

# ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABLED STUDENTS

## Definition of Disability

According to Section 3 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the term “disability” means, with respect to an individual:

1. Having a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual.
2. Having a record of such an impairment.
3. Being regarded as having such an impairment.

## Accommodations and Services Available at The University of Providence Includes the Following

Disability Services for students at the University of Providence are facilitated by the Accessibility Coordinator, located in the TRIO Center in Sullivan Hall. These services assure program access to the University by students with disabilities. The Disability Advocate treats all personal information with the strictest confidentiality. Student files are kept in a locked file in the Disability Advocate's office. Although students are required to disclose the existence of a disability to their instructors in order to receive accommodations, they are not required to provide them with a diagnosis or any other details. Any level of disability information about which instructors become aware should remain confidential.

The Disability Advocate coordinates and provides reasonable accommodations, advocates for an accessible and hospitable learning environment, and promotes self-determination on the part of the students we serve. Reasonable accommodations are changes in the learning environment that permit students with disabilities to compete on equal footing with their peers at the University. Examples include: extended testing times, tests proctored at the TRIO Center or in a quiet setting, note takers, use of assistive technology (Speech Recognition Software, Capti Voice, LiveScribe Pens) textbooks in auditory format, sign language interpreters, captioned course materials, and course relocation to physically accessible classrooms. The University charges no fee to students with disabilities for reasonable accommodations.

## Student Responsibilities

Each student must meet or exceed the essential requirements of the University of Providence and its programs with or without accommodations. While the ADA protects the civil rights of qualified students with disabilities, it also affirms their right to refuse any accommodation. Thus, students are not required to register with the Disability Advocate, identify themselves to instructors, staff, or other students as having a disability. Accommodations and Services Available at the University of Providence includes the following:

- **Admissions and registration assistance** - The TRIO/SSS Disability Advocate provides assistance with the admissions and registration process to applicants upon request. To protect confidentiality, it is recommended that applicants bring their documentation verifying their disability directly to the Disability Advocate's office located in the TRIO/SSS.
- **Advice and advocacy** – Faculty academic advisors will assist students in defining and developing their educational path. They will not have knowledge about a student's disability or its impact. Students will need to know how to ask his/her advisor the right questions. As always, the Disability Advocate stands ready to support

students and answer any questions or concerns. Advocacy is the most critical skill students with disabilities will develop in their pursuit of equality in education and, later, in employment and society. The Disability Advocate works with students to help them understand their rights and responsibilities and to identify strategies for effective self-advocacy. This includes advocacy on a personal basis with instructors and/or other students, but also includes advocacy on a University-wide basis, or with non-University agencies such as Vocational Rehabilitation.

- **Adaptive equipment** – The Disability Advocate works with individual students to determine which reasonable accommodations the student may want to use, including adaptive equipment. Students who qualify for equipment which is not personal must sign an equipment use agreement.
- **Note taking assistance** – Note taking is an accommodation that allows a student with a qualifying disability to acquire lecture notes from a classmate who volunteers to provide assistance. A student may need note taking assistance because of a cognitive or physical impairment. The note taking accommodation is not a replacement for class attendance.
- **Sign language interpreters** – Deaf and hard of hearing students who require sign language interpreting will be provided with appropriate interpreter services. Students requiring interpreter services should, therefore, inform the Disability Advocate of their need at least **one month before beginning classes** at the University. This will provide enough lead time to assure that services are in place on the first day of classes.
- **Textbooks in audio format** – Students with reading disorders and some with physical impairments may be unable to derive full benefit from printed materials. In an effort to provide full access to such materials, the Disability Advocate will acquire textbooks in audio format for these students from AccessText Network Bookshare or through the publisher. Students are required to submit a request for their textbooks in audio format at least two weeks in advance of the need.
- **Testing accommodations** – Testing accommodations (e.g. oral, extended time) are provided for qualified students. Accommodations on exams and quizzes are sometimes necessary to allow a person with a disability to demonstrate proficiency in the material being tested. Testing accommodations may consist of use of special adaptive equipment, a change in exam format (e.g., print size) or simply the provision of additional time or a distraction-free environment.

**Other specific services are provided in response to individual needs.**

## Information for Parents Regarding Disability Services

### Disability Services Parental Involvement Policy

The parent (or legal guardian) of a primary or secondary school student with a disability is an essential participant in school decisions about that child's disability-related needs. When that child enters the University, however, the parent no longer participates directly in the institution's decision-making process. The parent may continue to offer his or her son or daughter advice and support, but the student becomes solely responsible for communicating with University personnel about disability-related matters.

The University and the Disability Advocate are aware of the difficulty of the role change and welcome the opportunity to offer advice and general policy information to the parents of students with disabilities.

modifications in order to allow full participation of students with disabilities.

## Policy

A student or prospective student who wishes to request disability accommodations or a formal review of disability documentation is required to complete a disability information form with the Disability Advocate so that appropriate accommodations can be made and accessibility issues can be addressed. Under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1976 (FERPA), students have the right to access their own records. The parent or guardian does not share that right. This means that parents do not have legal access to their student's grades, transcripts, or any information concerning the services they are being provided through the Disability Advocate. This information is confidential. However, a student may fill out a release of information form to permit the disabilities specialist to discuss issues with his or her parent(s)/guardian.

## Disability Law

The University is committed to making its programs, services and activities accessible to students with disabilities. Toward this end, we strive to enhance awareness of and sensitivity to the needs of persons with disabilities and to ensure full access to educational opportunity for persons with disabilities as required under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## Disability Law

- **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is generally regarded as the first civil rights legislation for persons with disabilities on the national level. Included within the various sections of that Title are mandates for nondiscrimination in federal agencies (Section 501), the establishment of the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Boards (Section 502) and nondiscrimination on the basis of disability with regard to employment in entities and institutions that receive federal financial assistance. Of direct importance for the purpose of this guide is the mandate known as Section 504, which is a program access statute.

Section 504 requires that no otherwise qualified person with a disability be subjected to discrimination, be denied access to, or be denied the benefits of any program or activity provided by any institution or entity receiving federal financial assistance. Since its passage, this mandate has promoted the development of disability support services programs in colleges and universities across the country. While Section 504 does not require that colleges and universities develop special education programming for disabled students, it does require that an institution be prepared to make appropriate academic adjustments and reasonable modifications to policies and practices in order to allow the full participation of students with disabilities in the same programs and activities available to non-disabled students.

- **The American Disabilities Act (ADA)**

Under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Government agencies and recipients of federal funds (such as the University of Providence) were prohibited from discriminating on the basis of disability. With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, a much more inclusive piece of legislation, that prohibition was extended to include the private sector. ADA requires that postsecondary institutions make appropriate adjustments and