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Introduction and Purpose

The Center for Disability Services (CDS) Student Handbook is intended as a resource for students, prospective students, parents, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders regarding disability and the role of CDS at the University of Utah.

The University of Utah is mandated by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (as amended in 2008), and University policy, to provide appropriate and reasonable accommodations to students who qualify for services through the Center for Disability Services.

The Center for Disability Services is the designated office of the University of Utah which evaluates disability documentation, determines eligibility, and implements reasonable accommodations for enrolled students.

The law does not require the University of Utah to lower its academic standards or alter the essential elements of courses and programs to accommodate students with disabilities. The intent of the law and purpose of academic accommodations is to provide an equal opportunity for students with disabilities.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Examples of major life activities include: caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, sitting, standing, lifting, and mental and emotional processes such as thinking, concentrating, and interacting with others. The determination of whether an impairment substantially limits a major life activity depends on the nature and severity of the impairment, the duration or expected duration of the impairment, and the permanent or long-term impact of the impairment.

For additional information about the applicable laws, please refer to:

http://www.ada.gov/
http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html.
Mission Statement, Values, and Strategic Objectives

**Mission Statement** – The Center for Disability Services is dedicated to students with disabilities by providing the opportunity for success and equal access at the University of Utah. We are committed to providing reasonable accommodations as outlined by Federal and State law. We also strive to create an inclusive, safe and respectful environment. By promoting awareness, knowledge and equity, we aspire to impact positive change within individuals and the campus community.

**Values** – Access, Equity, Inclusion, Diversity, Respect, Knowledge, Independence, Self-Advocacy, and Leading Edge Technology

**Strategic Objectives**
- Provide appropriate and reasonable accommodations to eligible students.
- Develop students as a whole by providing services and resources that encourage self-advocacy, independence, wellness, knowledge, and balance.
- Promote a safe, accessible and inclusive environment for students with disabilities through outreach, education, and increasing awareness.
- Engage in activities that further our knowledge and skills in the areas of disability and higher education.
- Actively implement and utilize technology that improves our ability to assist students with disabilities.
- Enhance the diversity of the university by recruiting and retaining student with disabilities.
- Assess and evaluate our services to increase our effectiveness.

(See the Center for Disability Services 2010 Strategic Plan for additional details.)
Applying for Services and Accommodations  
(Process, Documentation, and Eligibility)

Process

University of Utah students experiencing academic difficulties as a result of a disability should contact the Center for Disability Services to request assistance. The following is an overview of the process for admitted students to apply for accommodations at the University of Utah:

- Schedule an Intake Appointment with an advisor in the Center for Disability Services.
- Call (801) 581-5020 to make an appointment.
- Complete the Intake Paperwork and Application Forms.
- Obtain and provide the necessary documentation to your CDS Advisor. ([http://disability.utah.edu/students/documentation.php](http://disability.utah.edu/students/documentation.php)).
- Review of your application and documentation by the CDS case management team to determine eligibility for services and accommodations:
  - Approved for services – follow up with your advisor to implement accommodations.
  - Additional information or documentation requested – work with your health care professional to provide the additional requested information.
  - Not approved – contact your advisor if you have questions.

Notes:
- Contact your advisor at any point in the process for clarification of the steps.
- This process may take some time to complete, so plan ahead and apply early!
- Legally, accommodations cannot be retroactive.

Documentation and Eligibility

In order to qualify for accommodations, the Center for Disability Services requires documentation which substantiates the presence of a disability, indicates the impact on one or more major life activities, and demonstrates functional limitations of the condition. The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) allows for universities to set reasonable standards for documentation, and these standards may vary from school to school. The documentation required establishes eligibility for services and is used for determining reasonable accommodations.

Eligibility is determined based on the information given during your intake appointment, your application forms, historical information such as IEP and 504 plans, and the current documentation provided. The CDS case management team will review this information to determine both eligibility and appropriate accommodations.

