



**SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 AND
THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT
DISABILITY POLICY FOR STUDENTS**

I. Statement of Policy

Oklahoma City University is committed to full compliance with Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* and the Americans with Disabilities Act. As such, it is the policy of Oklahoma City University to provide its students an environment that is free from all forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on disability in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, employment policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic or other university-sponsored programs.

The University prohibits discrimination against any individual with a disability. The University further prohibits harassment or retaliation against any individual requesting an accommodation or filing a complaint for an alleged violation of this Policy.

II. Disability Defined

An individual with a disability is defined as any person who (1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities; (2) has a record of such impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment. An individual satisfying parts (1) or (2) of this definition who is otherwise qualified to be a student at the University shall be referred to as “qualified student.”

III. Reasonable Accommodation Defined

A qualified student is entitled to receive a reasonable accommodation that allows for his or her full participation in the University’s educational and extra-curricular activities. A reasonable accommodation for a qualified student may include modified testing procedures, course load reduction, or use of auxiliary aides in the classroom, such as sign language interpreters or tape recorders. However, the University is *not* obligated to provide personal aids and services such as attendants, individually-prescribed devices such as wheelchairs, readers for personal use or study, or other devices and services of a personal nature.

IV. Requesting a Reasonable Accommodation

The University will make a good faith effort to provide a reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities to ensure their equal access and participation in the University's programs unless it would result in an undue hardship to the University or fundamentally alter the University's programs and their requirements.

It is a qualified student's responsibility to alert the Student Disability Services Coordinator of the existence of a disability if a student desires an accommodation. Qualified students who wish to request a reasonable accommodation may contact the designated Student Disability Services Coordinator:

Telephone: 405.208.5895

E-mail: disabilityservices@okcu.edu

When requesting an accommodation, a qualified student shall provide the Student Disability Services Coordinator with the following documentation (to the extent applicable):

- The presenting problem and relevant history;
- Test scores and discussion of results, if relevant;
- Substantial medication side effects, if any;
- Information on substantial disability-based limitations and how they relate to the educational environment;
- Suggested educational accommodations with rationale for recommendations.

The Student Disability Services Coordinator reserves the right to request additional documentation if the initial documentation the student provides is incomplete or inadequate to determine the need for accommodations. In particular, the University reserves the right to require documentation prepared by an appropriate professional, including, but not limited to: (1) a statement regarding how the student's disability affects a major life activity, and (2) a recommendation of a reasonable accommodation.

V. Documentation of Disability

The type of documentation will vary according to the disability. All forms of documentation are valuable in understanding how a student's disability is connected to a barrier and how an accommodation can provide access. Accommodations are determined through an interactive process on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the student's self-report, any past history of accommodation, the professional judgment of the Student Disability Services Coordinator, the unique characteristics of each course or program, and documentation from external sources.

Appropriate documentation differs depending on the disability; however, there are seven essential elements of quality documentation. These elements are as follows:

- 1. The credentials of the evaluator(s)** – a licensed or otherwise properly credentialed professional who has undergone appropriate and comprehensive training, has relevant experience, and has no personal relationship with the individual being evaluated.

2. **A diagnostic statement identifying the disability** – includes a clear diagnostic statement that describes how the condition was diagnosed, provides information on the functional impact, and details the typical progression or prognosis of the condition.
3. **A description of the diagnostic methodology used** – includes a description of the diagnostic criteria, evaluation methods, procedures, tests and dates of administration, as well as a clinical narrative, observation, and specific results. Diagnostic methods that are congruent with the particular disability and current professional practices in the field are recommended. It may include formal instruments, medical examinations, structured interview protocols, performance observations and unstructured interviews. If results from informal, non-standardized or less common methods of evaluation are reported, an explanation of their role and significance in the diagnostic process will strengthen their value in providing useful information.
4. **A description of the current functional limitations** – includes how the disabling condition(s) currently impacts the individual that is thorough enough to demonstrate whether and how a major life activity is substantially limited by providing a clear sense of the severity, frequency and pervasiveness of the condition(s).
5. **A description of the expected progression or stability of the disability** – includes expected changes in the functional impact of the disability over time and context. Information on the cyclical or episodic nature of the disability and known or suspected environmental triggers to episodes provides opportunities to anticipate and plan for varying functional impacts. If the condition is not stable, information on interventions (including the individual's own strategies) for exacerbations and recommended timelines for re-evaluation are most helpful.
6. **A description of current and past accommodations, services and/or medications** – includes a description of both current and past medications, auxiliary aids, assistive devices, support services, and accommodations; significant side effects from current medications or services that may impact physical, perceptual, behavioral or cognitive performance. While accommodations provided in another setting are not binding on the current institution, they may provide insight in making current decisions.
7. **Recommendations for accommodations, adaptive devices, assistive services, compensatory strategies, and/or collateral support services** – recommendations from professionals with a history of working with the individual provide valuable information for review and the planning process. It is most helpful when recommended accommodations and strategies are logically related to functional limitations; if connections are not obvious, a clear explanation of their relationship can be useful in decision-making. While the post-secondary institution has no obligation to provide or adopt recommendations made by outside entities, those that are congruent with the programs, services, and benefits offered by the college or program may be appropriate. When recommendations go beyond equitable and inclusive services and benefits, they may still be useful in suggesting alternative accommodations and/or services.

