



Student Accessibility Services Guidelines and Procedure Manual

Approved by: University Student Accessibility Services Committee (previously Disabilities and Accommodations Committee), July 2016

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Introduction

Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED or University) embraces diversity and recognizes the value that individuals with disabilities add to the student body and institution. Individuals with disabilities (as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act) have successfully completed the curriculums that are offered through the colleges at NEOMED with the support of reasonable accommodations and are engaged actively in their careers as pharmacists, physicians and scientists.

NEOMED complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and any state and local requirements regarding persons with disabilities. Under these laws, no otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall be denied access to participation in the programs, services, or activities of the University solely by reason of their disability. The protections under federal law apply to individuals with substantial impairments affecting one or more major life activity (e.g., walking, seeing, speaking, breathing, learning, working or performing manual tasks), those with records of such impairments, and those who are regarded as having such impairments. The University strictly prohibits any form of retaliation against any student or applicant who requests an accommodation, reports or participates in the investigation of a complaint of discrimination, or otherwise exercises rights secured by these guidelines and procedures

As NEOMED is enriched by having people with disabilities in its student body and among the faculty and staff, it is important also to understand and support the needs and rights of these individuals. All students will be held to comparable performance standards and must be able to carry out the essential functions of their programs with or without reasonable accommodation. Upon request of students with disabilities, the University will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities in accordance with ADA and Section 504 requirements. The University is not required, however, to make accommodations that impose an undue burden, present a direct threat to the health or safety of others, or fundamentally alter the nature of its programs, services, or activities.

Students are encouraged to request accommodations as early as possible. While accommodations are typically prospective, the University retains discretion to implement corrective measures when necessary to ensure equal access under applicable law.

Students needing more information regarding the University Student Accessibility Services guidelines or procedures should contact the Accessibility Specialist.

Definitions and Terms

Accessibility Specialist

The Accessibility Specialist is the staff member located with The Learning Center that serves as the point of contact for students seeking accommodations and supports the administrative needs of University Student Accessibility Services Committee.

Accommodation Renewal

An accommodation renewal is a required review that occurs after a lapse in accommodation status, a program transition, or at designated review intervals. Renewal involves reassessing current functional impact and reviewing updated provider documentation, if needed, to determine whether accommodations should be continued, modified, or discontinued. Renewal is not automatic and is based on current information rather than prior approval alone.

Applicant

Any student pursuing accommodations for a disability by submitting appropriate application materials to the Committee.

Continuation of Accommodations

Continuation of accommodations refers to the review process used when a student has existing, approved accommodations and is requesting to maintain them without a lapse in eligibility. The review focuses on whether the previously documented functional impact continues and whether the accommodations remain appropriate for the current academic context. Updated documentation may be requested when prior documentation no longer reflects current needs or academic demands. Accommodations that are not confirmed will remain inactive and will not be implemented until confirmation is received. Testing accommodations require advance scheduling; however, the University will make reasonable efforts to implement approved accommodations when circumstances prevent advance notice.

Current Documentation

Current documentation refers to information that reflects a student's present level of functioning and functional impact within the academic environment. Documentation must be recent enough to accurately represent the student's current needs, treatment status, and academic demands.

Disability

According to the ADA, a disability includes any mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Learning is a major life activity. When a learning disability makes learning significantly harder, it meets the definition of mental impairment under the law. Disabilities may be permanent or temporary in nature (see Temporary Medical Conditions).

Discrimination

Limiting, segregating, or classifying a student in a way that adversely affects the opportunities or status of such student based on his or her disability.

Functional Impact

Functional impact refers to the specific, observable ways in which a diagnosed or medically supported condition substantially limits a student's ability to perform essential academic tasks or major life activities. This includes how symptoms affect efficiency, accuracy, stamina, attention, processing, sensory functioning, or physical endurance under typical academic demands, and serves as the basis for determining the necessity of accommodations.

Initial Accommodation Request

An initial accommodation request is a student's first formal request for academic accommodations submitted to the Accessibility Specialist. This request typically requires documentation demonstrating a disability and its current functional impact within the academic environment.

Interactive Process

The interactive process is the collaborative exchange of information between the student and the Accessibility Specialist used to determine appropriate accommodations. This process may include follow-up questions, requests for clarification or additional documentation, and ongoing communication to ensure accommodations effectively address functional impact within the academic environment.

