

Responsibilities of Students and Faculty

It is the responsibility of each student to identify and to request 504 accommodations to either the Student Affairs Liaison (SAL) of each school or the Student ADA Coordinator (SADAC). Students will provide current documentation of a medical, learning, or medical disability to the Student ADA Coordinator for review and discussion of needed 504 accommodations for each semester. The current documentation is by a clinical and qualified clinician in their respected field of expertise.

The student will meet and consult with the Student ADA Coordinator each Fall and Spring semesters to determine specific accommodations he/she will receive while attending UTMB. At the beginning of each semester, students are required to request accommodation letters from the Student ADA Coordinator and to meet with their instructors to discuss arrangements for accommodations in each course. A copy of the current accommodations letter is sent to the SAL of the student's respective school. It is important for students to meet with their instructors early in the semester to coordinate services and present the accommodations letter to Faculty. If a student identifies as having a disability and provides current documentation and the need for accommodations during the currently enrolled semester, the accommodations letter is given to the student and sent to the SAL of each school. If a student identifies late in the semester, the 504 accommodations are not retroactive.

Students with disabilities maintain the same responsibility for their education as other students. This includes maintaining the same academic levels, maintaining appropriate

behavior and standards of ethics, and giving timely notification of any special needs to instructors and other staff personnel.

Responsibilities of Faculty

It is the responsibility of the Faculty to provide the approved accommodations and support services, in a fair and timely manner, to students with disabilities. Faculty meets as quickly as possible with students who provide a letter from the Student ADA Coordinator. Students initiate the meeting and Faculty is encouraged to establish a welcoming environment for students who are reluctant to self-advocate and discuss their personal diagnoses and needs in the classroom environment.

According to the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Faculty cannot refuse to provide required accommodations, to question whether the disability exists when accommodations have been authorized by the Student ADA Coordinator, or to request a copy the student's documentation. Verification of student documentation is kept confidential in the office of the SADAC and is not a record of the student's academic or medical records at UTMB.

If a student requests accommodations for a disability and the Faculty member does not have a current 504 accommodations letter from each semester, it is important that the Faculty advise each student to contact the Student ADA Coordinator. If the disability is obvious (use of a wheelchair, hearing aids, service dog, etc.) and the requested accommodation is obviously appropriate, Faculty can provide the accommodation while paperwork is being completed by the Student ADA Coordinator. Otherwise, Faculty does not have an obligation to provide requested accommodations unless properly

notified by the Student ADA Coordinator in the form of a current 504 accommodations letter.

Proper Notice of Accommodation

The Student ADA Coordinator prepares individualized student letters to Faculty each Fall and Spring semester. Each individualized letter documents the necessary accommodations for the student in the classroom setting for that current semester. Individual student 504 accommodations letters prepared for the Spring semester will be current and active for the summer sessions. These letters offer guidance in regard to accommodations to be provided by Faculty for the student with a disability. Faculty is encouraged to contact the Student ADA Coordinator for further discussion of student disabilities and accommodations. Upon receiving the accommodations letter from the student, it is important for Faculty to respect the student's confidentiality and to discuss each case in private with the student.

The accommodations outlined in each 504 letter are based on the student's specific disability, documentation prepared by a professional(s) in the appropriate field, and previous student educational history and current stated need for such accommodation. These accommodations have been deemed reasonable and necessary in order to promote equal access to UTMB by the Student ADA Coordinator, in coordination and consultation with the VP of Student Services, and the SAL from each school.

For the School of Medicine (SOM) students, 504 accommodations letters are completed at the beginning of each Fall semester of their Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, or Year 4 semesters. The SOM Faculty will receive current 504 letters of accommodations

based on the student's year of enrollment each Fall or as soon as the student identifies as having a disability.

Providing Accommodations

For accommodations such as extended test-taking time and a reduced noise distraction environment, it is the student's responsibility and Faculty's responsibility to make those arrangements on an individual basis as requested by the student for each exam. The student contacts Faculty for any testing accommodations before each exam, preferably two weeks before the scheduled exam. Student failure to contact Faculty within two weeks of the scheduled exam may result in denied services and the student taking exams in the regular class setting.