In general, documentation should:

- Have been completed recently.
- Be on official letterhead from a professional which includes their credentials and qualifications.
- Contain a clear statement of the diagnosis, including diagnostic codes.
• Include the history and prognosis of the condition(s).
• Focus on the current impact and functional limitations of the disability on major life activities.
• Discuss recommended accommodations and their connection to the limitations of the disability.
• Contain the assessment procedures, tests, and reports used in making the diagnosis including the psycho-educational or neuropsychological evaluations conducted.

For detailed information regarding guidelines for different types of conditions, please refer to our documentation guidelines at http://disability.utah.edu/documentation.html. Students should provide evaluators with the guidelines in order to ensure appropriate assessments are conducted and the documentation provided meets the eligibility requirements for the University of Utah and Center for Disability Services.

Rights, Responsibilities, and Expectations

Students with a disability have:

• The responsibility to identify himself or herself as having a disability, request accommodations, and provide documentation to the Center for Disability Services.
• The responsibility to maintain the same academic and behavioral standards as all students at the University (see Student Code at http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html).
• The responsibility to meet with and maintain regular contact with their advisor in the Center for Disability Services to assist in implementing accommodations.
• The responsibility to follow CDS policies and procedures associated with each accommodation.
• The responsibility to inform the Center for Disability Services when an accommodation is ineffective to discuss other options.
• The right to participate in the University experience without fear of or experiencing discrimination due to a disability.
• The right to reasonable and appropriate accommodations which ensure equal access to programs, services, and activities.

The Center for Disability Service and the University of Utah have:

• The responsibility to provide information about services and accommodations available to students with disabilities, and the procedures to request services.
• The responsibility to set criteria for disability documentation and to evaluate that documentation in a consistent and individualized manner.
• The right and responsibility to determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations based upon the limitation of a student’s disability.
• The right to deny a request for accommodation if the student’s documentation indicates no modification or accommodation is necessary, if the student fails to provide appropriate documentation, or if the request is determined unreasonable or imposes an undue hardship on the University.
• The responsibility to work with the student, staff, and faculty to ensure that approved accommodations are implemented.
• The responsibility to ensure its programs, activities and facilities are accessible.
Faculty at the University of Utah have:

- The right to ask for verification from the Center for Disability Services when the student requests an accommodation in their course or program.
- The responsibility to inform the student of the procedure to request accommodations.
- The responsibility to maintain confidentiality about any information disclosed in discussions with the student or their Disabilities Advisor.
- The right to consult the Center for Disability Services to discuss requested accommodations.
- The responsibility to provide accommodations in a timely manner once they have been verified by the Center for Disability Services.
- The responsibility to inform students that all course material can be made available in alternative format with prior request.
- The right and responsibility to identify and determine the abilities, skills and knowledge that are essential and fundamental to academic programs. *(These standards are not subject to modification based upon disability.)*
- The right to expect the student with a disability to meet the same academic standards as peers in the course.
- Faculty are not entitled to know the diagnosis of a student and should not ask students to disclose the specifics of their disability.
- Documentation related to accommodations (i.e. accommodation forms and memos) must be kept separate from a student’s departmental file.

*Faculty are not permitted to deny an approved accommodation issued by the Center for Disability Services without engaging with CDS to discuss their concerns. For more information regarding ADA policy at the University of Utah please see [http://www.oeo.utah.edu/ada/guide/faculty](http://www.oeo.utah.edu/ada/guide/faculty).*

**Privacy and Confidentiality (FERPA)**

The University of Utah follows the guidelines for confidentiality and security of documentation outlined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The Center for Disability Services is the designated office at the University of Utah authorized to maintain student disability records. Once documentation pertaining to a student’s disability is provided to the Center for Disability Services it is considered part of the student’s educational record and covered by the regulations of FERPA.

The documentation contained within a student’s file at the Center for Disability Services is held confidential and is not released except upon written request of the student, when disclosure is required by law, or when it is necessary to facilitate legitimate University processes.