Learning Disabilities

Learning disability is a neurologic disorder that causes difficulties in learning that cannot be attributed to poor intelligence, poor motivation, or inadequate teaching. Learning disabilities may occur in the following academic areas:

- Language, both spoken and written (often difficulties with reading, writing, and spelling)
- Arithmetic (difficulty in performing arithmetic functions or in comprehending mathematical concepts)

Major Life Activities

Major life activities are the kind of activities that you do every day, including your body's own internal processes. Some examples include eating, sleeping, speaking, breathing, walking, standing, lifting, and bending, thinking, and concentrating, seeing, and hearing, working, reading, learning, and communicating, as well as the operation of major bodily functions like circulation, reproduction, and individual organs.

Mental Impairment

A mental impairment includes any mental or psychological disorder, such as intellectual disabilities (formerly referred to as developmental disabilities), organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities. These impairments may substantially limit one or more major life activities, including learning, thinking, concentrating, and communicating.

Objective Data

Objective data includes clinical findings, assessment results, or documented treatment history that support the presence and severity of functional limitations. Objective data is reviewed alongside self-reported functional limitations.

Physical Impairment

Physical impairment includes any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement or anatomical loss that affects one or more of the body systems. These systems include neurological, musculoskeletal, special sense organs (such as vision and hearing), respiratory and speech organs, cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, genitourinary, hemic and lymphatic, skin and endocrine.

Provider Rationale

Provider rationale is the explanation provided by a qualified provider that connects a student's condition to specific functional limitations and explains why requested accommodations are necessary. This rationale helps reviewers understand how the condition affects academic performance and why particular accommodations address those impacts. Completed forms without explanatory detail may not provide enough information for a determination.

Provisional Accommodation

A provisional accommodation is an accommodation approved based on preliminary or incomplete information when a student's functional impact is evident, but full documentation or evaluation is still pending. The accommodation remains in place until sufficient information is available to make a final determination, at which time it may be confirmed, modified, or discontinued.

Qualified Provider

A qualified provider is a licensed or credentialed professional whose training and scope of practice allow them to diagnose, treat, or assess the condition for which accommodations are requested. Providers must have direct knowledge of the student's condition and be able to describe its functional impact in an academic setting. Documentation from providers outside their scope of practice may not be sufficient to support accommodation requests.

Qualified Student

A student who meets the academic and technical standards (also known as essential functions) required for admission to, continued participation in, and graduation from the program or activity with or without reasonable accommodation.

Reasonable Accommodation

A reasonable accommodation is any approved change to the way the curriculum is delivered or how student knowledge or proficiency is assessed, intended to ensure that a qualified individual with a disability can fully and equally access the benefits and privileges available to all students in the educational setting. These accommodations or modifications are designed to provide equal access to participation as a student in the educational setting. Accommodations ensure equal access but does not guarantee specific academic outcomes, performance levels, or grades.

An accommodation is considered reasonable if it does not:

- (A) fundamentally alter the nature of a course, program or academic standard.
- (B) compromise the essential requirements of a course or activity (for example, extra time would not be granted for time-sensitive skills or experiences).

- (C) Compromise the safety of the student, peers, patients, or others
- (D) cause an undue hardship for the University.

It is important to note that services of a personal nature, such as tutoring and typing, are not considered reasonable accommodations for postsecondary institutions under the ADA.

Substantial Limitation

A substantial limitation is a clinically and functionally meaningful restriction in the condition, manner, or duration with which an individual can perform one or more major life activities when compared to the average person in the general population.

Temporary Medical Conditions

Temporary medical conditions such as pregnancy, a broken bone, or recovery may be considered disabilities under the ADA when the condition substantially limits a major life activity. Students experiencing temporary medical conditions are encouraged to consult with the Accessibility Specialist for support options.

Undue Hardship

Universities must provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities unless it creates undue hardship. An undue hardship results when accommodations place a significant administrative or financial burden on the University. These hardships include the nature and cost in relation to the size, resources, nature, and structure of the University's operation.

University Student Accessibility Services Committee

The University Student Accessibility Services Committee (the "Committee") is a recognized Standing Committee of NEOMED. The Committee serves as the review and approval body for student requests for accommodations based on disability and in compliance with the ADA and state and local requirements regarding persons with disabilities. The Committee is co-chaired by faculty from the University, at least one of whom must have a College of Graduate Studies faculty appointment. Committee members include representatives from the Bitonte College of Dentistry, College of Medicine, College of Pharmacy and College of Graduate Studies, and they are supported by representatives from the Registrar's Office, General Counsel, Testing Services and the Learning Center.

