

University Policy 4.02.01

Student Disability Accommodations

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POLICY STATEMENT

Capella University is committed to extending educational access to adult students and is dedicated to providing accommodations and services to qualified students with disabilities so that they may achieve their full academic potential. Capella University recognizes and fulfills its reasonable accommodations obligations under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and similar state laws. The type of accommodation provided is dependent on the interplay between a student's disability and the educational environment. Students are not charged additional fees for disability accommodations. The university reserves the right to utilize external service agencies to provide the necessary accommodations.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires that all services, benefits, and programs provided by the university be accessible to any student with a documented disability. The law is a guide that cannot and does not address all possible situations. It is essential for all parties to understand that there may be a variety of accommodations and that there may be differences regarding which services are appropriate in each situation. Section 504 requires the university to publish a grievance procedure whereby disputes may be addressed in an impartial and efficient manner. The appeal procedures are used only in situations for which one or both of the following circumstances apply:

1. Accommodations requested were denied; or
2. Alternative accommodations, if any, were not considered sufficient by the student.

RATIONALE

This policy describes the scope of Capella University's legal obligation to provide disability accommodations and offers guidance for requesting or appealing accommodations.

DEFINITIONS

Accommodations Provided by External Service Agencies

Accommodations may include but are not limited to the following: sign language interpreters, mobility services, and real-time caption writers.

Interactive Process

The interactive process is a dialogue between a student and a representative in Disability Services to document a student's disabilities, barriers to access, and what reasonable accommodations or services are available that may address the barriers to access.

Reasonable Accommodations

A reasonable accommodation is a modification to a course, program, service, activity, or facility that enables a qualified student with a disability to have an equal opportunity to access and use benefits, privileges, and services that are available to similarly situated students without disabilities. Examples of reasonable accommodations can include but are not limited to the following: additional time on learning activities, advance access to course materials, extended time on tests, verbal clarification of assignments, and alternative format course materials.

PROCEDURES

I. Requesting Disability Accommodations

A. To request a disability accommodation, students must:

1. Self-disclose a disability to staff or faculty, including but not limited to a Disability Services representative, at Capella University.
2. Engage with a Disability Services representative in an interactive process to document the disability and to identify possible reasonable accommodations.
3. Provide documentation of the disability. Documentation can include a student's self-report and third party sources.
4. Documentation from third party sources may be submitted to:

Email: DisabilityServices@capella.edu

Fax: 612-977-5060 or 888-227-8492, Attention, Disability Services

Mail:

Disability

Services

Capella

University

Capella Tower

225 South Sixth Street, Ninth

Floor Minneapolis, MN 55402

- B. Documentation and accommodation requests must be received at least 21 calendar days prior to the start of a course, residency, or event to allow adequate time to process the request. Late requests will be considered, but there is a risk the request cannot be reasonably evaluated or implemented before the course, residency, or event begins.
- C. Upon a student's self-disclosure to staff or faculty, a disability services representative will contact the student to engage in an interactive process to determine eligibility for reasonable accommodations.
- D. Additional resources can be found at <https://www.capella.edu/disability-services/>.

II. Disclosing Disability Accommodations

- A. Students who are approved for accommodations will be provided with a letter of eligibility for accommodation that outlines the parameters of the approved

accommodations.

- B. Students must provide the letter of eligibility for accommodations to their faculty for course accommodations to go into effect. A disability services representative may also provide the letter of eligibility for accommodations to faculty if the student has given affirmative permission to share the information.

III. Appealing a Disability Accommodation

Students are encouraged to exhaust all informal procedures before beginning the formal appeal process. A student may pursue the formal process if they are not satisfied with the results of the informal procedure.

A. Informal Process

The university encourages the use of informal processes to resolve any disagreements regarding academic accommodations related to a documented disability. The goal of the informal appeal process is to achieve an appropriate resolution as quickly as possible. The informal process begins with the student conferring with a disability services representative in a good faith effort to achieve a reasonable resolution of the complaint.

