see: *Determining Essential Requirements and Standards and #22 below.*)

### Notification to students of procedures for obtaining accommodations

9. The University will provide notification of procedures for students to follow in requesting accommodations through

- statements in the Undergraduate and Graduate Student Handbooks and Bulletins of Information and in the quarterly Schedule of Courses,
- a letter sent to each new student describing available services and
- faculty and staff referrals for specific students.

10. Disabilities Services staff are available to discuss possible aids, services, and adjustments with students.

#### Request for accommodations

11. It is the responsibility of the student to request any accommodations needed to ensure equal opportunity for participation in Seattle University programs.

12. To initiate a request for accommodation, the student meets with Disabilities Services staff in person to discuss his or her individual situation.

13. Students must present accommodations requests to Disabilities Services staff in writing, separately for each situation. Typically this means requesting each accommodation, for each class, each quarter. (see: *Accommodations Request form*.)

14. If a student presents a request for accommodation directly to a professor, the professor will notify the student of the access procedures through Disabilities Services.

#### Verification of disability and determination of reasonable accommodations

15. It is the responsibility of the student to provide documentation of disability-related needs to Seattle University. Documentation must fulfill the criteria stated in the Seattle University *Requirements for Documentation of Disabilities*.

16. Documentation is given to Disabilities Services staff and kept in confidential files in the Learning Center. (see: *Confidentiality of Disability Related Records*)

17. Disabilities Services staff will send notification of the student's disability status to the designated administrator of the student's school or college. The administrator will keep this information in a separate location, not adding it to the student's official file. The designated administrator will release the information on a need to know basis only.

18. After reviewing the documentation and in consultation with the student, Disabilities Services staff will consider the following in determining whether to support a requested accommodation:

- the student must have a condition that meets the Section 504 definition of disability,
- the accommodation must be related to the functional impairments noted on the documentation, and
- the requested accommodation cannot be of a personal nature or for personal use.

Additionally, when choosing between equally effective accommodation strategies, the one supported must be the least financially and administratively burdensome for the university.

19. Accommodations recommendations written in a student's documentation by the diagnosing professional not be automatically approved.

20. If the documentation is unclear on issues related to specific requests, students may be asked to obtain additional information.

21. Students may receive reasonable accommodations on a limited basis (usually for one quarter) while they are in the process of obtaining documentation.

22. If it appears possible that a requested accommodation might require a change in the essential nature or requirements of a course, Disabilities Services staff will alert the student to the concern and explain that approval is needed from the academic department or school.

23. In any case in which Disabilities Services staff has reason to believe that a requested accommodation might require a change in the essential requirements or nature of the course, could require an exception to college or university policy, or presents issues and complexities not yet explored at Seattle University, the steps listed below will be followed (in other cases the procedure described in #27 - 32 below will be used):

- A. the student will provide the specific request in writing;
- B. Disabilities Services staff will forward that request to the designated administrator of the school involved, chair of the department, and the instructor of the course who will review the issue and its implications;
- C. within the limits of confidentiality, Disabilities Services staff will provide information requested by the department and/or school to support their deliberations (See: *Confidentiality of Disability Related Records*);
- D. within a reasonable (usually two weeks) time period, the designated administrator of the school will send a written answer to the accommodation request to Disabilities Services staff who will forward it to the student.

24. If a particular requested accommodation cannot be supported, Disabilities Services staff will attempt to find an alternative accommodation and/or services that will fit the needs of the student.

25. If the written request for accommodation is not supported by Disabilities Services staff, the denial and rationale will be provided to the student in writing.

#### Approval and implementation of accommodations

26 During the initial discussion regarding an accommodation request, Disabilities Services staff will inform the student of the procedures required for accessing that specific accommodation.

27. In order to access the accommodation, the student must follow the steps and timelines specific to that accommodation.

28 Except in situations covered in #21 above, Disabilities Services staff will send written notification to administrators, faculty, and staff involved in the implementation and monitoring of the accommodation, explaining the recommended adjustment and providing information about typical procedures. For accommodations provided in a specific class, this will include sending notification to the designated administrator of the school or college through which the class is taught.

29. If a faculty member has concerns about the approval or implementation of any accommodation, he or she should discuss the issue with the designated administrator of the school or college. Disabilities Services staff is also available for consultation.

30 If a faculty member receives written notification of a reasonable accommodation for a student and he or she does not discuss concerns with the designated administrator of the school or college, the accommodation will be implemented as described.

31 Support for a recommended accommodation may be denied by an academic department or school if

- a more effective or practical alternative can be provided,
- the accommodation would change the essential nature or requirements of the course,
- the accommodation causes an undue administrative hardship or burden,
- the accommodation would cause significant health or safety concerns for the student or others.

32. If a department or school determines that a requested accommodation must be denied, the designated administrator of the school will discuss the issue with Disabilities Services staff and provide written notification of the decision to Disabilities Services staff who will forward it to the student.

33. If a requested accommodation cannot be approved, the designated administrator of the school and /or the instructor of the course will explore alternative accommodations and services with the student and Disabilities Services staff.

#### Dispute resolution

34. The student will be informed of appeal procedures as provided in the Seattle University Section 504/ADA Policy and Appeal Procedure at the initial meeting discussing accommodations with Disabilities Services staff and will be reminded of the procedures whenever a request is denied.

35. In the event of disagreement between Disabilities Services and the department or school regarding an academic accommodation, the following routes of resolution can be followed:

- decisions of Disabilities Services staff can be reviewed through the Director of Student Academic Services, Associate Provost and then the Provost, whose decision is final;
- decisions of academic personnel can be reviewed through the department chair, Dean, and then the Provost, whose decision is final.