

## Welcome to The Disability Resource Center



### Online student handbook

#### **WELCOME!**

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) promotes access and equity for all students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University of Minnesota. Our mission is **All A's: Able, Aware, Accessible** 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 the DRC. 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 The Disability Resource Center 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.

### **b) Providing services to students**

Students are encouraged to contact the DRC as early as possible to discuss reasonable accommodations or services and should do so every semester. We will discuss how the disability impacts academics and your student life and will determine your eligibility for services. We can refer you for further assessment or can 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, we will ask you to describe disability-related barriers you have experienced in the past and talk about current impacts. We will also explore strategies and accommodations you have used in other educational settings. Additionally, we may ask you to provide documentation to better understand your disability condition. We encourage students to contact us any time their situation changes.

## **Appointments**

To schedule a private and confidential appointment, students should call the DRC at 218-281-8587. Come to the DRC if you have a known disability or if you are struggling with barriers from an unknown cause.

## **Interactive Process**

The staff in the DRC will 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 DRC 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.

The DRC 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, event setting, or residential setting.

Disability or health conditions and documentation about those conditions are confidential information. Accommodations are not confidential. The DRC 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 staff in the DRC will recommend accommodations in a letter and will email the letter to the student and their faculty each semester that they request accommodations. The student is responsible to discuss with faculty 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 DRC staff 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 the DRC.

If an instructor has questions or concerns about accommodations, they too should contact the DRC. In some cases, instructors may only need clarification about the intent of the accommodation. In other cases, the instructor and the DRC 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:

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- 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 DRC uses documentation to better understand a student's experience of their condition, identify impacts in an academic or college life setting, and make informed decisions to determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations.

When additional information is needed to determine accommodations, the DRC 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 DRC can provide referral information to the student. Students are responsible for the cost of assessments and appointments with providers but the DRC 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 the DRC 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;

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- abide by the University of Minnesota Code of Conduct (available at [http://regents.umn.edu/policies/index/academic/Code\\_of\\_Conduct.pdf](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](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 The disability Resource Center, 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 the DRC and its services, they can follow the process outlined below.

1. Discuss concerns directly with the DRC staff if possible.
2. If concerns continue to persist, address them with the Director of the Disability Resource Center.
3. If concerns persist, speak with the Associate Vice Chancellor of student Affairs, Dr. Peter Phaiah.
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.

## Registration Agreement

1. I understand that I am registering for services from The Disability Resource Center 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 the DRC, I am responsible for reviewing the rights and responsibilities pertaining to disability access (Students only) included in the online Student Handbook and I agree that I am responsible for understanding and following its provisions.
  - I understand that The Disability Resource Center 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 The Disability Resource Center 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 the Disability Resource Center 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 understand that my accommodations will be sent out in a letter through email to my instructors and/or pertinent university staff.

Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Disability Services \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Confidentiality and Release of Information Policies

The Disability Resource Center 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 DRC 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. The DRC may charge a reasonable fee for costs incurred related to release of information.
6. The DRC 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** \_\_\_\_\_



**Student Information:**

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ MI: \_\_\_\_\_ Last: \_\_\_\_\_

University ID: \_\_\_\_\_ x500: \_\_\_\_\_ Campus: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
Month Day Year

**Ethnic Background:**  American Indian or AK Native  Asian  Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander  
 Black or African American  Hispanic or Latino  Inter-national  
 White  Unknown  Other

Veteran Referral Source: \_\_\_\_\_

**Academic Information:**

Major: \_\_\_\_\_ Minor: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_ U of M Entry: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
Month Day Year

University Status: (PSEO, Fr/So/Jr/Sr, CIHS, Non-Degree)

**Vocational Rehabilitation Information – only if working with a rehab specialist to pay for college**

**Status:**  case closed  pending  inactive  never applied  not eligible  receiving services  VA

VRS/SSB Client: Yes / No VRS/SSB Counselor: \_\_\_\_\_

Office: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Refer Student to VRS/SSB:

_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Home/Parent	<input type="checkbox"/> Local	<input type="checkbox"/> Work	<input type="checkbox"/> V/TTY	<input type="checkbox"/> TTY
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Fax <input type="checkbox"/> Cell	<input type="checkbox"/> Home/Parent		<input type="checkbox"/> V/TTY	<input type="checkbox"/> TTY

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**UMC Email Address:**