



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**TENNESSEE**  
HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER.

# **STUDENT HANDBOOK FOR ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS**

**ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS**

910 Madison Avenue, Suite 105

Memphis, TN 38163

<https://uthsc.edu/tlc>

Dear Student,

UTHSC is committed to ensuring that all students with disabilities, who are otherwise capable of meeting all technical standards of the College in which they are enrolled, are provided access to all facets of the university. Staff are available to assist and coordinate support services and programs that enable students with disabilities to maximize their educational potential, as well as help increase awareness among all members of UTHSC, so that all students can achieve academic success based on their abilities. Accessibility and Accommodations assists students with documented disabilities by determining their eligibility for services and then working with them to determine reasonable accommodations and services.

This handbook was created to detail the guidelines and procedures for requesting and receiving accommodations at UTHSC. It is our hope that the information provided addresses your needs. Should you have a question or concern please contact Accessibility and Accommodations at 901-448-7745.

Accessibility and Accommodations is located in the Office for Student Success, at 910 Madison. Our center hours are 8:00am to 5:00pm Monday through Friday.

We look forward to working with you!

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Accessibility and Accommodations is committed to ensuring that all student information, including disability-related documentation, correspondence, and accommodation records, is kept confidential in accordance with state and federal laws.

### **UNIVERSITY OBLIGATION**

- The University has an obligation to confirm that students receiving accommodations have verified disabilities according to state and federal law. We request disability documentation on this information. Accommodations and services may not be provided if the student does not provide appropriate documentation of a disability, does not have a diagnosed disability, or does not follow policies and procedures. Disability documentation is housed in a confidential student file and does not become part of the student's academic record.

### **EQUAL ACCESS TO THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE**

UTHSC's fundamental purpose is to improve the well-being of people in Tennessee and beyond. As part of our multifaceted public mission, UTHSC strives for excellence in education, research, clinical practice, scholarship, and community service. There are many shared values which support this mission, including welcoming diversity and celebrating the contributions of individuals from all walks of life.

Accessibility and Accommodations supports the mission and value of diversity at UTHSC by facilitating and supporting equal access to its programs and services for students who experience disability. Students who require academic accommodations begin their request with Accessibility and Accommodations. Accessibility and Accommodations will then engage in an interactive process with the student and academic departments, as needed, to determine which accommodations are reasonable and will facilitate equal access. Reasonable accommodations are approved on a case-by-case basis and may include academic adjustments, auxiliary aids and/or program modifications. Reasonable accommodations are designed to give students an equal opportunity to participate in an academic program by eliminating or reducing disability-related barriers without fundamentally altering the program, lowering standards, or posing a threat to health/safety to others.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008 as well as other applicable federal and state regulations prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability help guide working with students. In addition to the ADA and ADAAA, UTHSC has specific policies that provide additional guidance. Students should review all UTHSC policies related to equal access for students with disabilities. Students requesting accommodations are strongly encouraged to review this handbook in its entirety.

## **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **STUDENT RIGHTS**

Qualified students with disabilities have the right to:

- An equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from courses, programs, services, and activities offered through the University.
- An equal opportunity to receive reasonable accommodations (academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, and services).
- Appropriate confidentiality of information regarding their disability and to choose to whom, outside the University and its partners, information about their disability will be disclosed, except as disclosures that are required/permitted by law and UTHSC policy/procedures. Student disability records fall under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- Equally effective communication.

### **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Accessibility and Accommodations does not require students to use accommodations. Students are responsible for following established procedures to request reasonable accommodations. Otherwise, qualified students with disabilities who wish to obtain accommodations are responsible for:

- Meeting and maintaining UTHSC's fundamental academic and technical standards (with or without reasonable accommodations).
- Self-identifying as an individual with a disability if accommodations are being requested.
- Following institutional policy, procedures, and guidelines to request information, services, and accommodations.
- Submitting documentation from a qualified and appropriate professional demonstrating how the disability impacts participation in courses, programs, services, or activities. This documentation should meet the [Accessibility and Accommodations Documentation Guidelines](#).
- Requesting accommodations in a timely manner in alignment with the accommodation request timeline.
- Demonstrating competency in learning outcomes for courses, academic programs, and activities as required by their academic program.
- Communicating with faculty, service providers, and academic programs regarding accommodations (anonymity is not guaranteed). Read more about how information is shared in **Understanding Confidentiality**.
- Notifying Accessibility and Accommodations of any issues, concerns, or delays regarding accommodations.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY AND RELEASE OF INFORMATION**

### **UNDERSTANDING CONFIDENTIALITY**

Accessibility and Accommodations is committed to ensuring that all disability records are kept in accordance with federal and state law, as well as UTHSC policy and procedure.

In some circumstances, Accessibility and Accommodations is required to break confidentiality and report information, including disclosures involving imminent threats to safety and mandatory reporting required by law, such as child abuse, elder abuse, or abuse of an individual with a disability. Although rare, Accessibility and Accommodations also may be required to disclose information as part of a formal external legal process.

Students requesting accommodations from UTHSC will be required to submit an [Application for Accommodation](#) acknowledging that they understand that the provision of disability services and accommodations may involve sharing/disclosure of disability information provided by the student with appropriate UTHSC and partner institution personnel participating in the accommodation process. The following is an explanation of our procedure and practice pertaining to confidentiality and disclosure.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

- Disability related information maintained by Accessibility and Accommodations falls under FERPA. A student's right to privacy must be balanced against the University's need to know the information in order to provide requested accommodations.
  - Students have a right to privacy with minimal disclosure of confidential information.
  - The University has an obligation to confirm disability status and the right for appropriate staff to discuss students and their disabilities.
  - Students submit the Application for Accommodation form acknowledging that some level of disclosure may be necessary to selected faculty, administrators, and staff in order to implement requested accommodations.
  - A student's disability-related information remains in Accessibility and Accommodations and is secured and accessible to only Accessibility and Accommodations Staff; it does not become a part of the student's academic record. Information in files will not be released except in accordance with federal and state laws or pursuant to a court order or subpoena.
- Disability documentation is not shared directly with faculty; however, Program Accommodation Liaisons (PALs) may on occasions, as deemed necessary, have access to such records.
- A student's self-disclosure of a disability is voluntary, and students are never obligated to self-disclose their disability to Accessibility and Accommodations, faculty, or staff. However, students who wish to obtain accommodations and/or other disability-related

services must self-disclose their disability to Accessibility and Accommodations and officially request accommodations.

- If students do not want Accessibility and Accommodations to disclose disability information to anyone under any circumstances, they may request an alternate Application for Accommodation form; however, students need to be aware that implementing accommodations may become unattainable as a result.
- When a student requests an accommodation, particularly instructional accommodations, the issue arises as to what and how much information the faculty needs and/or has the right to receive. By submitting the Application for Accommodation, students acknowledge an understanding that for Accessibility and Accommodations staff to coordinate, advise and/or administer requested accommodations, disclosure of information to faculty or appropriate administrator/staff may be necessary and/or required.
  - If a student asks that Accessibility and Accommodations not discuss their situation with faculty or staff, their request will be honored. However, students must understand that if they are requesting Accessibility and Accommodations to provide accommodations and if they prohibit the individuals responsible for implementing accommodations from discussing critical components of the situation, then it may not be possible to implement an accommodation.
- A student must provide written authorization for information to be released.

### **SUMMARY OF CONFIDENTIALITY PROCEDURES**

- The University has an obligation to confirm disability status and the right for appropriate staff to discuss students and their disabilities.
- Students have a right to privacy with minimal disclosure of confidential information.
- Students submit the Application for Accommodation form acknowledging that some level of disclosure may be necessary to selected faculty, administrators, and staff in order to implement requested accommodations.
- Disability documentation is not shared directly with faculty; however, Program Accommodation Liaisons (PALs) may on occasions, as deemed necessary, have access to such records.
- If students do not want Accessibility and Accommodations to disclose disability information to anyone under any circumstances, they may request an alternate Application for Accommodation form; however, students need to be aware that implementing accommodations may become unattainable as a result.

**TABLE EXPLAINING DISCLOSURE PROCEDURES:**

<b>Information Type</b>	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Program Accommodation Liaison</b>	<b>Academic Program Staff</b>	<b>Accessibility &amp; Accommodations</b>
<b>Disability Documentation, Medical, And Other Records</b>	No	In rare circumstances	No	Yes
<b>List Of Approved Accommodations</b>	Upon request of the student	Yes	If necessary to implement accommodations	Yes
<b>Diagnoses</b>	Not without a signed release from the student	In rare circumstances	Not without a signed release from the student	Yes

***Disability status and use of accommodations should not be shared in transcripts, academic records, or in letters of recommendation.***



## **APPLYING FOR SERVICES**

### **SELF-DISCLOSING AND REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS**

Accessibility and Accommodations provides academic services and accommodations for students with diagnosed disabilities in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. The ADA defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Students disclosing a diagnosed disability with evidence of a functional limitation that impacts the individual in the academic setting will be provided with reasonable accommodations.

Students with disabilities must be able to perform the essential functions (technical standards) of the curriculum with or without accommodations and present no threat to the safety and well-being of others.

Students with documented disabilities who wish to request accommodations must self-identify by registering with Accessibility and Accommodations and submitting documentation. Accessibility and Accommodations engages in an interactive process and reviews requests for accommodations on an individual basis. In determining eligibility for accommodations, Accessibility and Accommodations considers each individual's condition, history, request, and the essential functions (technical standards) of the academic program.

Once we've received a student's application AND documentation, please allow 10 business days for the process to be completed. However, at certain times in the semester, such as the beginning of each semester, the volume of students applying for accommodations is higher and the length of time to complete the process may take longer.

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### **THE BELOW PROCESS IS TO BE FOLLOWED WHEN REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS DUE TO A DISABILITY:**

1. Submit an online application by going to this webpage:  
[https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofTNHSC&layout\\_id=7](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofTNHSC&layout_id=7) .
2. Documentation should be submitted that meets the documentation guidelines. The documentation guidelines can be found on the Accessibility and Accommodations webpage at <https://uthsc.edu/tlc/disability-services.php> as well as on pages 19-28 of this handbook.
  - a. Documentation should be uploaded into the application, or it can be emailed to [accommodations@uthsc.edu](mailto:accommodations@uthsc.edu)).
3. Upon receiving both the application and documentation, the information will go through a review process and after being reviewed the student will be contacted by Accessibility and Accommodations to arrange an intake interview.

4. Once the review process and intake interview are complete, which can take up to 10 business days, reasonable accommodations are determined, and Accessibility and Accommodations will notify the student of their accommodation status and steps for implementing accommodations.
  - a. To make a determination, Accessibility and Accommodations may need additional information. Please respond to any requests for further information/documentation from Accessibility and Accommodations as soon as possible to avoid delays.
5. Once approved for accommodations, Accessibility and Accommodations will complete your accommodation letter and email it to you, your Program Accommodation Liaison (PAL), and other staff members in your academic program who assist in the implementation of your accommodations. Students who require assistance in notifying faculty or other staff can reach out to Accessibility and Accommodations.
6. After receiving your accommodation letter and guidelines, please review and follow the procedures related to your accommodations. Keep in mind that some accommodations may be reasonable in some parts of the curriculum and not in others. Contact Accessibility and Accommodations with any questions or concerns.
7. Unless accommodations are provisional, the letter is valid for the duration of your attendance at UTHSC. If you need additional or different accommodations, please contact Accessibility and Accommodations. Additional documentation may be required.
  - a. Occasionally, some accommodation requests might change in transitioning from didactic to clinical environments. Please contact Accessibility and Accommodations prior to beginning clinicals/rotations.
8. Accommodations are implemented by each academic program/faculty. Your PAL is your point person for questions, concerns, or issues but you can and should notify Accessibility and Accommodations of any problems or concerns immediately.
9. Accessibility and Accommodations can informally assist students in resolving accommodation related issues. Students have the right at any time to file a complaint on the basis of disability discrimination through the [UTHSC Office of Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity](#) or through the [Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights \(OCR\)](#).

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT APPLYING FOR ACCOMMODATIONS:**

- Accommodations are not retroactive. If you are not sure if you'll need accommodations, it is better to have them in place should the need occur.
- Accommodations can be requested at any point during the semester. However, it does take time to process the request and review documentation to determine the provision of accommodations. Don't wait until your test is days away. The process can take up to 10 business days once we've received a student's application AND documentation. Please note, that at the beginning of each semester the volume of students requesting accommodations is higher, so the length of time to complete the process can take longer at certain times of the year.
- A prior history of accommodations in a previous academic environment is not a guarantee that accommodations will be granted. A prior history of accommodations without a demonstration of a current need does not in itself warrant the provision of similar accommodations.
- Students who have a disability but do not wish to seek accommodations are welcome to register with our office.
- Self-disclosure of a disability is completely voluntary; however, students wishing to request accommodations must self-disclose their disability and make a direct request for accommodations in Accessibility and Accommodations.
- All information is confidential in Accessibility and Accommodations. Release of data is per the table on page 8.
- Students must be officially approved for accommodations for Accessibility and Accommodations to provide accommodations.
- An approved accommodation(s) for a test is not a guarantee that an accommodation would be approved on clinicals.
- An approved accommodation(s) at UTHSC is not a guarantee that an accommodation would be granted on board exams.

**ACCOMMODATION TIMELINE:**

Please allow up to 10 business days for Accessibility and Accommodations to review any new accommodation request. The timeline below describes the notice needed for **already approved** accommodations.

Accessibility and Accommodations encourages students to meet with faculty, instructors, course directors, or academic program staff (whoever is facilitating the course) to discuss your accommodations and make a plan to implement them. Remember, accommodations are not retroactive.

Please see the timeline below for minimum time requirements for approved accommodations.

Accommodation Type	Time Required
Interpreting, Real-time Captioning, Real-time Transcribing, Video Captioning, Classroom Relocation, Braille materials	Within 48 hours of registering for the course. These accommodations may take up to 4 weeks to coordinate.
Accessible Furniture	At least 3 weeks prior to beginning of the course.
Classroom Assistant, Lab Assistant, Library Assistant, Clinical Assistant (intermediary)	At least 3 weeks prior to beginning of the course.
Textbooks and Course Materials in Accessible Formats	At least 2 weeks prior to the beginning of the course.
Peer Note Taker	1 week prior to the beginning of the course.
Exam Accommodations	Minimum advance notice is 10 business days to schedule the exam with the appropriate individual (ask your PAL if you are unsure).
Consideration for Flexibility with Attendance/Assignments	2 weeks prior to the beginning of the course.
Housing Accommodations	At least 4 weeks prior to move in.

## **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS**

### **WHAT IS A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION?**

Qualified students with disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations allowing them an equal opportunity to participate, enjoy the same benefits and privileges, and attain the same level of achievement as similarly situated students without disabilities in UTHSC programs and activities.

Accommodations are modifications to a condition that would otherwise cause a student, because of a disability, to be at a disadvantage relative to non-disabled students in their access to the university's programs for students. Reasonable accommodations provide equitable access to programs or facilities and do not fundamentally alter the essential nature of a course or academic program.

A reasonable accommodation does not:

- Fundamentally alter the nature of the program or activity.
- Remove or compromise essential requirements or elements of the program.
- Lower academic standards.
- Present an undue financial or administrative burden on the university.
- Pose a threat to the safety of patients, self, or others.
- Constitute a service of personal nature.

*Accommodations are never designed to substantially alter the curriculum or eliminate the student from meeting the academic or technical standards.*

### **HOW ARE REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS DETERMINED?**

Accommodations are determined on an individual, case-by-case basis. In some instances, the academic affairs or course director may be asked if an accommodation is reasonable given the technical standards of the academic program. Further, in addition to the Accessibility and Accommodations staff, other resources such as the Association on Higher Education And Disability (AHEAD), physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists, educators, and other relevant experts are frequently consulted. Reasonable accommodations are determined by examining:

- The documentation of the disability and recommendations made by the diagnosing professional.

- The student's request for a specific accommodation(s).
- Barriers resulting from the interaction between the documented disability and the campus environment.
- Possible accommodations that might remove the barriers.
- Whether or not the essential elements of the course/program are compromised by the accommodation(s).

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*\*\* The amount of time needed for a test is carefully determined by examining disability documentation, observations of the student's ability, and historical information. Extra time on didactic exams does not mean that extra time is approved on clinical performance tests. This is determined separately after considerable deliberation by Accessibility and Accommodations and the course director/clerkship director.*

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## **PERSONAL SERVICES**

Personal services are not considered reasonable accommodations. UTHSC is not required to provide students with personal services, per [Title II of the ADA](#).

Common personal services include, but are not limited to:

- Personal care attendants
- Private tutoring
- Childcare
- Medical devices (mobility devices, hearing aids, eyeglasses, etc.)
- Personal transportation

Accessibility and Accommodations may refer students to resources that are available to all students, or available within the community such as: Student Academic Support Services and Inclusion, University Health Services, etc.

## **THE INTERACTIVE PROCESS**

Before an accommodation determination is made Accessibility and Accommodations will engage with the student, appropriate personnel within academic programs, and other UTHSC employees as needed to determine how a student's disability can be reasonably accommodated.

The interactive process requires cooperation between Accessibility and Accommodations, students, academic programs, and personnel at regional campuses and clinical sites. Through the interactive process Accessibility and Accommodations will work with the student and academic programs to:

- Identify barriers to equal access through information received from the student and their supporting documentation.
- Explore which accommodations may be both effective and reasonable.
- Analyze the nature of the course, program, or activity requirements to ensure that the accommodation requested is not a personal service and does not pose an undue burden, fundamental alteration, or is a threat to health/safety.

To engage in the interactive process, Accessibility and Accommodations may request information from the student via meetings, phone calls, or by email. If a student fails to engage in the interactive process, reasonable accommodations may not be granted.

## **ACCOMMODATION LETTERS FROM MAXIENT**

Student accommodation letters are issued to the student through Maxient. The letter outlines the approved accommodations. The “student letter” is notification to the student of agreed upon accommodations and states their responsibilities for implementing the accommodation. A separate email is provided to the College contact that lists the students approved accommodations.

*Maxient is the platform UTHSC uses to manage applications and documentation for student accommodations.*

## **SHARE ACCOMMODATION LETTER**

The student may wish to share the “student letter” with individual faculty, module, program, or clerkship directors to receive the specific accommodations. Sharing this information is at the discretion of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to share this letter promptly (three business days before an assessment or due date) to arrange for accommodations to be implemented. The module, program, or clerkship director is to notify Accessibility and Accommodations of any issues or need for changes. There may be occasions when the Associate Director communicates directly with faculty or other administrators on a need-to-know basis (see the section on Confidentiality).

Conditional accommodation letters may be issued. These letters include the approved accommodation and have an end date.

Accommodations cannot be implemented retroactively. A student is not entitled to accommodations in any module, clerkship, or activity if the faculty accommodations letter is not presented before specific accommodations are needed. Faculty, module, clerkship, and program directors must provide approved accommodations to all students who have provided the faculty letter in a timely fashion (i.e., three [3] business days before an assessment or due date) to arrange for accommodations to be implemented. Individual courses or clerkships may have additional posted deadlines for some assignments. If a student’s accommodation plan includes assistive devices or extensive supplemental aid, additional time may be required to make arrangements, and the Associate Director of Accessibility and Accommodations will help to make those arrangements directly.



## APPEALS AND GRIEVANCES

Consistent with the spirit of the ADA, Accessibility and Accommodations determines disability accommodations through a deliberative and interactive process involving disability services professionals, appropriate members of the University community, and the individuals with disabilities themselves. We recognize that there is the possibility of disagreement about the appropriateness of accommodations in any deliberative process. We also acknowledge that even with the best efforts of everyone involved with your service delivery at UTHSC, a problem may occur. To this end, Accessibility and Accommodations recommends a range of options to resolve concerns about accommodations and eligibility decisions, services received, treatment by University staff and faculty, and University policies related to students with disabilities.

Occasionally, a problem arises because of a misunderstanding or miscommunication; clarification can lead to a quick and effective solution. It is often best to discuss the issue with the person(s) most closely involved with the decision or incident first, and then go to the person's supervisor or department chair if a satisfactory resolution has not been provided. If you are having difficulty with faculty or an academic program and need to address issues regarding access and/or accommodations, please notify Accessibility and Accommodations and your PAL (your Program Accommodation Liaison) as soon as possible. ***Do not wait until the end of the term or after you receive a grade to contact us with an issue.***

Though attempts at internal resolution are always recommended first, external means for resolving concerns are available and may be exercised at any time. Throughout any of these procedures you may expect to be treated with respect, receive a timely response, not experience any form of retaliation, and have your issues dealt with in a confidential manner to the greatest extent possible. The University expects that you bring up any problems early, give clear and detailed information, and be respectful of those people who are working with you. If you wish to know more about your rights as a student with a disability under Federal and State law and University policy, Accessibility and Accommodations can refer you to the appropriate entity. Disability-related law and University policy prohibit retaliation in any form against persons who file complaints.

To the extent possible, reports of issues will be acted upon within 48 business hours. The time it takes to resolve an issue depends on the nature of the issue. Students have the right to file a formal complaint internally or externally at any time.

## **APPEALS OF ACCOMMODATION DECISIONS**

### **DISABILITY APPEAL PROCESS REGARDING ACCOMMODATION DENIAL**

All Accessibility and Accommodations students have the ability to submit additional documentation and ask for an additional review of their request for accommodations. If a student is receiving disability services -approved accommodations, the student may put in the additional request at <https://uthsc.edu/tlc/disability-services.php>

If the student has been denied an accommodation they requested and would like to appeal the denial:

The student needs to submit their appeal within 90 days of the denial from Disability Services.

1. The student should put in writing the reason for the appeal and include any additional information regarding a disability-related need/impact for the accommodation. Please submit appeal at <https://uthsc.edu/tlc/disability-services.php>
2. The student should call (901) 448-1218 to request an appointment with the Director of the Teaching and Learning Center or designee to discuss the appeal.
3. During the discussion with the Director of the Teaching and Learning Center the student should be prepared to explain why the denied accommodation is needed to address the current impacts of their disability at UTHSC. Having received an accommodation from a previous institution or in the K-12 system is not in itself a sufficient explanation.
  - a. Information gathered during the appeals meeting will be presented to the appeals committee who will review all relevant documents submitted before rendering a decision. The student will be notified in writing of the committee's decision within a reasonable amount of time of the hearing.

A decision will be made by UTHSC's appeal committee regarding the student's appeal within seven (7) business days. The decision will be in writing and will be sent to the student's UTHSC email. If through the appeal process, the accommodation is granted, it will be granted moving forward. Accommodations are not retroactive.

If the denial is upheld and the student feels the issue is not resolved, the student may file an appeal with the Sr. Associate Vice Chancellor, Academic and Faculty Affairs within ten (10) business days of Accessibility and Accommodations determination. This is the final step: the Sr. Associate Vice Chancellor, Academic and Faculty Affairs decision is the university's final decision on the matter and no additional internal appeals are available unless the student makes a complaint to EOA.

The Sr. Associate Vice Chancellor, Academic and Faculty Affairs will make a decision regarding the student's appeal within seven (7) business days. Sr. Associate Vice Chancellor, Academic and Faculty Affairs decision will be in writing and will be sent to the student's UTHSC email. If through the appeal process the accommodation is granted, it will be granted moving forward. Accommodations are not retroactive.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, student concerns may be referred by the Sr. Associate Vice Chancellor, Academic and Faculty Affairs to the Office of Inclusion, Equity and Diversity (OIED).

- Please see Office of Inclusion, Equity and Diversity (OIED) page for additional information.

At any time, students have the ability to take their concerns/complaint to the federal Office for Civil Rights.

## **GRIEVANCES**

Any student who believes they have been discriminated against based on their disability, or who feels that the University is out of compliance with their obligations to people with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the ADA, and ADAA, is encouraged to work with UTHSC to resolve their concerns informally. If such difficulties cannot be resolved informally, students can avail themselves to UTHSC's formal grievance processes. These processes are specific to disability grievances only; if a complaint is not pertaining to a disability, please inquire with us about the process that is needed. For information on the informal and formal process, please refer to the [Accessibility and Accommodations webpage](https://uthsc.edu/tlc/disability-services.php) under the Teaching and Learning Center (<https://uthsc.edu/tlc/disability-services.php>).

Additionally, at any time students may contact the [Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity \(AAEO\) Department](#) to file a formal discrimination complaint.

AAEO investigations are kept confidential to the extent possible under UTHSC policies; and information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis pursuant to AAEO's investigation protocol or as required by law. UTHSC prohibits retaliation against individuals who file a complaint or who participate in an investigation. Alleged retaliation will be investigated and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

## **GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTING A DISABILITY**

To provide reasonable and appropriate academic accommodations to UTHSC students with disabilities, Accessibility and Accommodations requires that students submit documentation and other supporting evidence of their disability. Documentation should state the current diagnosis, the significant functional limitation in a major life activity being impacted for which an accommodation is being requested, and a rationale for why the accommodation is needed.

The following guidelines are provided to assure that documentation is appropriate to verify eligibility and to support requests for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids. UTHSC adheres to the standards set forth by Association on Higher Education And Disability (AHEAD).

### **STUDENT SELF-REPORT:**

Students should complete the [New Student Application](#) (Accommodations Request) which provides students an opportunity to describe their disability and the accommodations they are requesting to receive. Students may supplement the Accommodation Request with additional information, if needed. Students may consider including information about their experiences related to their disability, barriers faced, and/or previous accommodations.

### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION:**

Disability related supporting documentation should provide information on the impact of the disability so that appropriate accommodations can be identified. Documentation may include assessments, reports, and/or letters from qualified evaluators, professionals, or institutions. Common sources of documentation are health care providers, psychologists, and diagnosticians. Copies of accommodations approved from a previous school(s) such as accommodation agreements/letters, 504 plans, IEPs, ARD documents and/or standardized exams can also be included as additional supporting information.

### **SUGGESTED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION ELEMENTS:**

- Typed on letterhead, dated, and signed by a qualified professional.
- State the disability or disabilities.
- Describe the impact or symptoms of the disability.
  - If appropriate, discuss the severity and/or expected progression.
  - If appropriate, list medication side-effects.
- Current and/or past accommodations.
- Any recommended accommodations.

## **WHEN AND HOW TO SUBMIT DOCUMENTATION**

Accessibility and Accommodations will consider all relevant information provided in documentation. Documentation will be reviewed on an individual, case-by-case basis. Please submit your information at least 2-3 weeks prior to the date that services are requested. If you have any questions about these documentation guidelines, please contact the Associate Director at (901) 448-7745.

The Accommodation Request should be submitted by completing the [online form](#) in the **Maxient Portal** and supporting documentation should be uploaded as part of the application. If needed, supporting documentation can also be submitted in person or sent electronically.

## **HOW TO OBTAIN DOCUMENTATION**

The professional making the diagnosis of a disability should be an appropriately trained evaluator/professional, such as a physician, psychologist, psychiatrist, or educational diagnostician. For example, an audiologist would diagnose a hearing impairment; a psychiatrist, psychologist, or clinical social worker would diagnose a mental health disability. Documentation from a family member or family friend is not acceptable.

Disability documentation should be current and relevant but not necessarily “recent.” Disabilities are typically stable lifelong conditions. Therefore, historic information, supplemented by interview or self-report, is often sufficient to describe how the condition impacts the student at the current time and in the current circumstances.

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

- *Please understand that evaluation reports themselves do not automatically qualify a student for services through Accessibility and Accommodations. Accessibility and Accommodations will make the final decision as to whether reasonable and appropriate accommodations are needed and can be provided to the student.*
- *It is important to note that a prior history of receiving accommodations in previous academic/testing environments is not a guarantee one will be granted accommodations on a high stakes' examination (ex: board exam). Prior documentation may have been adequate in determining appropriate services or accommodations in the past; however, a prior history of accommodations without demonstration of a current need does not in itself warrant the provision of similar accommodations.*

## **DOCUMENTATION FOR A SPECIFIC DISABILITY**

*In addition to the general guidelines listed on the previous page, documentation for a specific disability should also include the following:*

### **ADHD**

**1. A qualified diagnostician should conduct the evaluation.**

- Professionals conducting assessments and rendering diagnoses of ADHD must be qualified to do so.
- Comprehensive training in the differential diagnosis of ADHD and direct experience in diagnosis and treatment of adolescents and adults with ADHD is necessary.

**2. Evaluation report should include specific information:**

- Date(s) of assessment;
- Clear diagnosis utilizing the appropriate DSM-5 or ICD code(s);
- A description of the exact symptoms and criteria met for the diagnosis as well as absence of specific diagnostic criteria for ADHD;
- Identification of tools used for diagnostic purposes;
- Clinical observations;
- Relevant pharmacological history, explanation of the extent to which the medication(s) currently benefit and effect the student;
- Testing results using adult norms and reporting as percentiles or stanines, along with standard scores;
- Description of the functional impact as it pertains to the learning environment;
- Details about the typical progression or prognosis of the condition.

**3. Evidence to support a childhood onset of symptoms and associated impairment.**

- Historical information regarding the individual's developmental, academic and behavioral functioning in elementary and secondary education, including difficulties and/or use of accommodations in kindergarten through high school and college.
- Review of relevant educational records; early psycho-educational testing reports; documentation from tutors or learning specialists; and disciplinary records.

**4. Documentation should build a case for and provide a rationale for the ADHD diagnosis.**

- In-depth history reflecting a chronic and pervasive history of ADHD symptoms and associated impairment beginning during childhood and persisting to the present day.
- Description and emphasis on how ADHD symptoms have manifested across various settings over time, how the student has coped with the problems and what success the student has had in their coping efforts.
- All co-morbid issues should be addressed and the manner in which they impact the diagnosis or need for accommodations should also be discussed.
- A thorough explanation of the significant functional limitation(s) to major life activities (e.g. learning, concentrating, thinking) posed by the disability.
- Description of the degree to which the functional limitations apply to the life activity for which accommodations are being requested.

**5. Comprehensive testing battery and diagnostic report with specific assessment data should be included.**

- Summary of the assessment procedures and evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis.
- An intellectual assessment including sub-test scores, standard scores and percentiles or stanines:
  - Examples of acceptable IQ Tests:
    - Kaufman Adolescent and Adult Intelligence Test
    - Reynolds Intellectual Assessment Scales (RIAS)
    - Stanford Binet – 5<sup>th</sup> Edition
    - Wechsler Adult Intelligence Score-IV (WAIS-IV)
    - Woodcock-Johnson III, Tests of Cognitive Abilities, General Intellectual Ability (WJ-III)
  - Please check with SASSI if you are unsure if an assessment tool is acceptable by our standards.
- A comprehensive academic achievement battery with all sub-test scores, standard scores and percentiles or stanines reported, and should include current levels of academic functioning in such relevant areas as reading (decoding and comprehension), mathematics, and oral and written language.
  - Examples of acceptable Achievement Tests:

- Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults (SATA)
- Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK)
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test – III (WIAT-III)
- Woodcock-Johnson III Psycho-educational Battery: Test of Achievement (WJ-III)
- Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests – Revised
- Nelson-Denny Reading Testing (*to be used as supplemental test*)
- NOT Acceptable Achievement Tests:
  - Wide Range Achievement Test\_– 4 (WRAT-4)
- Test data should logically reflect a substantial limitation to learning for which the student is requesting the accommodation.
- The particular profile of the student's strengths and weaknesses should be shown to relate to functional limitations that may necessitate accommodations.
- Checklists and/or ADHD symptom rating scales can be a helpful supplement in the diagnostic process, but by themselves are not adequate to establish a diagnosis of ADHD.
- Test scores or sub-test scores alone should not be used as a sole measure for the diagnostic decision regarding ADHD as they do not in and of themselves establish the presence or absence of ADHD.

**6. Each accommodation recommended should include a rationale.**

- Accommodations are not granted on the basis of a diagnostic label; instead, accommodation requests need to be tied to evidence of current functional limitation that supports their use.
- Each recommendation should be tailored to the individual and tied to specific test results and clinical observations.



## **DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING**

### **1. Report from an audiologist or otolaryngologist that includes the following:**

- Clear statement of deafness or hearing loss.
  - Current audiogram and interpretation that reflects the degree of hearing loss and current impacts the deafness or hearing loss has on the student's functioning, specifically within an academic and clinical setting.
  - The student's history with and managing hearing loss.
  - The type of hearing loss (conductive or sensorineural).
  - The status of the individual's hearing in regard to whether the hearing loss is temporary or permanent, and if it is stable or progressive.
  - Whether the condition is mitigated by hearing aids or medication.
  - Recommendations and rationales for reasonable academic accommodations are appreciated.
- 

## **LEARNING DISABILITY**

### **1. A qualified diagnostician should conduct the evaluation.**

- **Professionals** conducting assessments and rendering diagnoses of a LD must be qualified to do so.
- Comprehensive training and direct experience in diagnosis and treatment of adolescents and adults with LD is necessary.

### **2. Documentation should be current.**

- Although a LD is normally viewed as lifelong, the severity and manifestations of the condition may change over time.
- The provision of reasonable accommodations and services is based upon assessment of the *current* impact of the disability on the activity in question;
- Therefore, it is necessary to provide "current," relevant, and appropriate documentation.

### **3. Evaluation report should include specific information:**

- Date(s) of assessment;
- A clear diagnosis utilizing the appropriate DSM-5 or ICD code(s);
- Identification of tools used for diagnostic purposes;
- Diagnostic interview and clinical observations;

- Testing results using adult norms and reporting as percentiles or stanines, along with standard scores;
  - Description of the functional impact and severity of the disorder as it pertains to the learning environment.
4. **Historical information that might support childhood onset of symptoms and associated impairment.**
- Historical information regarding the individual's developmental, academic, and behavioral functioning in elementary and secondary education, including difficulties and/or use of accommodations in kindergarten through high school and college;
  - Review of relevant educational records, early psycho-educational reports, documentation from tutors or learning specialists, parental reports, self-report, and disciplinary records;
5. **Rule Out.**
- All co-morbid issues should be addressed and the manner in which they impact the diagnosis or need for accommodations should also be discussed;
  - A thorough explanation of the significant functional limitation(s) to major life activities (e.g. learning, concentrating, thinking) posed by the disability;
  - Description of the degree to which the functional limitations apply to the life activity for which accommodations are being requested;
6. **Comprehensive evaluation and diagnostic report with specific assessment data should be provided.**
- Summary of the assessment procedures and evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis;
  - An intellectual assessment including sub-test, standard scores and percentiles or stanines:
    - Examples of acceptable IQ Tests:
      - Kaufman Adolescent and Adult Intelligence Test
      - Reynolds Intellectual Assessment Scales (RIAS)
      - Stanford Binet – 5<sup>th</sup> Edition
      - Wechsler Adult Intelligence Score-IV (WAIS-IV)
      - Woodcock-Johnson III, Tests of Cognitive Ability (WJ-III)
    - Please check with SASSI if you are unsure if an assessment tool is acceptable by our standards.
  - A comprehensive academic achievement battery with all sub-test, standard scores and percentiles or stanines reported, and should include current levels of academic functioning in such relevant areas as reading (decoding and comprehension), mathematics, and oral and written language:
    - Examples of acceptable Achievement Tests:

- Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults (SATA)
- Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK)
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test – III (WIAT-III)
- Woodcock-Johnson III, Tests of Achievement (WJ-III)
- Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests – Revised
- Nelson-Denny Reading Testing (*to be used as supplemental test*)
- NOT Acceptable Achievement Tests:
  - Wide Range Achievement Test\_– 4 (WRAT-4)
- Test data should logically reflect a substantial limitation to learning for which the student is requesting the accommodation.
- The particular profile of the student's strengths and weaknesses must be shown to relate to functional limitations that may necessitate accommodations.

**7. Each accommodation recommended should include a rationale.**

- If recommendations are made, information that supports the need for each requested accommodation must be provided. The rationale should explain why the specific accommodation is needed based upon functional limitations established through the evaluation process.

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## **MEDICAL AND PHYSICAL DISABILITY**

1. **Letter or report from a physician in an appropriate medical specialization that includes the following:**
  - The specific medical condition which causes the disability.
  - Whether the condition is temporary or permanent, and if it is stable or progressive.
  - Information about current prescribed medications used to treat the disability and possible side effects.
  - A description of the functionally limiting manifestations of the condition(s) for which accommodations are being requested.
  - Recommendations and rationales for reasonable academic/clinical accommodations.

## **MENTAL HEALTH DISABILITY**

1. **Psychological or neuropsychological evaluation or report from a psychiatrist or licensed psychologist that includes the following:**
    - Clear statement of the condition with the DSM-5 or ICD-10 diagnosis.
    - Clear description of the specific symptoms experienced by the student which meet the criteria for the diagnosis.
    - A summary of the assessment procedures and evaluation instruments which were used to make the diagnosis.
    - Information about current prescribed medications used to treat the disability and possible side effects.
    - Description of the functional limitation(s) caused by the disability that would impact the academic/clinical/residential context for which accommodations are being requested.
    - If recommendations are being made, rationales for reasonable academic accommodations should be included.
- 

## **SPEECH-RELATED DISABILITY**

1. **Report or letter from a speech pathologist or physician that includes the following:**
    - The specific disabling condition.
    - Whether the condition is temporary or permanent, and if it is stable or progressive.
    - A description of the functional limitation(s) caused by the disability on student's performance in an academic and/or clinical setting.  
If recommendations are being made for reasonable academic accommodations, rationales should be provided.
- 

## **VISUAL IMPAIRMENT**

1. **Report or letter from an ophthalmologist or optometrist that includes the following:**
  - The specific medical condition which causes the visual impairment and how long the student has experienced the condition.
  - The degree of visual acuity, including with corrective lenses.
  - The extent of the visual fields.
  - Whether the condition is temporary or permanent, and if it is stable or progressive.
  - Whether the condition is mitigated by corrective lenses or medication.
  - A description of the functional limitation(s) caused by the disability.
  - Recommendations for reasonable academic accommodations including any visual aids.

## **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The information below explains the rights and responsibilities of students with disabilities as well as the obligations UTHSC has to provide academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, and/or services. Each student receiving academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, and/or services through Accessibility and Accommodations is required to acknowledge that they have read and know their responsibilities for receiving academic adjustments.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES HAVE A RIGHT TO:**

[Qualified students with disabilities](#) have the right to:

- Equal access to courses, programs, services, and activities offered through UTHSC.
- An [equal opportunity](#) to receive reasonable accommodations (academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, and services).
- Appropriate confidentiality of information regarding their disability and to choose to whom, outside the University and its partners, information about their disability will be disclosed, except as disclosures that are required/permitted by law and UTHSC policy/procedures. Student disability records fall under the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#).
- Confidentiality of all information pertaining to the individual's disability, except as disclosures are required or permitted by law.
- Accessible formats of information if reasonably available.
- Equal opportunity to learn through reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- An [equal opportunity](#) to participate in and benefit from courses, programs, services, and activities offered through the University.

### **Students with Disabilities have a RESPONSIBILITY to:**

Accessibility and Accommodations does not require students to use accommodations. Students are responsible for following established procedures to request reasonable accommodations. Otherwise, qualified students with disabilities who wish to obtain accommodations are responsible for:

- Meeting and maintaining UTHSC's fundamental academic and technical standards (with or without reasonable accommodations) for courses, services, and activities.
- To self-disclose as an individual with a disability when an academic adjustment, auxiliary aids and/or service is needed.
- To follow published procedures and seek information, counsel, and assistance in a *timely manner* to request accommodations and services.

- Complete and submit an application to formally self-disclose a disability and request accommodations when the need should arise.
- Submit documentation from a qualified and appropriate professional demonstrating how the disability impacts participation in courses, programs, services, or activities, and provides support for each accommodation request. This documentation should meet the [Accessibility and Accommodations Documentation Guidelines](#).
- Contact the Associate Director if you wish to request an additional accommodation at any time during your program.
- Communicating with faculty, service providers, and academic programs regarding accommodations (anonymity is not guaranteed). Read more about how information is shared in **Understanding Confidentiality**.
  - For CRNA, CHP, and GHS students: share with your instructors during the first week of class about your accommodations so that instructors can assist with arrangements.
  - For M-3/M-4 students, discuss your accommodation(s) at the beginning of each rotation with the clerkship director and clerkship contact person to aid in the arrangement of accommodations.
- Inform Accessibility and Accommodations as soon as possible if you elect to not use an approved accommodation.
- Promptly inform the Accessibility and Accommodations Associate Director of any issues, concerns, or delays regarding accommodations or the manner in which an accommodation(s) is being provided.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

- *Accommodations are not a guarantee of a certain grade or of success in a particular class; rather they are for the purpose of providing equal access to education. Also, an approved accommodation for a test is not a guarantee of an accommodation on clinicals/rotations. Furthermore, an approved accommodation at UTHSC is not a guarantee that an accommodation will be approved on board exams.*
- *As a reminder, accommodations are not retroactive, so if you think you may need accommodations it's helpful to go ahead and go through the process of being approved so that you have them in case you need them.*

### **FACULTY AND STAFF HAVE A RIGHT TO:**

- Establish essential functions, abilities, skills, knowledge, and standards for courses, programs, services, and activities, and to evaluate students on this basis.
- To identify and maintain the academic and technical standards that are fundamental to providing a quality academic program, while ensuring the rights of individuals with disabilities.
- To refuse an unreasonable accommodation, adjustment, or auxiliary aid or service that imposes an undue hardship or a fundamental alteration of a program or activity at UTHSC.
- To select and recommend accommodations which are equally effective for individuals with disabilities.

### **FACULTY AND STAFF HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO:**

- Include a statement on syllabi to inform students with disabilities how to access accommodations on campus through the Accessibility and Accommodations. An example can be found on the TLC or Accessibility and Accommodations webpage.
- Refer any student that may report having a disability, but that does not currently receive approved accommodations, to Accessibility and Accommodations.
- Maintain the same academic standards for all students, as with appropriate accommodations students with disabilities should be expected to perform at the same academic proficiency levels as their non-disabled peers.
- Work cooperatively with the students and Accessibility and Accommodations in providing accommodations **only** to those students approved for accommodations.
- Ensure that students receive the needed accommodations without undue complications.
- Respect the student's right to privacy; keep disability-related information confidential. Students with disabilities are protected under FERPA and the civil rights law. At no time should faculty and staff make any statements or implications that the student with a disability is any different from the general student population.
- Remember that the student has the right not to self-disclose or discuss the particulars of his/her disability with faculty or staff except on a need-to-know basis.
- Contact Accessibility and Accommodations immediately in the event problems occur.
- Be aware that further accommodations/arrangements may be made at a later time by a member of Accessibility and Accommodations staff.

*Students are not expected or required to provide faculty with detailed documentation about their disabilities. Therefore, Accessibility and Accommodations does not give advance notice to faculty regarding students with disabilities who are enrolled in their classes. From a legal standpoint, it is strongly advisable that faculty not request or expect such detailed documentation from the student. It is, however, entirely appropriate for faculty to request that the students provide verification from Accessibility and Accommodations that they are registered with the Associate Director, should that be needed.*



## **PROVISIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS**

To provide quality services to students with disabilities, students must provide appropriate documentation of a disability and be approved by the Associate Director for reasonable accommodations. Accessibility and Accommodations is unable to provide accommodations to students that have not been formerly approved.

### **WHAT IF A STUDENT HAS A TEMPORARY NEED FOR AN ACCOMMODATION?**

- At times, a situation may occur where a provisional or temporary accommodation is provided for a student. It is a provisional arrangement made on a case-by-case basis and is not an official approved accommodation.
- This arrangement is not a substitute for a student with no documentation to get accommodations nor is it a replacement for a student whose documentation has been denied.

### **FOR CONSIDERATION OF A PROVISIONAL ACCOMMODATION, THE FOLLOWING MUST OCCUR:**

- Step 1:** Documentation is provided, even if it may be insufficient information to meet UTHSC's documentation guidelines, which presents a diagnosis and substantiates a need for accommodations.
- Step 2:** The office is in the process of reviewing the documentation to determine the official approved accommodations.
- Step 3:** Appropriate documentation is in the process of being obtained, including any upcoming evaluation appointments.
- Step 4:** A request is made for a provisional accommodation.

***Complete documentation must be received within 6-8 weeks of receiving provisional accommodations or they will be waived. If you have difficulty in meeting this deadline due to troubles making a testing appointment, contact the Associate Director immediately.***

## **DISABILITY RELATED ABSENCES**

The following guidelines describe the process whereby students currently registered with Accessibility and Accommodations for a documented disability can arrange to make-up an exam due to an **absence directly related to a previously disclosed and documented disability**.

1. **Students must follow the College/professor's policy regarding notification of an absence from an exam.** The reason/diagnosis for which the absence is based need only be shared with Accessibility and Accommodations staff.
2. Students aware that they will miss an exam prior to its administration must notify the College first and then notify Accessibility and Accommodations by email as soon as possible, prior to the exam.
3. After notifying the College, if the student is not able to notify Accessibility and Accommodations due to an unexpected absence it is expected that they notify Accessibility and Accommodations in writing within **12 hours of the original exam administration time**.
4. Within **5 working days** the student must provide Accessibility and Accommodations with a written explanation/medical excuse from the diagnosing clinician. Once written notification is received Accessibility and Accommodations can verify the absence, if needed, for the professor.
  - a. *The notification must include information that directly supports the need for the absence from an exam based on a documented disability on file with Accessibility and Accommodations. This explanation must be from a professional on letterhead and include a projected date for return to campus.*
5. Students must follow the College/professor's policy regarding make-up exams.
6. Faculty members should contact Accessibility and Accommodations if they desire verification of the disability-related absence from an exam. Faculty members must refrain from asking the student for specific and detailed documentation of the excused absence as such explanations/documentation constitute a violation of the student's privacy rights.
7. When providing a make-up exam for a student with a disability-related excused absence, faculty members must administer the same make-up exam given to all other students, provided that the make-up exam is given at the same time for all students.
  - a. *Should it be necessary to prepare a separate make-up exam for any student (disability or not), faculty members must provide an exam that is comparable to the original with respect to the types of questions, length of exam, and complexity of the questions.*

**PLEASE NOTE: Accessibility and Accommodations should not be contacted unless the excuse is directly related to a disability that has been documented by Accessibility and Accommodations. Absences that are not attributable to a documented disability should be handled according to the College/professor's written policy regarding missed exams.**

## ASSISTANCE ANIMALS

UTHSC recognizes the vital role that animals play in aiding persons with disabilities and has certain legal obligations to students with disabilities, as set forth under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The University prohibits unauthorized animals from being brought into university building. Special provisions will be made for handicapped individuals upon request.

### ASSISTANCE ANIMALS

**“Assistance Animal” shall have the meaning as defined under the Fair Housing Act (FHA).** Specifically, it shall mean a non-pet animal that works, provides assistance, or performs tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability or provides emotional support alleviating identified symptoms or effects of a person’s disability.

In accordance with the FHA, residents of housing provided by UTHSC for away rotation activities may request assistance animals in such housing. Assistance animals, including emotional support animals, are not otherwise permitted in UTHSC educational activities on the UTHSC campus.

Requests for an assistance animal in housing that UTHSC provides for a rotation, practicum, or other away educational activity should be made to the Clinical Education and Support Department.

### SERVICE ANIMALS

#### Definitions

- **“Service animal”** shall have the meaning as defined under the ADA (Title II and Title III) and as adopted by the Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights for Section 504 purposes. Specifically, it shall mean a dog (or in some cases a miniature horse) that is individually trained to perform work- tasks for a person with a disability and is directly related to such disability. Service dogs in training are considered service animals if they meet all requirements. Animals that serve solely to provide emotional support, comfort, and/or companionship are NOT service animals. Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless the individual’s disability prevents using these devices or these devices interfere with the service animal’s safe, effective performance of tasks. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

- **“Student-handler”** shall mean any matriculated or visiting student and any applicant who has applied to a UTHSC academic program and is visiting the UTHSC campus, who has a disability, and utilizes a service animal.
- **“Identification”** Under the ADA, the service dog must be under the handler’s control at all times (28 CFR § 35.136(d)). The law states, “A service animal shall have a harness, leash, or other tether, unless either the handler is unable because of a disability to use a harness, leash, or other tether, or the use of a harness, leash, or other tether would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks, in which case the service animal must be otherwise under the handler's control (e.g., voice control, signals, or other effective means).”
  - Students are encouraged to submit a request to [accommodations@uthsc.edu](mailto:accommodations@uthsc.edu).