B. Formal Process

The formal process is more involved and requires a greater level of documentation than the informal process. This process serves as a vehicle for appealing a decision or resolving any impasse that may have occurred during the informal process.

1. The student must submit the request to initiate the formal process within seven calendar days after the disability services representative notifies the student of a decision or the inability to reach a decision. Reasons for the request must be limited to one or more of the following:
 - a. To determine whether the denial of accommodations was appropriate and whether alternative accommodations—if any were provided—were sufficient.
 - b. To consider new evidence or facts that may be sufficient to alter a decision and that were not introduced in the original request because such evidence or facts were not known or available through reasonable inquiry at the time of the decision.
2. The duration of the formal process is determined by the complexity of the case but typically does not exceed 30 calendar days.
3. A student begins the formal process by taking the following steps:
 - a. The student shall submit a written appeal to the manager of Disability Services, or designee, noting specific objections to the decision rendered during the informal process and providing any materials they feel are relevant to those objections. The appeal must include the following components:
 - i. A summary of the original request for accommodations and the resulting decisions and actions.
 - ii. A detailed statement of the circumstances and any documentation relating to the complaint.
 - iii. A statement that explains why the student disagrees with the decisions or actions of the informal process or why no decision was able to be reached if such was the case.

- iv. The resolution the student is seeking.
- b. Within seven calendar days of receiving the formal appeal, the manager of Disability Services, or designee, will acknowledge receipt of the request.
- c. The manager of Disability Services, or designee, receives and reviews all evidence and records of prior discussions and deliberations.
- d. Following the investigation, the manager of Disability Services, or designee, will render a decision regarding the matter and communicate it to the student, all associated parties, and any other appropriate individuals as necessary.
- e. A full report of the incident, appeal, and all related materials will be kept in Disability Services' records and, upon request, will be made available to all Capella University boards and any appropriate regulatory bodies.

C. Appeal Process

If a student wishes to appeal the decision of the manager of Disability Services, they must submit a formal request to the provost within seven calendar days of being notified of the decision by the manager of Disability Services.

1. The duration of the university-level process is determined by the complexities of the case but is not to exceed 30 calendar days.
2. The appeal process involves the following steps:
 - a. The student shall submit a written appeal to the provost, noting specific objections to the decision rendered during the formal process and providing any materials they feel are relevant to those objections. The appeal must include the following components:
 - i. A summary of the original request for accommodations and the resulting decisions and actions.
 - ii. A detailed statement of the circumstances and any documentation relating to the complaint.
 - iii. A statement explaining why the student disagrees with the decisions or actions of the formal process and the decision of the manager of Disability Services.
 - iv. The resolution the student is seeking.
 - b. Within seven calendar days of receiving the appeal request, the provost will notify the student, Disability Services, and the manager of Disability Services that a university-level review process will take place.
 - c. The provost receives and reviews all evidence and records of prior discussions and deliberations. The provost may also ask for an independent investigation of the evidence and circumstances of the case.
 - d. Following the investigation, the provost will render a decision regarding the matter and communicate it to the student, all associated parties, and any other appropriate individuals as necessary.
 - e. A full report of the incident, appeal, and all related materials will be kept in Disability Services' records and, upon request, will be made available to all Capella University boards and any appropriate regulatory bodies.
3. The decision of the provost is final.

- IV. All procedures in this policy apply to students in programs in GuidedPath and FlexPath formats.

POLICY OWNERS

Academic Owner: Disability Services

Operations Owner: Disability Services

RELATED DOCUMENTS

None

REVISION HISTORY

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Administrative edits as result of ongoing review: 12-20-07; 11-18-09; 2-17-10; 9-20-11; 4-17-12; 8-6-12; 4-24-13; 12-14-16; 4-1-18; 5-23-19; 4-1-20; 7-1-23; 4-1-25