

Welcome to Disability Services



WELCOME!

Disability Services (DS) promotes access and equity for all students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University of Minnesota. Our mission is **Advancing Access for Everyone**, and our goal is to maintain an environment where everyone is treated in a respectful manner.

INSTRUCTIONS:

This welcome packet contains important information about registering with our office and how we work with you and your instructors to facilitate reasonable access. Please take a few minutes to read it as it contains essential information.

This packet also contains your registration forms; please fill in the requested information and either scan/email, fax, or hand carry them with you when you come to DS. Completing the forms in advance will help us use our meeting time more efficiently. However, don't worry if you do not fill them out as we can do that during your appointment.

The contents listed below contain links so you can jump from section to section. To return to this page please click on the link at the beginning of each section, it is identified as [Top]. The forms are at the end of this packet:

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Students eligible for services

Current and prospective University of Minnesota students with disability or health conditions may be eligible for accommodations and services. A disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that **substantially** limits one or more major life activities (including, but not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, working, and operation of a major bodily function). **ADA 1990; ADA 2008**

a) Accommodations

The University of Minnesota has identified Disability Services as the office to determine and facilitate reasonable accommodations. A reasonable accommodation is a modification to a course, program, service, job, activity or facility that eliminates or minimizes disability barriers to allow equitable access. Student Services is the unit within DS that works with students. Staff members in Student Services who work individually with students are called Access Consultants.

b) Providing services to students

Students are encouraged to contact DS as early as possible to discuss reasonable accommodations or services. Access Consultants and students will discuss how the disability impacts academics and student life. The primary responsibility of the Access Consultant is to determine students' eligibility for services and to facilitate the process of identifying appropriate and reasonable accommodations. The Access Consultant will also assist students with obtaining appropriate documentation.

c) Personal History of Impact

The student's own experience or personal history of disability is a primary focus in the process of determining accommodations. In the first appointment, the Access Consultant will ask the student to describe disability-related barriers they have experienced in the past and current impacts. The Access Consultant will also explore strategies and accommodations the student has used in other educational settings. Additionally, the Access Consultant may ask the student to provide documentation to better understand their disability condition. We ask the student to set up a phone or in-person meeting with the Access Consultant any time their situation changes.

Appointments

To schedule a private and confidential appointment with an Access Consultant, students should call DS at 612-626-1333. We will ask students to identify the disability or health condition for which they are seeking services, as well as the college in which they are enrolled so we can schedule them with the appropriate person.

Interactive Process

Access Consultants engage in an interactive process to determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations with (a) the student to gather information about disability or health condition-related barriers, and (b) the faculty to obtain information about essential academic

requirements that apply to all students in a course or program. During this process, the student describes their history of disability and any previous experience using accommodations, and provides documentation of their disability or health condition. Instructors provide information about their courses and academic curriculum.

While students may have recommendations for preferred accommodations, the Access Consultant is responsible for engaging in an interactive process with the student and instructor(s) to determine appropriate and reasonable accommodations in each academic environment. Accommodations are appropriate when they address disability-related barriers and provide needed access. Accommodations are reasonable when they meet these four criteria:

- Do not compromise essential requirement of a course, program, job, activity or facility.
- Do not cause undue administrative or financial hardship.
- Do not compromise safety of the student or others.
- Do not fundamentally alter the course or program.

An Access Consultant will work with the student and their instructors to determine if an accommodation is reasonable. Different courses may require different accommodations. Each accommodation plan is tailored to the individual student and their courses. For example, some accommodations may be useful in a classroom setting, while others are useful in a laboratory setting.

Disability or health conditions and documentation about those conditions are confidential information. Accommodations are not confidential. DS may share limited disability information with other University of Minnesota personnel on a need-to-know basis. Student files will only be released to the student or others outside the University with written consent.

The Access Consultant recommends accommodations in a letter and sends the letter to the student each semester they request accommodations. The student is responsible for sharing the letter with instructors and discussing how to implement accommodations in each course. An accommodation letter is only effective during the term(s) stated on the letter beginning on the date the instructor receives it. Accommodations are not intended to be retroactive. The Access Consultant can assist the student in preparing to talk with instructors about how to implement accommodations. If the student has questions or concerns about implementing them in any class, they should contact their Access Consultant.

If an instructor has questions or concerns about accommodations, they too should contact the student's Access Consultant. In some cases, instructors may only need clarification about the intent of the accommodation. In other cases, the instructor and the Access Consultant may need to discuss specific intentions or the integrity of the curriculum. The interactive process may result in modifying the original accommodations.

