



Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Introduction: This policy statement serves as guidance for faculty to ensure fairness and consistency in accommodating students who qualify for academic accommodations through the Disability Services Program (DSP). In addition, the guidelines and procedures listed below will clarify the difference between an official accommodation, which is a legal requirement defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), and an informal arrangement for a student who may have missed a class or two or may need a make-up exam due to a minor illness or injury (e.g. flu, broken leg). Because of the legal context of the word, it is critical that the word “*accommodation*” be used only for students who have been approved for accommodations through DSP.

Policy Statement:

1. Students requesting accommodations must register with DSP through a disclosure process that includes providing appropriate documentation.
2. Instructors should only implement accommodations approved by DSP. Written notice of approved accommodations will be provided by DSP.

Statement of Process for Faculty Implementing Student Accommodations

The Disability Services Program (DSP) is responsible for the administration of the University of Denver’s commitment to equal access and participation in academic areas and other programs sponsored by the University for all students who have documented disabilities or medical conditions.

DSP works closely with administrators and faculty to ensure that students who are eligible for accommodations are appropriately served. The department works with individual instructors, offers trainings at college and department meetings and provides collateral materials, e.g. informational flyers/brochures. Although DSP’s ongoing collaboration with virtually every academic college and department on campus has resulted in wide acceptance of the policies and procedures that govern the process of accommodations, this policy supports instructors in understanding legal requirements and the importance of providing accommodations only to students whose accommodations have been approved through the DSP.

Accommodation Guidelines and Procedures:

- Each academic departmental website and all applicable student handbooks and bulletins should include a statement about how students request accommodations through DSP. In addition, instructors are required to include a statement in each syllabus (see Appendix A) to inform students about the accommodation process through DSP.
- Students who have disabilities/medical conditions and who want accommodations must register (request accommodations and provide appropriate documentation) with DSP in order for instructors to implement approved accommodations.

- Faculty may grant only those accommodations approved by DSP, shown in a DSP *Faculty Letter*.
- Accommodations are not approved retroactively for past terms. Accommodations are approved and must be used in the term during which they are requested and for future terms. Additional accommodations, or modifications to existing ones, may be requested at any time.
- Law students are granted appropriate accommodations by DSP but the law school has standing policies and procedures that provide anonymity to all law students. These students should disclose DSP approved accommodations to the Student Services Office and the Registrar, who will administer the accommodations.
- DSP recommends that instructors complete DSP accommodations training. Trainings are offered to academic departments throughout the year, and instructors may request individual consultation.

Providing Approved Accommodations:

- Many accommodations students use in the classroom will not require the instructor to have primary responsibility – such as providing sign language interpreters, alternate format text, adaptive furniture – but there are occasions when it will be advantageous for the student, instructor, and DSP if needed, to collaborate on how the accommodation(s) can be administered in the classroom or department. This is especially relevant for Extended Time Testing, where it may be helpful for the student to be physically near the instructor in order to ask questions.
- If a student is granted the accommodation of “extra absences,” or “extensions on assignments,” instructors will work with DSP to determine a reasonable number of absences or length of extensions. If the absences or extensions negatively affect the student’s ability to achieve the course learning outcomes, instructors should inform students of deadlines for dropping a course and/or the University’s Medical Leave of Absence option; students should be directed to appropriate offices.

Informal Arrangements - Not DSP Accommodations: Instructors may require appropriate medical documentation from students requesting a minor arrangement such as a make-up exam or assignment extension for a temporary, minor illness or injury (e.g., colds/flu, broken hand/arm). Note: An arrangement is not considered an accommodation. Only DSP can grant official accommodations.

Recording Informal Agreements - Not DSP Accommodations: Instructors should use the Advising Toolkit-Comment Section- in PioneerWeb – to document arrangement of informal agreements made with the student and include any appropriate forms (e.g., Incomplete Grade Application). The Comment Section is part of a student’s permanent record and can be referenced by other university officials to give consistent messages to students. In addition, this type of documentation assures consistency and fair practice to students and protects faculty members and the University.

Referral to DSP: An instructor should refer the student to DSP if it appears that a more formal accommodation may be necessary. The DSP staff will evaluate the situation to determine if the student qualifies for a formally approved accommodation.

Syllabus Statement (Appendix A) – may be modified to fit style/space

Students who have disabilities or medical conditions and who want to request accommodations should contact the **Disability Services Program (DSP)**; 303.871.2372/ 2278; 1999 E. Evans Ave.; 4th floor of Ruffatto Hall. Information is also available online at www.du.edu/disability/dsp; see *Handbook for Students with Disabilities*.