Essential Functions

Accommodations cannot waive, remove, or alter the essential academic or clinical competencies, technical standards, or safety requirements of any NEOMED program. All students must be able to meet the essential functions of their programs with or without reasonable accommodation. Accommodations are designed to address disability-related barriers while maintaining the fundamental requirements of the curriculum. Adjustments that would lower academic standards, compromise assessment integrity, diminish required competencies, or interfere with student, patient, or community safety cannot be approved. The Committee reviews accommodation requests with careful consideration of essential functions to ensure both access and program integrity.

Students should review the essential functions for their academic program to understand the skills and requirements expected, with the understanding that reasonable accommodations may support the completion of these functions.

[Bitonte College of Dentistry](#)

[College of Medicine](#)

[College of Pharmacy](#)

[College of Graduate Studies](#)

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Students with disabilities have the right to:

- (A) equal access to courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities available throughout the University;
- (B) reasonable and appropriate accommodations that are legally mandated, as determined on an individual basis; and
- (C) appropriate confidentiality of all information pertaining to their disability; and
- (D) have disability-related information that is maintained separately from academic records in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and ADA confidentiality requirements and is shared only with personnel who have a legitimate educational need to know.

Students with disabilities have the responsibility to:

- (A) meet their college's qualifications and essential technical requirements, with or without reasonable accommodations;
- (B) meet the requirements of each academic course or clinical experience, with or without reasonable accommodations;
- (C) provide required documentation of disability in a timely manner, if accommodations are being requested;
- (D) follow the University's procedures for obtaining accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids, which includes disclosing their disability in a timely manner and providing documentation of the functional impact of it; and
- (E) discuss accommodations with the Committee and address any of its questions, concerns, or problems that may arise, in a collaborative spirit.

Guidelines for Students with Disabilities

Determination of Eligibility

NEOMED is committed to providing an equal opportunity and challenge for all academically qualified students and does not discriminate on the basis of disability. Accommodations are available to encourage students with disabilities to take full advantage of the University's educational, social, and cultural opportunities.

The Accessibility Specialist, located in the Learning Center, is responsible for the coordination of programs and services for students with disabilities. Determinations of eligibility for appropriate accommodations are made by the Committee, after a review of disability documentation provided by the student. The Accessibility Specialist, as needed, will discuss the student's request for services with the student to aid in properly completing all materials necessary for the Committee's review. The Accessibility Specialist may also consult with faculty members, testing services, or other departments in order to best support a student in requesting accommodations.

All accommodation requests will be presented to the Committee by the Accessibility Specialist, who acts as a liaison between the student and the Committee. If the Committee requires additional information and/or documentation, students will be contacted by the Accessibility Specialist via email accordingly. Occasionally, a student may be asked to attend a meeting to answer further questions that the Committee may have.

Requesting Accommodations

Students seeking accommodations must disclose the presence of a disability as part of the accommodation request process. In most cases, the student will be asked to submit documentation of disability for review by the Accessibility Specialist prior to it being reviewed by the Committee. Upon receipt and review of the documentation, the Accessibility Specialist may request that the student schedule an intake appointment with the Accessibility Specialist to obtain more information or clarify the student's request. Students should clearly provide their contact information on the intake form with the documentation to facilitate the scheduling of an appointment, if necessary. Student may also request a meeting with the Accessibility Specialist should they have questions about the procedures for requesting accommodations or documentation requirements.

Timeliness of Requests

Most requests for accommodations are typically processed within two to three (2-3) weeks, depending on the completeness of the documentation and availability of the Committee. Requests for accommodations for curriculum-related activities that occur outside of the Rootstown Campus may take up to six (6) weeks to process. Students are encouraged to submit their request prior to the beginning of the academic year.

Continuity of Accommodations and Documentation Requirements

Students are required to confirm whether they would like to continue with any previously approved accommodations into the subsequent year to the academic year. Such confirmations are completed by resubmitting the [Student Accommodations Request Intake Form](#). This annual confirmation allows the Accessibility Specialist to review existing accommodations in advance and ensure they remain aligned with curricular requirements, clinical environments, and any changes in disability-

related needs.