Documentation

Documentation is confidential information from an appropriately qualified health or other service professional who is knowledgeable about the student's condition. This professional might be a therapist, doctor, rehabilitation counselor, audiologist, nurse practitioner, or mobility specialist. Documentation can vary in length and format, but should focus on the ways the condition currently affects the student, especially in an academic environment. Here are some examples of useful documentation:

- Psycho-educational evaluation
- Neuropsychological assessment
- Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)
- 504 Plan
- Vocational assessment
- Information on previous use of accommodations
- Statement from health or other service professional
- Mobility assessment

The Access Consultant uses documentation to better understand a student's experience of their condition, identify impacts in an academic setting, and make informed decisions to determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations.

When additional information is needed to determine accommodations, the Access Consultant can help the student obtain what is necessary, which may require the student to sign a release of information for current providers. If the student is not working with a provider, the Access Consultant can provide referral information to the student. Students are responsible for the cost of assessments and appointments with providers but the Access Consultant can explore financing options with students if necessary.

Most health care professionals provide documentation letters at no charge. If this is not the case, the student is responsible for the cost of documentation. However, if DS requires a second opinion from a different provider, the University will be responsible for the cost of obtaining that documentation.

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Rights & Responsibilities of People with Disabilities Regarding Access to the University of Minnesota

Rights to:

- an equitable opportunity to participate in and benefit from employment, courses, programs, services and activities offered through the University;
- an equitable opportunity to work and to learn, and to receive reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services;
- appropriate confidentiality of all information regarding their disability/health condition and to choose to whom, outside of the University, information about their disability will be disclosed, except as required/permitted by law;
- information reasonably available in accessible formats.

Responsibilities to:

- meet qualifications and maintain essential institutional standards for employment, courses, services and activities;
- self-identify as an individual with a disability/health condition in a timely manner when an accommodation is needed, and seek information, counsel and assistance as necessary;
- provide documentation from an appropriate professional which describes how the health condition or disability impacts their participation in employment, courses, programs, services or activities;

- abide by the University of Minnesota Code of Conduct (available at http://regents.umn.edu/policies/index/academic/Code_of_Conduct.pdf) and Student Conduct Code (available at http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf).

Rights & Responsibilities of the University of Minnesota Regarding Disability Access

Rights to:

- evaluate faculty, staff and students, and identify and establish essential functions, abilities, skills and knowledge for their employment, courses, programs, services and activities;
- request and receive, through Disability Services, current documentation that supports requests for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary services;
- deny a request for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary services if the documentation demonstrates that they are not warranted or if the individual fails to provide appropriate documentation;
- select among equally effective reasonable accommodations, adjustments and/or auxiliary services;
- refuse an unreasonable accommodation, adjustment and/or auxiliary services or one that imposes an undue hardship or fundamental alteration on a program or activity of the University.

Responsibilities to:

- provide information in accessible formats to faculty, staff, students and guests with disabilities in upon request;
- ensure that employment, courses, programs, services and activities, when viewed in their entirety, are available and usable as broadly as possible;
- provide or arrange reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary services in a timely manner for faculty, staff, students and guests with disabilities in employment, courses, programs, services, facilities and activities;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication, except as permitted/required by law.

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Grievance Process

If a student would like to address concerns about DS services, they can follow the process outlined below.

1. Discuss concerns directly with the Access Consultant if possible.
2. If concerns persist, speak with the Associate Director of Student Services in Disability Services.
3. If concerns continue to persist, address them with the Director of Disability Services.
4. If a student believes they have been discriminated against because of disability, consult with the University of Minnesota Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action at 612-624-9547.

Disability Services Registration Agreement

1. I understand that I am registering for services from Disability Services at the University of Minnesota and that I may be eligible for services such as information, referral, reasonable accommodations and/or other individualized services that may be needed for access to employment, courses, activities, programs, services, or facilities.
 - I understand that the University needs information about health or disability impacts to provide services and to conduct reporting and research functions. These data are classified by condition and do not include personally identifiable information.
 - I understand that as a user of Disability Services, I am responsible for reviewing the rights and responsibilities pertaining to disability access (Students only, see Disability Services Handbook).
 - I understand that Disability Services employs an interactive process to determine eligibility for services and potential accommodations, and foremost in this process is a thorough self-report of personal impact. However, I also understand that services or accommodations are best identified when Disability Services is able to review current impact information described by a service provider who is qualified to describe or diagnose a disability or significant medical condition.
2. I understand that if I request Disability Services to facilitate accommodations on my behalf, they may need to consult with other University personnel and may share information about the impacts of my condition as necessary.
3. I have been given a copy of the Disability Services Handbook, and agree that I am responsible for understanding and following its provisions (Students only).

