

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-ST. LOUIS

Disability Access Services (DAS)

Accommodation Policy and Procedures

The Office of Disability Access Services (DAS) grants reasonable accommodations for students who have a verifiable documented disability. Accommodations afforded a student are determined on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration a student's individual needs for the classroom, and are designed to provide equal access to education and the university experience.

The university environment creates a unique learning environment, and governs its accommodations according to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Family Educational Right to Privacy Act/Buckley Amendment (FERPA), and UM System Collected Rules and Regulations 600.070 Policy Related to Students with Disabilities.

Reasonable Accommodation

The ADA stipulates that post-secondary institutions are responsible for providing necessary accommodations when a student declares a disability. Reasonable accommodations are made in order to "level the playing field" for otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities. As much as possible, accommodations are designed to minimize the functional limitations of an individual in a given task/setting.

The adjustments permit students with disabilities the opportunity to learn by removing barriers that do not compromise academic standards. Wherever possible, the disability is minimized as a measure of performance in the academic environment. This is accomplished with services or strategies focused on the end result, rather than the means by which that result is customarily achieved.

The amended law requires reasonable accommodations to be provided to otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities so those with disabilities can enjoy the benefits and privileges equal to those enjoyed by similarly situated individuals without disabilities. The law also ensures equal access to Federal programs, activities and facilities to people with disabilities.

Reasonable accommodations do not pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others, do not require the instructor to make a substantial change in an essential element of the curriculum or fundamentally alter an essential

requirement of the program, and does not pose an undue financial or administrative hardship.

Accommodation versus Other Consideration

When a student has provided verifiable documentation of disability to the DAS office and has completed the registration process, that student is presented with a DAS Faculty Notification Memo that outlines a student's "accommodations" as well as "other considerations".

"Accommodations" are those items that have been deemed necessary to provide equal access to the student's education based on documentation provided and assessment through the DAS office. These are "non-negotiable" items that are required for a student to be able to benefit from the academic environment based on their needs, and will provide the student with equal access to the classroom/course materials. Instructors are expected to adhere to the accommodations as listed on a student's DAS Faculty Notification memo and are not eligible to be changed or denied based on instructor's personal preference.

"Other Considerations" are those items that the Disability Access Services office requests an instructor take into consideration on the student's behalf. These items do not limit a student's ability to have equal access to the course or the information presented; however, these items may impact a student based on his/her given disability.

Disability Related Absences

Students may be provided with "other consideration" of "Disability Related Absences" due to the nature of his/her verified disability/medical condition. If a student's DAS Faculty Notification Memo has this listed, then it has been determined applicable given the appropriate medical documentation on file.

Generally students are expected to follow established classroom attendance policies. However, some disabilities are episodic in nature and result in a student missing class. Instructors are expected to determine whether attendance is an essential function of the course, and make allowances for absences base on a case-by-case determination.

An instructor should not deny the request for allowing disability related absences based on a generalized assumption that attendance is essential. Rather instructors should consider the following before making the final determination: How much classroom interaction occurs or is expected, do in-class student contributions constitute a significant component, is student participation essential for learning, does the student's absence affect the

educational experience of others in the class, final grade calculations, and classroom policies regarding attendance.

Flexibility Regarding Deadlines

“Flexibility regarding deadlines” is another “other consideration”. Students with documented disabilities may have difficulties meeting deadlines in courses due to variable circumstances and symptomology. Instructors must consider the student’s individual circumstances when deciding to make allowances for the request for modified deadlines, and not deny the request based on instructor preference or general policy. Should an instructor allow for modified deadlines for course work, the instructor is responsible for establishing new deadlines and communicating these to the student.

Other Accommodations

- **Reader/Writer Services** – A student can be provided with reader/writer for exams and quizzes if that student’s disability requires such an accommodation to provide equal access to one’s education as determined by the Disability Access Services office. This reader/writer will be a student worker identified by the Disability Access Services office. In addition, if an individual requires this accommodation, this may impact one’s ability to take exams at the time of class. Testing will need to be arranged based on student worker availability, and at least two weeks in advance of the exam.
- **Special Furniture Accommodation** - A student may require, based on their documented disability, special furniture to be placed in the classroom (accessible desk, oversized chair, etc.). A student should self-identify to the Disability Access Services office the need for this accommodation.
- **Emergency Evacuation** – For those students verified with an ambulatory impairment or other disability that can effect ambulation, DAS notifies key campus staff of the location of each of these students throughout the academic semester in order to provide assistance in the event of an emergency to ensure the student’s safety and wellbeing.
- **Adaptive Technology** – The Disability Access Services office provides students with adaptive technology as necessary to ensure equal access to educational materials.
- **Testing Accommodations** – Please refer to the DAS Testing Accommodations Policy and Procedure for specific details.
- **Closed Captioning Transcription Services (CART)** – Please refer to the DAS CART Services Policy and Procedure for specific details.

- **Sign Language Interpreter Services** – Please refer to the DAS Sign Language Interpreter Services Policy and Procedure.
- **Recording Lectures** - Should it be necessary, based on a student’s documentation of disability, a student may be afforded the accommodation to record lectures. Students provided with this accommodation are to be allowed to record lectures in order to have equal access to the classroom. General policies of an instructor that prohibit recordings are insufficient to deny the request.
 - **Executive Order No. 38 of the University of Missouri System Chapter 200: Student Conduct 200.015 section B. 2a** – Students may make audio or video recordings of course activity unless specifically prohibited by the faculty member.
 - To foster a safe environment for learning, however, the redistribution of audio or video recordings of statements or comments from the course to individuals who are not students in the course is prohibited without the express permission of the faculty member and of any students who are recorded. Unauthorized distribution of such materials is a violation of academic standards and may violate copyright laws and/or privacy rights. Students found to have violated this policy are subject to discipline in accordance with the provisions of Section 200.020 of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters. Faculty and staff found to have violated the policy are subject to discipline in accordance with applicable University policies
 - Nothing in this Executive Order may conflict with the provisions of Section 600.010 of the Collected Rules and Regulations, “Policy Related to Students with Disabilities.”

Resource:

https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected_rules/equal_employment_educational_opportunity/ch600/600.070_policy_related_to_students_with_disabilities