The University has established procedures for granting a student’s request for access to his/her records within a reasonable time (no more than 45 days and often much sooner). For additional information, see [http://registrar.utah.edu/handbook/ferpa.php](http://registrar.utah.edu/handbook/ferpa.php).
Accommodations and Services

The following are some of the accommodations which may be requested by CDS students at the University of Utah. The specific accommodations for which a student will be approved depends upon the documentation provided, the essential elements of the courses or programs, and the functional limitations created by the student’s disability. (The following is not intended as an exhaustive list.)

Accommodations

**Adaptive Technology, Equipment, Classroom Furniture, Tables, and Chairs** – For some students with disabilities, adaptive technology, equipment, or furniture in the classroom is necessary to provide equal access. Auxiliary equipment may include ergonomic chairs, accessible tables, and FM system amplification. Occasionally tables or chairs placed in classrooms for CDS students are used at other times during the day for projectors or other projects. If equipment has been moved to a different location in the room, the student with a disability will need to take responsibility in working with the instructor to arrange the equipment for their use in the classroom.

**Attendance Policies** – Attendance in class is expected for students participating in the university experience. Departments and professors establish attendance policies for specific courses, and students are responsible for adhering to individual class policies. The Center for Disability Services encourages students to arrange a reduced course load or extended program of study to address the need for flexibility with attendance. However, if a student’s condition directly impacts their ability to attend class on a periodic basis, some flexibility might be necessary and appropriate. In these cases, and taking into account the course requirements, the student, CDS advisor, and faculty should work together to determine if there would be a reasonable accommodation to the course policies. If a student’s attendance suffers significantly, CDS may assist them in discussing options with the instructor which might include requesting an incomplete or petitioning for a late withdrawal from the course.

**Classroom Assistants, Readers, and Scribes** – Student may be approved for the use of an assistant, reader, or scribe in the classroom to aid with tasks that are significantly impacted by a student’s condition. This accommodation is dependent upon the student’s limitations and the course requirements. (Note: Classroom assistants are not employed to act as tutors inside or outside the classroom setting.)

**Classroom Holds and Changes** – Classroom locations may be moved to ensure all programs and activities are accessible. In order to make the necessary adjustments to classrooms, we require reasonable prior notice (four weeks advanced notice is requested). Requests received later than four weeks will be considered if possible. Students are also encouraged to look at options including utilizing the campus shuttle system or enrolling in alternative sections of the course before requesting that a class be moved. Essential elements and the nature of the course will be considered before a request to move a class is deemed appropriate. Due to equipment, technology and pedagogical needs it may not be feasible or appropriate to move some class locations.

**Exam Accommodations** – Exam accommodations vary depending upon the impact of a student’s disability and the essential elements of the course, but can include extended time, a reduced distraction location, a private room, the use of a reader and/or scribe, the use of a computer or assistive technology, additional rest breaks, etc. Students approved for exam accommodations need to contact
their CDS advisor at the beginning of each semester to obtain an exam accommodation form for each
course. It is the student responsibility to meet with the instructor, complete the form, and return it to
the CDS exam coordinator to schedule exams. In order to guarantee that we will be able to proctor
exams, the completed form should be returned to our office at least five (5) school days prior to the first
exam.  (Please see the CDS exam policies and procedures statement for additional details.)

**Flexibility with Deadlines and Due Dates** – Depending upon the impact of a student’s disability, an
appropriate accommodation may be to allow for extended time to complete and turn in assignments,
papers, or projects. The amount of extended time would be based upon an exacerbation of a student’s
disability or if the assignment has a quick turnaround time. Typically, an extra two to three school days
would be considered.

**Housing Accommodations** – For eligible students who have applied and been accepted into the
Residence Halls or University Student Apartments, the Center for Disability Services may assist in
ensuring that your housing location and facilities are accessible. There is often a waiting list for housing,
so apply early. The Center for Disability Services will not move a student with a disability to the front of
the waiting list. Accommodations are made once a student’s housing application has been approved.

**Interpreting and Captioning Services** – American Sign Language, Interpreting/Transliterating, Oral
Interpreting, Cued Language Transliterating, and Real Time Captioning will be provided upon eligibility.
In consultation with the student, a determination is made by CDS staff as to which service is most
reasonable and appropriate for ensuring equal access for deaf or hard of hearing students pertaining to
to all course related activities (class sessions, meetings with faculty, or required attendance at out-of-class
activities). Requests for semester long classes should be made as far in advance as possible, preferably
three weeks prior to the beginning of the semester to ensure the availability of interpreters and
captioning services. Services are also provided for University sponsored events and provided when
services are requested by the individual needing the service in a reasonable time (two weeks advance
notice is requested).  (NOTE: For guests and students attending non-academic or campus events, please
contact the department sponsoring the event to arrange services.)

**Materials in an Alternative Format** – For qualified students, the Center for Disability Services will assist
in making books and course materials accessible. The Center for Disability Services will work with the
student to determine the most effective and reasonable method for providing information in an
alternative format. Possibilities include books in an audio format, electronic books, materials in Braille,
screen and text recognition software, materials in CD or MP3 format, and enlarged text.

**Note Taking Services or Audio Recording of Classes** – Students may be approved for a paid or volunteer
note taker in classes. Students who are approved for note taking services need to contact their CDS
advisor at the start of each semester to obtain a note taking form which they provide to their
instructors. Instructors assist CDS in recruiting note takers from peers in the class. The note taker is
required to sign a contract agreement with CDS to provide paper or electronic copies of notes. Unless
approved by your CDS advisor, attendance in class is required to be eligible to receive notes. Students
are responsible for reporting in a timely manner any problems with the note taking process and
reporting if information is missing from the notes.

Students may be authorized to audio record lectures through the use of digital recording devices
or smart pen technology. If approved for this accommodation, student will be trained in the use of a
Smart Pen and allowed to check-out one from the CDS office to use in courses for the semester. If used,
this accommodation may replace the note taking accommodation listed above. *(Faculty have the right to prohibit recording of classes and lectures unless approved as an accommodations by CDS.)*

**Parking** – Accessible parking locations can be found throughout campus to drivers with disabilities. A "D" permit may be purchased by qualified individuals. Please contact Commuter Services for additional information at (801) 581-6415 or [http://www.parking.utah.edu/](http://www.parking.utah.edu/).

**Priority Registration** – To ensure equal access to its programs, courses, and facilities, students may be eligible for priority registration. Eligibility for priority registration is reviewed each semester and approval is dependent upon the impact of a student's condition. It is essential that students utilize this service to facilitate classroom scheduling changes to accessible buildings.

**Reduced Course Load and Extended Programs** – The Center for Disability Services may approve students with disabilities to enroll in a course load of less than full-time status (12 credit hours for undergraduate students and 9 credit hours for graduate students). In these cases, students will be afforded full-time status and may be eligible for benefits available to other full-time students at the University of Utah that are within the University’s purview. (There may be exceptions to this accommodation which are a result of laws and policies outside of the University's control, such as federal financial aid requirements.)

**Service and Emotional Support Animals** – Service animals (as defined by the ADA) are welcome on campus and in student housing. Emotional support animals must be approved as an accommodation for campus housing and are not allowed in other areas of campus where pets are normally prohibited. Please contact CDS to obtain the documentation guidelines for emotional support animals. All animals on campus must be under the control of their owner at all times. Animals may be excluded if they pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others. Refer to the Campus policy regarding animal control, at [http://www.regulations.utah.edu/administration/3-231.html](http://www.regulations.utah.edu/administration/3-231.html).

**Shuttle Services** – Regular scheduled / fixed route campus shuttles have lifts and are accessible and available for assisting students with mobility concerns around campus. Additionally, for approved students, a point-to-point accessible shuttle is available to schedule pick up and drop of dates and times. ([http://www.parking.utah.edu/transportation/shuttles/index.html](http://www.parking.utah.edu/transportation/shuttles/index.html))

**Substitutions for Course Requirements** – On occasion, when a student’s specific disability would prevent them from successfully learning and completing the mathematics or foreign language general education requirements, the Center for Disability Services may consider approving substitute courses for these requirements. This specific accommodation is only granted when based upon disability documentation, history, and a student’s previous attempts at completing the courses with accommodations. Substitutions are not applicable or available for requirements or pre-requisites essential to a student’s major or field of study. *(Please contact CDS for the specific Math and Language substitution policies.)*
Services

**Academic Advising** – University College Advising ([http://advising.utah.edu/](http://advising.utah.edu/)) and specific departmental advisors are the primary contact for academic advising at the University of Utah. However, CDS advisors are available to assist students and departments in understanding how disability may impact a student’s schedule and academic plan.

**Accessible Paths of Travel** – With the many and ongoing construction projects around campus, accessible paths are constantly changing. The Center for Disability Services works with Facilities and Campus Planning and Construction to maintain accessible paths throughout the campus and to display signage which directs students to these paths. If you have any concerns about a path on campus, please contact your CDS advisor.

**Advocacy** – A central role of the Center for Disability Services is to work directly with faculty and staff at the University of Utah to advocate for the equal and fair treatment of students with disabilities.

**ASD Support Group** – The Center for Disability Services offers a support group for students who have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. The group meets regularly throughout the semester and is available to any U of U student who would be interested.

**Computer Labs** – The Center for Disability has dedicated accessible computer labs (Union 162 and the Marriott Library) and individual accessible computers in many of the computer labs around campus. Computers in these labs have accessible software such as JAWS, Kurzweil, ZoomText, and Dragon Naturally Speaking. The dedicated labs also have high speed scanners, flatbed scanners, a braille typewriter, and CCTV.

**Peer Mentoring** – The Center for Disability Services offers a peer mentoring program for eligible CDS students to assist new, returning, and continuing students with time management, stress management, academic skill building, and organizational skills.

**Scholarships** – Each year, the Center for Disability Services offers a number of scholarships to University of Utah students who are registered and qualified with CDS. Applications for and information about these scholarships are available on the CDS website at [http://disability.utah.edu/scholarships.html](http://disability.utah.edu/scholarships.html).

**Snow Removal** – The University of Utah makes a reasonable attempt to address priority snow removal in areas identified by the Center for Disability Services and the University Grounds Department. The two departments work to prioritize the clearing of paths of travel for students with disabilities. The University’s general policy identifies the Medical Complex as critical for first response. After the Medical Complex, lower campus priority snow removal is considered. University Risk Management has determined a reasonable schedule of snow removal prior to 3:00 p.m. weekdays. Please be advised that during winter freezing conditions in which the daytime temperature is below 32 degrees Fahrenheit, every effort is made to reduce icing on paths of travel. If you notice an area of concern, please contact your CDS advisor so that we can help.
Services Not Offered

The following are services which are not offered by the Center for Disability Services:

Changes to Essential Program and Course Elements - The law does not require the University of Utah to lower its academic standards or alter the essential elements of courses and programs to accommodate students with disabilities. The intent of the law and purpose of academic accommodations is to provide an equal opportunity for students with disabilities.

Diagnostic Services – The ADA regulations do not require the University to screen or diagnose disabilities. It is the student’s responsibility to assume all costs associated with obtaining an adequate diagnosis and current documentation of a disability.

Personal Aids and Equipment – The University of Utah is not required to provide personal attendants, bathroom assistance, individually prescribed devices, readers for personal use or study, devices of a personal nature, equipment including tape recorders, CD/MP3 players, hearing aids, computers, and specialized software. It is a student’s responsibility to procure these services or equipment.

Tutoring – Since tutoring is considered a personal aid, the Center for Disability Services does not offer this as a service. However, the University of Utah as a whole offers a number of low cost or free tutoring resources. Please work with your CDS advisor to take advantage of these resources.