Name (print) _____

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Disability Services _____ **Date** _____

Disability Services
Office for **Equity and Diversity**

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Disability Services

Confidentiality and Release of Information Policies

Disability Services collects information to assist in determining reasonable accommodations for students and employees of the University of Minnesota and is committed to following legal guidance in maintaining and protecting the confidentiality of this information. The information may include biographical history, health or disability information, assessment data, grades, performance reviews, and case notes. The intent of this document is to inform you of Disability Services' policies with regard to confidentiality and the release of this information. These policies incorporate relevant state and federal regulations, guidelines established by relevant professional associations, and the University Board of Regents' policies on managing personal information.

1. Only Disability Services staff has automatic access to files. Any information gathered to determine the existence of a disability and reasonable accommodations will be considered highly confidential and will be shared with others within the institution on a need-to-know basis only. For example, University faculty and staff do not need access to diagnostic information regarding an individual's health or disability condition. However, they may need to know an individual's functional limitations and what accommodations are necessary/appropriate to meet the individual's disability/health-related needs. All health/disability-related information will be sent to and filed with Disability Services in order to protect confidentiality by limiting access to that information.
2. Information in files will not be released except in accordance with federal and state law, which require release in circumstances in which an individual
 - states they intend to harm themselves or another person(s);
 - reports or describes any physical abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse of children or vulnerable adults within the last three years (this includes the occurrence of abuse or neglect to the individual if they were under age 18 at the time of the abuse);
 - reports the use of an illegal drug for non-medical purpose during pregnancy; or
 - reports or describes sexual exploitation by counseling or health-care professionals.
3. An individual's file may be required to be released in response to a court order or subpoena.
4. An individual may give written authorization for the release of information when they wish to share it with others. Before giving such authorization, the individual should satisfy themselves that the information is necessary to share, that they understand the contents of the information being released, and that providing this information is in their best interest.
5. Disability Services may charge a reasonable fee for costs incurred related to release of information.
6. Disability Services will retain a copy of all information provided. If an individual wishes to have a record expunged, they must make a written request to the Director, who will make a decision whether it is necessary for Disability Services to retain the record.
7. Disability Services may communicate or share health/disability information on a need-to-know basis as necessary to provide reasonable accommodations.

I agree that I have reviewed, understand, and agree to the above information.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

If under 18 years of age,
Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ **Date** _____

Disability Services
Office for **Equity and Diversity**

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UNDER 18 REQUIRES PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

Student Information:	
First Name: _____	MI: _____ Last: _____
University ID: _____	x500: _____ Campus: _____
Gender: _____	DOB: _____ / _____ / _____ Month Day Year
<input type="checkbox"/> Veteran	Referral Source: _____
Ethnic Background: <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or AK Native <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Inter-national <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Other	

Academic Information:	
College: _____	Major: _____
Advisor: _____	U of M Entry: _____ / _____ / _____ Month Day Year
University Status:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Prosp <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Fresh <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh <input type="checkbox"/> Soph <input type="checkbox"/> Jr <input type="checkbox"/> Sr <input type="checkbox"/> Grad Sch <input type="checkbox"/> Adult Sp <input type="checkbox"/> Prof <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate <input type="checkbox"/> Ext. <input type="checkbox"/> Other	

Vocational Rehabilitation Information – only if working with a rehab specialist to pay for college	
Status:	<input type="checkbox"/> case closed <input type="checkbox"/> pending <input type="checkbox"/> inactive <input type="checkbox"/> never applied <input type="checkbox"/> not eligible <input type="checkbox"/> receiving services <input type="checkbox"/> VA
VRS/SSB Client: Yes / No	VRS/SSB Counselor: _____
Office: _____	Phone: _____ / _____ - _____ Email: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Refer Student to VRS/SSB:	

Contact Information:	
Phone #: _____ / _____ - _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Fax <input type="checkbox"/> Cell <input type="checkbox"/> Home/Parent <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Work <input type="checkbox"/> V/TTY <input type="checkbox"/> TTY
Phone #: _____ / _____ - _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Fax <input type="checkbox"/> Cell <input type="checkbox"/> Home/Parent <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Work <input type="checkbox"/> V/TTY <input type="checkbox"/> TTY
Campus/Local Address:	Permanent Address:
Street _____ Apt. _____	Street _____ Apt. _____
City _____	City _____
State _____ Zip _____	State _____ Zip _____

UMN Email Address: