

CHAPTER 14: ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

I. Introduction and Mission

Guided by our Catholic, Jesuit tradition of academic excellence, freedom of inquiry and respect for individual differences, our law school is committed to fostering an inclusive environment which is responsive to the needs of all students. SLU LAW Disability Services aims to lead campus efforts to recognize disability as a valued aspect of diversity and to embrace accessibility as a matter of social justice. In doing so, we are committed to designing inclusive and equitable environments. When barriers to access are encountered, we will collaborate with the student to determine appropriate academic accommodations.

Many of the concepts and some of the language in this policy are derived from content on the Association on Higher Education and Disability's website, <http://ahead.org> and their guidance, *Supporting Accommodation Requests: Guidance on Documentation Practices*, April 2012.

I. Disability Services Coordinator

The Dean of Students for Activities and Leadership is the Disability Services Coordinator ("Coordinator") for the School of Law. Her responsibilities include implementation of this policy.

II. Confidentiality

The Coordinator is committed to providing students with confidential advice. All documentation submitted to the Coordinator and the records pertaining to the request for accommodations shall be held in confidence in a separate locked file. Information about a student's disability or other health information will not be provided to School of Law faculty or staff, unless there is a clear educational, health, or safety reason.

III. Process for Requesting Accommodations and Documentation Overview

A. Background

1. Every person should be respected for their individual differences; therefore, the Coordinator will begin by having a conversation with the student about their experience and expectations. This conversation will help identify the information necessary to support an accommodation request. The process for determining accommodations is a collaborative one that may or may not require third-party documentation. The Coordinator encourages students to contact Disability Services early in the semester to engage in discussions surrounding the student's experienced or anticipated barriers to access as well as possible accommodations.

2. Documentation informs administrators about a disability's impact and can aid in ensuring that the law school is well suited to provide accommodations to resolve barriers that have been identified in the law school's physical and learning environments.

B. Overview of Process

1. The student should fill out the Accommodation Request Form and set an appointment with the Coordinator.
2. There are no deadlines for requesting accommodations; however, the request must be timely. Please give enough time in order to properly review, approve and put the accommodation into place.
3. Information necessary to support your accommodation request may include medical records, psychoeducational reports or past school records. The student should bring any documentation they have available regarding their request to the appointment. After speaking with the student, the Coordinator will let the student know if any additional documentation is needed for the request.
4. Following the appointment, the Coordinator will send a confirmation letter (“proposed schedule”) to the student outlining the approved academic accommodations. After one week, if there are no appeals, the accommodation is put into place.
5. Accommodations are effective for one academic year (Fall, Spring and following Summer). Students are required to submit the Accommodations Renewal Form each academic year in order to renew their request. A student should also submit the Accommodations Renewal Form if they find that their current accommodations are not meeting their needs.
6. Should the student seek an appeal pursuant to section VI of this policy, the proposed schedule will not become final during the appeal process but shall be in effect pending the result of the appeal.

C. Sources and Forms of Documentation

1. Documentation requests may be made to provide further details regarding the student’s request and can take place in several forms including the student’s self-report, the Coordinator’s observations and interactions, and information from external or third parties.
 - a. Each student is best able to identify the barriers to their access. Thus, it is important to have the student provide a narrative of their experience.
 - b. While in consultation with the student, the Coordinator and other administrators may form impressions and conclusions regarding the effectiveness of previous or requested accommodations. These observations may serve as valuable forms of documentation when reviewing a student’s narrative of their request.
 - c. When necessary, students requesting accommodations may be asked to provide documentation from qualified professionals licensed in the relevant area. This documentation should discuss the impact of the disability on the student’s academic experience and include recommendations for accommodations.

D. Documentation Process

1. Individual Review

a. The primary focus of student accommodations is to address barriers that impose limitations on the student's access to the program. The process of individual review allows the student to articulate and clarify those barriers that result from the physical or learning environment. Therefore, there is no prescribed standard for the type of documentation needed to establish and address a particular disability. The documentation process should reflect the uniqueness of the individual student and their request.

2. Non-burdensome Process

Saint Louis University School of Law is committed to a non-burdensome process for students requesting accommodations in their academic experience. The School of Law will not impose a documentation process that is overly burdensome to a student or one that discourages a student from seeking accommodations.

3. Other Universities and Testing Agencies

Please take note that other universities and testing agencies (such as GRE or Board of Law Examiners) may require more extensive documentation. Research their requirements well in advance of requesting accommodations.

IV. Accommodations

A. Reasonable accommodations refer to any adaptation in the School of Law environment or in customary practice, which enables an individual with a disability to enjoy equal educational opportunities. Reasonable accommodations do not fundamentally alter the nature of the program, course, service or activity. Reasonable academic accommodations may be made in the following areas:

1. Academic Programs

These are accommodations necessary to enable a student to enroll in, qualify for, attend and participate in all programs of the School of Law. Some examples of accommodations include: additional time while testing, note-taking services, use of a recording device, use of a scribe or reader, alternate format textbooks, accessible classroom location or use of interpretation/transcription services.

2. Examinations

These are accommodations necessary to enable a student to demonstrate competency on the course exam designed by the professor. Examples include, but are not limited to, additional time, a private testing space, use of a computer, or use of a scribe.

3. Auxiliary Aids

These are materials or assistance necessary to enable a student to participate fully in the School of Law academic program. Examples include, but are not limited to, alternative format materials (braille, digital, audio etc.), assistive technology, note takers, readers, scribes and library assistance.

4. Physical Accommodations

These are accommodations necessary to provide students full physical access to all School of Law programs.

V. Temporary Conditions

SLU LAW provides support to students with temporary conditions to meet their needs on a case-by-case basis. Follow the procedures outlined in section III of this policy to request temporary classroom support.

VI. Appeal

A student who disagrees with the Coordinator's eligibility determination or proposed accommodations shall have an appeal to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. The appeal process shall include an interview with the student, a review of the Accommodation File and consultation with the Coordinator. At the conclusion of the appeal process, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs shall issue a letter of decision. A student who disagrees with the determination of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs shall have an appeal to the Dean.

VII. Collaboration

School of Law faculty and staff shall collaborate with the Coordinator in providing appropriate accommodations to eligible students. Students shall collaborate with the Coordinator and the School of Law faculty and staff to help ensure that the academic programs are provided to all students in an equitable manner.