

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER
ACADEMIC POLICY FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Introduction

The University of Nebraska Medical Center takes pride in its diverse population and is committed to providing all students the opportunity to take full advantage of its programs and facilities. In keeping with this philosophy, UNMC strives to eliminate architectural and programmatic barriers that may prevent qualified students with disabilities from obtaining an academic or professional degree. Reasonable accommodations (such as auxiliary aids and services or academic adjustments) are offered to provide students with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in academic programs and to promote and facilitate the integration of students with disabilities into the mainstream of university academic life. Students should initiate requests for accommodation; however, the accountability and responsibility of accommodations is shared among faculty, students, administrators, and staff. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities are designed to provide equal access in a manner that does not compromise essential elements of academic programs.

The Role of the Academic Program and Faculty

UNMC academic and professional programs will not inquire whether an applicant has a disability during the admission process; however, information describing the general actions that UNMC is prepared to take in accommodating students is widely available to applicants and accepted students at: <http://www.unmc.edu/stucouns/services/disabilities/index.html> . Individual accommodation plans are developed in conjunction with the UNMC Services for Students with Disabilities Coordinator. Furthermore,

- Faculty must not try to assess or diagnose whether a student has a disability or what accommodations should be provided. Instead, faculty should make a referral to the UNMC Services for Students with Disabilities Coordinator if there is a concern that a student may require reasonable accommodation based on disability. Faculty should not independently grant accommodations for a perceived disability to a student without first contacting the UNMC Services for Students with Disabilities Coordinator.
- Academic programs and faculty must offer a rationale for specific course requirements that cannot be waived or modified as a reasonable accommodation.
- Academic programs and faculty must not inquire about the specific diagnosis or name of a student's disability. Faculty should make every effort to protect the privacy of students with disabilities.

- Academic programs and faculty must assure that qualified students with disabilities are not counseled toward more restrictive career objectives than non-disabled students with similar interests and abilities.
- Academic programs and faculty will agree to provide reasonable accommodations to facilitate full access and inclusion for students with disabilities.
- Academic programs and faculty must provide timely feedback to the Services for Students with Disabilities Coordinator when proposed options are determined not to be reasonable.
- Waiver and/or substitution of courses by the college is typically not necessary when requirements can be documented as essential to the program of study.
- Academic programs and faculty will assist students with disabilities in the development of their academic and post-graduation career plans to the same level as is available to non-disabled students.

The reasonable accommodation of students with disabilities will not compromise the academic standards or required components of any UNMC program.

The Student's Role

Students who seek reasonable accommodation based on disability must:

- Contact the UNMC Services for Students with Disabilities Coordinator to formally request reasonable accommodations and participate in the interactive process to formulate an individual accommodation plan.
- Provide documentation from an appropriate source that verifies the nature of the disability and contains information that will assist in the formulation of an appropriate and reasonable accommodation plan.
- Self-identify to the UNMC Services for Student with Disabilities Coordinator in advance, or as soon as possible once the disability is identified, when seeking accommodations for specific courses or clinical experiences. Ideally, accommodations will be in place at the beginning of the course or clinical experience. If a disability is not identified until after a course or clinical experience has begun, the performance evaluations received up to that point in the course or clinical experience will stand (since disability status had not been previously identified) and UNMC will attempt to accommodate the student as necessary going forward.
- Follow specific procedures outlined by the UNMC Services for Students with Disabilities Coordinator for obtaining reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aides.

Students can inquire about or request disability accommodations by contacting the UNMC Services for Students with Disabilities Coordinator or by completing the online UNMC Request for Services for Students with Disabilities form that can be accessed by logging into the CARE website (<https://net.unmc.edu/care/>) using your Outlook username and password and choosing the

“disability accommodation request” button under the Campus Records tab. The form can also be printed (<http://www.unmc.edu/stucouns/forms/request-for-services-students-disabilities.pdf>) and then mailed or faxed to the coordinator once completed.

The Role of Student Disability Coordinator

The Services for Students with Disabilities Coordinator has the responsibility of providing appropriate assistance to students with disabilities and guidance to faculty in facilitating accommodations and determining what is a reasonable accommodation. The UNMC Services for Students with Disabilities Coordinator will:

- Correspond or meet with the student to assist with completing the request for services form, discuss possible accommodations and formulate a reasonable accommodation plan.
- Review documentation of disability status and recommendations from appropriate health providers who have assessed the student.
- Consider disability accommodations provided at previous educational institutions.
- Write the student’s official accommodation plan.
- Coordinate with faculty on the provision of accommodations.
- Provide consultation services to the faculty and student when adjustments to the accommodation plan may be required due to specific course/clinical requirements or when questions arise concerning what is a reasonable accommodation.

Documentation of Disability

To be eligible for disability-related services, students must have a documented or visible impairment as defined by the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. The ADA regulations broadly define impairments to include a wide variety of disorders or conditions affecting any number of body systems, including the neurological or musculoskeletal systems, special sense organs, respiratory, cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, genitourinary, hemic, lymphatic, or endocrine systems, or the skin. Impairments also include mental or psychological disorders, including mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and certain learning disorders.

UNMC’s student disability accommodation procedure requires documentation from appropriate, licensed professionals including educational information such as Individual Education Plans (IEPs), 504 plans, Summaries of Performance (SOPs), or other information about a student’s education and accommodation history and interview information from the

student. The cost of obtaining documentation will be borne by the student. Accommodation plans will be formulated based on the information provided by the student and the licensed professional(s), with accommodation decisions ultimately being made by the UNMC Services for Students with Disabilities Coordinator. UNMC reserves the right to receive documentation before formulating an accommodation plan.

Purpose of Reasonable Accommodations

UNMC is obligated to provide reasonable accommodations, adjustments, and/or auxiliary services only to the known limitations of an otherwise qualified individual with a disability. In general, it is the responsibility of the individual with a disability to inform the University that an accommodation is needed. When a qualified individual with a disability requests an accommodation, the University will make a reasonable effort to provide in a timely manner an accommodation, adjustment, or auxiliary service that is effective for the individual.

Evaluation of performance, including admissions decisions, course examinations and other measures of achievement, will be provided with appropriate reasonable accommodations or modifications taken into consideration to ensure that the evaluation represents achievement rather than reflecting the impact of disability.

Student Disability Accommodations in Clinical Training

UNMC recognizes that student disability accommodation plans may need to be modified for the clinical training components of a particular UNMC academic program. Students with disabilities who anticipate a need for modified accommodations during clinical training should contact the UNMC Services for Students with Disabilities Coordinator as soon as possible in advance of the clinical experience.

Appeal or Grievance Procedures

UNMC students with concerns or complaints about the disability accommodation process or the implementation of an accommodation plan should first contact the UNMC Services for Students with Disabilities Coordinator (BH 6001, 402-559-7276) for assistance in resolving the dispute. If the complaint cannot be resolved through consultation with the Disabilities Coordinator, the student should contact the UNMC Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Officer (ADC 2001, 402-559-7394) for additional assistance. If the complaint remains unresolved, the student may contact the University of Nebraska ADA/504 Compliance Officer, 222 Varner Hall, Lincoln, NE (402) 472-8404.

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