## **PUBLIC AREAS**

- Service animals are permitted in public areas where other animals would typically not be permitted, provided the student-handler follows federal, state, and local laws and the student-handler responsibilities.
- Student-handlers are not required to request accommodation to bring a service animal into public areas. However, if the need for a service animal in public areas is not clear, UTHSC faculty and staff may make the following ADA permitted inquiries to determine whether an animal qualifies as a service animal.
  - Is the animal required because of a disability?
  - What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?
- If the answer to the first question is “yes” and the student-handler appropriately and adequately describes the work task the service animal has been trained to perform, the student-handler with the service animal may access any public areas.
- UTHSC cannot require documentation, such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal. Also, student-handlers who desire access to areas not open to the public and/or access restricted areas, such as clinical settings, laboratories, and operating facilities, should contact the Associate Director of Accessibility and Accommodations at [accommodations@uthsc.edu](mailto:accommodations@uthsc.edu).

## **NON-PUBLIC AREAS**

- There are non-public areas where service animals may pose a substantial and direct threat to health and safety that cannot be reduced or eliminated by reasonable accommodation. The animals may be in danger, or the presence of the animals may compromise the integrity of the research/service.
- Service animals are prohibited from entering private or restricted access areas, including, but not limited to, certain laboratories, some operation facilities, some emergency facilities, and restricted access to some clinical settings. If a student-handler wishes to enter one of these areas with the service animal, the student must consult with the Associate Director of Accessibility and Accommodations before entering. Ph.D. students and residents, considered UTHSC employees, should contact Human Resources to request an accommodation to bring the service animal into a non-public area.
- The Associate Director of Accessibility and Accommodations may make the following ADA permitted inquiries:
  - Is the animal required because of a disability?
  - What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?
- If the answer to the first question is “yes” and the student-handler appropriately and adequately describes the work-task the service animal has been trained to perform, the Associate Director of Accessibility and Accommodations will work with the appropriate personnel to complete an individualized assessment of the student-handler’s request to allow the service animal into non-public areas. The individualized assessment may include the nature, duration, and severity of the risk, the probability of harm or injury, and the availability of modifications to minimize the risk.
- If the request to bring the service animal to a non-public area is approved, the student-handler will receive approval in writing from the Associate Director of Accessibility and Accommodations. The student-handler is responsible for providing this letter to their course, module, clerkship, or program director before entering the non-public area. The Associate Director reserves the right to temporarily restrict the animal from a pre-approved location/activity if clinical or other issues make the presence of a service animal inappropriate or if a change in the safety of the learning environment should occur.
- The student-handler must follow all federal, state, and local laws and student-handler responsibilities.

## **SERVICE ANIMALS IN NON-UTHSC EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS**

Student-handlers who require a service animal and who will be completing a clerkship, practicum, or clinical rotation to fulfill their degree program requirements at a non-UTHSC location are responsible for communicating any service animal needs directly to the agency or site where they will be reporting and adhere to agency facility guidelines.

## **STUDENT-HANDLER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Whether on public or non-public property, the student is responsible for:

- Retaining full control of the service animal at all times. The service animal may not be left in the care of anyone else while on UTHSC property. To the extent possible, the service animal should be as unobtrusive as possible to other individuals and the UTHSC learning environment.
- Actions of the service animal, including bodily injury and/or property damage. If the service animal damages UTHSC property, it is to be repaired or replaced at the cost of the student-handler.
- Cleaning and removing waste produced by the service animal.
- Compliance with state and local laws concerning animals (including registration, vaccinations, and tags).

## **REMOVAL OF SERVICE ANIMALS**

UTHSC reserves the right to request that the service animal be removed in certain circumstances, including, but not limited to when a service animal is:

- Out of control or where the student-handler does not take effective action to control the service animal.
- Not housebroken or the student-handler repeatedly fails to clean and remove waste or maintain a clean, healthy environment for the service animal.
- A substantial and direct threat to the health and safety of individuals, including exhibiting threatening or aggressive behavior.
- Causing continuous and/or excessive damage to UTHSC property or property of others.
- Causing continuous and/or excessive noise or disruption.

### **CONFLICTING DISABILITIES**

UTHSC will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate other students who may be affected (e.g., severe allergies, asthma, etc.) by service animals in the learning environment. A student requesting a service animal-related disability accommodation must contact the Associate Director of Accessibility and Accommodations.

UTHSC and the Associate Director will resolve any conflict in a timely manner and consider the conflicting needs and/or accommodations of all persons involved.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/GRIEVANCES**

For information on how to file a disability-related grievance, review the section on Appeals and Grievances in this Student Guide.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

### **ACCESSIBLE PARKING**

- Students with disabilities needing accessible parking should contact the Office of Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity (OIED) to help facilitate this process with Parking Services. [UTHSC Accessible Parking Forms](#) will need to be completed and documentation provided. OIED can be contacted at (901) 448-2112.

### **LEARNING SPECIALISTS**

- Learning Specialists are available in SASSI to meet with students to help improve their skills, develop personalized learning approaches, and enhance their academic performance. Working with a Learning Specialist can help students study smarter by developing skills in time management, goal setting, and test preparation. Appointments can be made [online](#) or by calling the SASSI front desk at (901) 448-5056.

### **COUNSELORS**

- Counselors are available in SASSI to meet with students and provide support services related to test anxiety, personal issues, relaxation techniques, EMDR, Biofeedback, stress management, Heart Math, adjusting to this environment, and more. Appointments can be made [online](#) or by calling the SASSI front desk at (901) 448-5056. There is also an after-hours mental health emergency number you can call after normal business hours, (901) 690-CARE.

### **UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES**

- University Health Services (UHS) serves students, employees, and their family members over the age of 18. They offer primary care as well as specialized care. Most health insurance plans are accepted, including UTHSC sponsored plans for students and employees. For a list of their services and to access their patient portal, please visit the [UHS webpage](#).
- UHS has an extensive behavioral health program that helps meet the needs of students by providing psychiatric and counseling services. Services are free and several providers are available. Call (901) 448-5360 or visit the UHS webpage and click on Behavioral Health.

### **THE OFFICE OF INCLUSION, EQUITY, AND DIVERSITY**

- For any requests, concerns, or complaints regarding compliance with the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act at UTHSC contact this office by calling (901) 448-2112. This is also the office that would manage accessible parking on campus.



## **PROGRAM ACCOMMODATION LIAISONS (PALs)**

Program Accommodation Liaisons (PAL) are staff members in your academic program who assist in the implementation of your accommodations. Students are responsible for providing a copy of their accommodations letter to faculty and/or academic program staff who implement the accommodation. The Associate Director of Accessibility and Accommodations will communicate with the PAL for your college of your approved accommodations.