Temporary Medical Conditions

Temporary medical conditions that are expected to be resolved in a matter of a few days, weeks, or months (e.g. a broken arm or leg, common cold or flu, etc.) are typically not covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). When a student experiences a temporary condition, they are encouraged to work with instructors to seek flexibility and to make arrangements for assistance. However, students are welcome to come in to CDS to explore whether or not services might be available.
Transition to College

The differences in the application and implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act are significant when comparing the secondary (elementary, junior high, and high school) and postsecondary (college and university) settings. It is essential for new students coming to the University to understand the differences.

At the secondary level, schools districts are required to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to all children, including those with disabilities. School districts are also expected to identify student’s educational needs and provide any regular or special education services necessary to meet those needs. Additionally, under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and a student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP), significant changes can be made to educational and academic standards and content of courses in moving towards graduation. The focus of the law at the secondary level is on ensuring student success.

At the postsecondary level, colleges and universities are not required to provide a free and appropriate public education, the IDEA does not directly apply, and IEP plans are not used. Instead, the focus of the law is on ensuring equal access and opportunity by providing reasonable and appropriate accommodations. However, colleges and universities are not required to lower standards or change the essential elements of programs or courses. For example, an appropriate accommodation at the university level might be to allow extended time for a student to take an exam, but it would not be appropriate to change the type or format of an exam.

A valuable resource available to students to assist in understanding the differences between the secondary and postsecondary level is a publication by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, entitled “Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities.” It is available online at http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html.

Admission to the University

The admissions requirements and standards apply to all prospective students who apply to the University of Utah, regardless of ability or disability. Those requirements may change from year to year and students who do not meet the requirements are encouraged to contact the admissions office to inquire about alternative admission options, (Admissions Office, 250 SSB, (801) 581-7281 or www.sa.utah.edu/admiss). The University of Utah does not make pre-admission inquiries regarding disability and must not deny admission on the basis of disability.
Dispute Resolution and Grievance Procedures

The University of Utah encourages an informal resolution of problems or grievances whenever possible. Students should contact their advisor in the Center for Disability Services, the specific faculty member involved, the department chair, the dean of their college, or the Dean of Students Office to discuss any questions, concerns, or problems.

If the dispute cannot be resolved by an informal process, the student should submit a written statement describing the situation to the Director of the Center for Disability Services. The written statement should identify the issue and reason for filing a grievance. This statement may be submitted by either email or paper copy. (If the complaint is with the CDS Director, the statement should be submitted to the Associate Vice President for Student Development).

In cases where resolution is not reached at this level, a referral is made to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, (801) 581-8365, http://www.oeo.utah.edu/index.php.

Discrimination, Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, and the Office of Civil Rights

If a student feels that they have experienced discrimination at the University of Utah, they should contact the University of Utah, Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action or the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

Office of Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action
The University of Utah
201 South Presidents Circle
John Park Building, Room 135
Salt Lake City, Utah 84112
(801) 581-8365
FAX (801) 585-5746
http://www.oeo.utah.edu/index.php

Office for Civil Rights (Denver Office)
U.S. Department of Education
Cesar E. Chavez Memorial Building
1244 Speer Boulevard, Suite 310
Denver, CO 80204-3582
(303) 844-5695
FAX (303) 844-4303
Email: ocr.denver@ed.gov
Other University and Community Resources


Dean of Student Office, (801) 581-8061, http://deanofstudents.utah.edu/

LGBT Resource Center, (801) 587-7973, http://lgbt.utah.edu/

Student Health Center, (801) 581-6431, http://studenthealth.utah.edu/

TRIO/Educational Opportunity Programs, (801) 581-7188, http://trio.utah.edu/

University College Advising, (801) 581-8146, http://advising.utah.edu/

University Counseling Center, (801) 581-6826, http://counselingcenter.utah.edu/


Veterans Support Center, (801) 587-7722, http://veteranscenter.utah.edu/