Because academic and experiential settings may change as students progress through their programs, accommodations may need adjusted accordingly. In addition to annual confirmation, provider documentation may be requested at designated review intervals, including approximately every two (2) years, when necessary to evaluate current functional impact, changes in condition, or alignment with evolving academic or clinical requirements. Students are encouraged to notify the Accessibility Specialist of any changes in their disability and may submit updated documentation earlier than the two (2)-year interval if necessary.

Accessibility Services

Accessibility-related consultations, including the intake and coordination of accommodation requests, are facilitated by the Accessibility Specialist, who is housed within the Learning Center. The role of the Accessibility Specialist is to evaluate documentation, assess functional impact, and act as a liaison between the student and the University Student Accessibility Services Committee (USASC). The Committee determines reasonable accommodations within the curricular requirements and technical standards of the student's academic program.

The Accessibility Specialist serves as the primary point of contact for students seeking accessibility-related support and assists students in understanding the accommodation process, documentation requirements, and institutional procedures. The Accessibility Specialist does not provide clinical services, diagnostic evaluations, or medical or psychological assessments.

The Accessibility Specialist coordinates accommodations for NEOMED courses and internal assessments only. Accommodations for national board examinations, licensure examinations, and external clinical or experiential sites are governed by the policies and procedures of those external entities. Students are responsible for following the application requirements established by each external organization, and approval of accommodations at NEOMED does not guarantee approval by any outside agency.

In clinical or experiential environments, certain accommodations may not be feasible due to patient safety considerations, site-specific requirements, or essential functions of the placement. When accommodations involve clinical teaching sites, the Accessibility Specialist works collaboratively with site leadership to determine what may be reasonably implemented. All decisions related to clinical or experiential sites are made on a case-by-case basis and are guided by safety, essential competencies, and the integrity of the educational program.

Learning Center staff may assist students with contacting the Accessibility Specialist or scheduling appointments but do not provide guidance on accessibility services, accommodation eligibility, or documentation requirements. Accessibility Services are housed within the Learning Center and operate under the supervision of Learning Center leadership.

Students seeking accessibility services should schedule an appointment through Campus Groups or contact accommodations@neomed.edu.

Procedures for Requesting Accommodations

Students seeking accommodations should complete all the following steps:

1. Submit Online Student Accessibility Intake Form

Students can request accommodations by completing the Student Accessibility Services Intake Form on NEOMED's secure online platform. All documentation regarding accommodations is collected through secure platform to help protect confidentiality and ensure appropriate handling of medical information. Students are strongly encouraged to use the online links for all submissions.

If documentation is delivered in person or sent by email, the student may be asked to resubmit it through online or may be assisted with uploading the documentation so that it is stored securely.

2. Request Treating Provider complete and submit the Provider Verification Form

Students are required to submit medical documentation from their treating provider verifying their disability and describing the functional limitations of that disability relevant to the academic or clinical environment. Students are responsible for any costs associated with obtaining any documentation provided to support their request for accommodations.

Provider Information:

The Provider Verification Form must be completed by a licensed professional who is qualified to diagnose and treat the condition and has established a treatment relationship with the student. Reports from current treatment providers are preferred, however, evaluations from past providers familiar with a student's permanent or longstanding condition may also be accepted.

Provider documentation must always come from the provider's own clinical judgment; neither students nor the University can influence, coach, or script what a provider submits on the Provider Verification Form. Providers must independently determine what is clinically appropriate based on the functional impact they observe and the student's current medical condition.

Accommodations for temporary, episodic, or evolving disabilities may require updated documentation as frequently as every two years to ensure the accommodations properly address the student's current needs. Permanent or long-standing disabilities may not require any updates, unless the condition or requested accommodations change.

3. Respond to Requests for Clarification or Additional Information

If the documentation provided is insufficient to complete an individualized assessment of functional limitations and accommodation necessity, the Accessibility Specialist or USASC may request clarification or additional details from the student or their provider. Students are not required to undergo new evaluations, however, if existing information is outdated, unclear, or does not address the specific accommodation requested, students may choose to submit updated documentation. Temporary accommodations may be granted while additional information is being obtained.

Requests that are not supported by documentation or other reliable information obtained through the interactive process; that would compromise essential academic or clinical standards, program integrity, or safety; or that constitute a fundamental alteration of the curriculum will not be approved.