All documentation of disabilities submitted to the Student Disability Services Coordinator will be held in confidence. Disability documentation provided by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist or other recognized professional is not subject to free access under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). The information regarding a student's disability will be shared by the Student Disability Services Coordinator on a limited basis, and then only when there is a compelling reason for such disclosure.

VI. Provision of Accommodations

Upon receipt of a request for an accommodation by a qualified student, the Student Disability Services Coordinator will engage in an interactive process with the student making the request. This interactive process will be an informal process designed to determine the nature of the limitations resulting from the disability and the appropriate accommodation(s) that will overcome this limitation. As discussed earlier in this Policy, prior to providing an accommodation, the University reserves the right to require documentation prepared by an appropriate professional, including, but not limited to: (1) a statement regarding how the student's disability affects a major life activity, and (2) a recommendation of a reasonable accommodation.

If the accommodation as initially provided is insufficient, upon receipt of notice of the insufficiency, the Student Disability Services Coordinator will make a good faith effort to implement any appropriate additional measures necessary to overcome the qualified individual's limitations.

If a student requests accommodations directly from a faculty member and no letter of verification has been sent by the Student Disability Services Coordinator, ***it is the faculty member's responsibility*** to inform the student that services are available and to refer the student to the Student Disability Services Coordinator to begin the process of verification of a disability and the subsequent notification of faculty. Except in cases of minor accommodations, such as sitting in the front of the classroom, faculty should not provide accommodations without verification from the Student Disability Services Coordinator. To provide accommodations without verification, or to refuse to provide accommodations recommended by the Student Disability Services Coordinator, exposes a faculty member and the University to legal liability. Faculty members are encouraged to consult with the Student Disability Services Coordinator or the University Compliance Officer/University Section 504 Compliance Coordinator if there are questions regarding accommodation issues.

Oklahoma City University is committed to complying with the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Accessible Instructional Materials. The University will provide accessible instructional materials for individuals with visual disabilities, including materials in alternate formats, such as Braille, large print, accessible e-text, and/or audio versions of online courses and materials.

VII. Confidentiality and Notification of Accommodation

Information and records about individual disabilities are treated as confidential information under applicable federal and state laws and are only provided to individuals on a need-to-know basis and/or when authorized by the student.

A qualified student who has received an approved academic or classroom-related accommodation for his or her disability will receive an access plan letter each semester for each class in which the student is enrolled. It is the responsibility of the student to provide the access plan letter to their faculty member.

VIII. Grievance Procedure

The University has adopted a Nondiscrimination Policy and equity resolution process for all complaints of discrimination, including complaints of disability discrimination, retaliation, harassment, or failure to provide a reasonable accommodation. The nondiscrimination policy and equity resolution process may be accessed at the following link:

The Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) serves as the University's Section 504 and ADA Compliance Officer. The CHRO is located in Room 205 of the Clara Jones Administration building and can be reached at 405.208.5075.

IX. Alternative Remedies

A student claiming discrimination, harassment, or retaliation based on a disability may also file a complaint with:

Kansas City Office
Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Education
One Petticoat Lane
1010 Walnut Street, 3rd floor, Suite 320
Kansas City, MO 64106

Telephone: 816-268-0550
FAX: 816-268-0599; TDD: 800-877-8339
Email: OCR.KansasCity@ed.gov

X. Access to Regulations and Policies

Any student wishing to view copies of Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended in 2008, or this Policy may do so by visiting the office of the Student Disability Services Coordinator or follow the links below.

<http://www.dol.gov/oasam/regs/statutes/sec504.htm>

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>

<http://www.ada.gov/pubs/adastatute08.htm>