4. Schedule an Intake Meeting

After required documentation is submitted, students may be asked to meet with the Accessibility Specialist for an Intake Meeting. This meeting provides an opportunity to review the submitted documentation, discuss disability-related needs, and explore appropriate accommodations. The Accessibility Specialist may consult with faculty or staff to clarify course, program, or clinical expectations while maintaining student confidentiality. Any consultation with faculty or staff will involve sharing only the minimum information necessary to clarify academic or clinical requirements; diagnosis or medical details will not be shared.

5. Committee Review and Decision

Accommodation requests are reviewed through an individualized, interactive process that considers the functional impact of the disability, the documentation submitted, and the essential academic or clinical requirements of the program. The Accessibility Specialist acts as a liaison between the student and the Committee. All decisions are made by the Committee or its subcommittees, typically within two to three weeks after all required documentation has been received.

The Committee review process is intended to be focused on an individualized assessment of functional impact and accommodation necessity. Students may be invited to meet with the Committee if any additional information or clarification is needed. Committee deliberations and records are maintained confidentially and disclosed only to individuals with a legitimate educational or legal need to know.

If additional information assists in reviewing a request, the Accessibility Specialist may request clarification from the student or their provider. Students may choose to respond to such requests by providing updated documentation if they wish to pursue accommodations that cannot be fully supported by the information already submitted.

Provisional accommodations may be offered at the discretion of the Committee Chairs while clarification or updated documentation is being obtained. Provisional accommodations do not guarantee future approval.

Common reasons for requests for additional information include:

- Insufficient detail regarding functional impact
- Missing or incomplete forms
- Documentation submitted by a provider with a conflict of interest
- Documentation not completed by an appropriately licensed professional who is qualified to render an opinion on the student's disability

6. Committee Notification of Approved Accommodations

When accommodations are approved, the Accessibility Specialist sends an official notification on behalf of the Committee to the University personnel responsible for implementing the accommodations in the student's academic or clinical environment. Notifications include only the approved accommodations and the information necessary for implementation. Diagnostic or medical information is not included in the official notification.

Students are not required to disclose medical information to faculty or staff, but may choose to do so if they believe it will support implementation. Notifications may be made to the following areas, based on the nature of the accommodations:

- **Testing Services:** When accommodations apply to assessments, the Accessibility Specialist notifies Testing Services to ensure appropriate testing arrangements.
- **Clinical Sites:** If accommodations involve a clinical teaching site, the Accessibility Specialist discusses the communication plan with the student before contacting the site.
- **College of Graduate Studies:** For students in the College of Graduate Studies, the Program Director is notified of approved accommodations within two (2) business days. The Program Director is responsible for informing the student's Course Directors each semester. Accommodations must be implemented at the start of the semester or within seventy-two (72) hours if the notification occurs after the semester begins.

Once an accommodation has been approved, the Accessibility Specialist will contact the student in subsequent academic years to allow them to confirm, modify, or update their existing accommodations. It is the student's responsibility to request specific accommodations each year via the form.

7. Student Request for Committee Reconsideration

Students who have concerns about the Committee's decision may request that the Committee reconsider their accommodation determination. Before submitting a request for reconsideration, students are encouraged to provide any updated information or additional context that may assist the Committee in its review.

Students may initiate the reconsideration process by submitting the **Accommodations Request Reconsideration Form**. This form allows students to provide clarification, submit additional information, or upload supporting materials they would like the Committee to review.

A reconsideration request allows the Committee to re-examine the accommodation decision in light of the information provided. Any accommodations approved through this process are not retroactive and apply only to future circumstances.

8. Appeal

Students can file an appeal if they are not satisfied with the Committee's decision. An accommodation that is granted as the result of an appeal is not retroactive and may only affect future circumstances.

If the student has additional information, disagrees with the Committee's decision, or believes there was a procedural issue in the review, they may submit an appeal to the Dean of Students of their respective college within ten (10) working days of receiving the Committee's decision. The Dean of Students will review the appeal within ten (10) working days of its receipt. During this review, the students may be invited to meet in person to discuss the appeal, accompanied by a representative from the Committee. The appeal process is intended to be informal and non-adversarial. Students generally participate without legal counsel; however, requests for additional attendees may be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Dean of Students will issue a decision within ten (10) working days, which may include sending the matter back to the Committee for reconsideration.

Although students are encouraged to attempt to resolve accommodations concerns using the University process specified above, they have the right to file any complaint directly with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR). Complaints filed with the OCR must be filed within 180 days from the time the alleged discriminatory act(s) occurred.

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