

PROCEDURES FOR
Accommodating Individuals
With Disabilities

Monmouth University

Office of Equity and Diversity

ADA/504 Coordinator

(732) 571-7577

**MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Policy Name: **Procedure for Accommodating Individuals
With Disabilities**

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POLICY: It is the policy of Monmouth University to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. Federal law, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("504") and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), establishes the rights of individuals with disabilities. Monmouth University shall comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations regarding reasonable accommodations needed to provide equal opportunity to qualified individuals with disabilities. This document establishes the policy and procedures for determining accommodations for students, employees and visitors to campus events. Postsecondary institutions such as Monmouth University have an obligation under the law to:

- establish procedures in place to adequately respond to requests for accommodation,
- develop a program for servicing students with disabilities and
- provide notice to all interested parties of the existence of the program, its location and the identity of the person to contact to obtain information and services.

I. Campus Contact Offices

At Monmouth University there are several offices designated to provide services for people with disabilities, through which documentation of disability and determination of reasonable accommodations are provided. These offices provide, arrange, or coordinate accommodations for students, employees and visitors to the campus.

The *Office of Human Resources* is the designated office that obtains and files disability-related and medical documents, certifies eligibility for services, determines reasonable accommodations, and develops plans for provision of such accommodations for employees.

The *Department of Disability Services for Students* collects student disability documentation, determines accommodations related to academic course work and programs, and assists faculty, staff and students with information and resources relating to psychiatric/psychological, health/medical, physical disabilities and learning disabilities. The Department of Disability Services for Students also serves as the point of contact for requesting sign language interpreters.

The *Office of Counseling and Psychological Services* provides confidential personal and psychological counseling to all Monmouth University students on a first-come, first-served basis, and assists faculty, staff and students with information and resources, both on and off campus, relating to psychological concerns.

The *Director of Equity and Diversity* serves as the University's ADA/504 Coordinator. The ADA/504 Coordinator is available to assist faculty, staff, and students in gaining a greater understanding of the requirements of the laws involving disabilities, to assist in identifying external resources, and to provide clarification of the University's obligations under the law to provide particular accommodations that may be requested by students, employees and visitors to the campus.

Access for employees and students with disabilities is intended to acquaint faculty, staff, students, and departments with the procedures for ensuring access to employment, courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities at Monmouth University. If you have any questions regarding disability or reasonable accommodations, make one of the above-mentioned offices your first point of contact.

II. Definitions

A. Reasonable Accommodation:

A *reasonable accommodation* is any modification or change in the educational, employment or general campus environment (or in the way things are customarily done) that enables an individual with a disability to have equal opportunities to fully participate in the particular activity. This term may include:

1. making existing facilities and programs readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities;
2. relocating classrooms, developing alternative testing procedures, providing educational auxiliary aids, readers, or interpreters;
3. defining a student who takes less than 12 credits, because of a documented disability, as full-time for institutional purposes, unless prohibited by Federal/State regulations.

The ADA does not seek to change fundamental methods of ensuring a sound education and successful completion of an academic program. It is designed to ensure that students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to access academic programs and successfully complete their studies. A reasonable accommodation is not a modification of policies and practices when such modification would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.

B. Disability:

A *person with a disability* is anyone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

In addition to those people who have visible disabilities - persons who are blind, deaf, or use a wheelchair - the definition includes people with a range of invisible disabilities. These include psychological/psychiatric disabilities, learning disabilities, or some chronic health impairment, such as epilepsy, diabetes, arthritis, cancer, cardiac problems, HIV/AIDS, and more including the operation of major bodily functions such as the immune system, normal cell growth, and the endocrine system. The definition also includes impairments that are episodic or in remission if the impairment would substantially limit a major life activity when the condition is considered in its active state (**Documentation of the disability is required**).

The determination of whether an impairment substantially limits a major life activity shall be made without regard to the ameliorative effects of mitigating measures such as medication, medical supplies, equipment, or appliances.

A person is considered to be a person with a disability if he/she has a disability, has a record of a disability, or is regarded as having an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

An individual meets the requirement of being regarded as having a disability because of an actual or perceived physical or mental impairment whether or not the impairment limits or is perceived to limit a major life activity. An individual cannot be regarded as having a disability if the impairment is transitory and minor. A transitory impairment is an impairment with an expected duration of six months or less.

C. Qualified individual with a disability:

A *qualified individual with a disability* is someone whose experience, education, and/or training enable the person, with or without reasonable accommodation, to perform the essential requirements of a job or an academic course or program.

III. Procedures

The request for and determination of accommodation(s) is handled through the designated campus contact. A faculty member, administrator, or supervisor should contact the respective designated campus contact when a request is received to accommodate an individual with a disability if:

- there are questions or concerns about services, means of accommodation for someone with a disability, verification of a disability, or responsibility for responding to the needs of a person with a disability, and/or:
- the accommodation would or might alter the essential functions of the assignment or of an academic requirement for the course or program.

An individual with a disability will be expected to meet the job, course or program standards whether or not an accommodation is needed. An individual with a disability who can meet these standards in a different way than is customary will be provided with a reasonable accommodation to enable the individual to do so.

Faculty members/supervisors who have reason to believe that a student's or employee's behavior, associated with a disability, has created or can potentially create an unsafe or unhealthy environment for themselves or others, may request through their respective department head to have the student or employee consult with the appropriate campus contact office to determine if referral for further evaluation is appropriate. The request should be forwarded to the appropriate campus contact office through the ADA/504 Coordinator.

A. Requesting Reasonable Accommodation

1. A request may be initiated at any time by an individual who needs an accommodation. The responsibility for requesting or initiating the request lies with the individual. Individuals requesting an accommodation are encouraged to provide as much advance notice as possible.
2. Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to submit disability documentation to the appropriate campus contact office before or when making the request. Requests for accommodations will not be processed until the disability documentation is received by the appropriate campus contact office. Disability documentation must state that a disability exists and the need for accommodation. The appropriate campus contact office will maintain documentation that identifies the disability and ensure that disability-related documents are kept confidential and shared with University personnel on a limited and need-to-know basis only.
3. Once a qualified individual with a disability has requested an accommodation in a timely manner, the University will take steps to determine if the accommodation requested is appropriately based on the disability documentation. The appropriate, reasonable accommodations are best determined through a flexible, interactive process that involves the individual with the disability, the faculty member/ administrator/ supervisor to whom the request is directed and the designated campus contact office. Early consultation with the appropriate campus contact office is essential whenever questions of compliance or funding for an accommodation are involved. Final responsibility for selection of the most appropriate accommodation rests with the University. The Provost shall have final responsibility in this area for any accommodations which involve academic issues.

B. Appeal of Accommodation Determination

If a mutually acceptable accommodation cannot be found, the following procedure should be followed:

Step 1. The faculty or staff member should consult with his or her department chair/supervisor and must contact the appropriate campus contact office. The department chair/supervisor or Dean and the appropriate campus contact office will discuss the accommodation request.

Step 2. If a mutually acceptable accommodation cannot be found, the ADA/504 Coordinator will determine whether the requested accommodation is reasonable based on relevant laws and regulations. If additional information is required, the individual with the disability will be contacted for a release of information. The University reserves the right to require a second medical/professional opinion and/or additional information if needed to evaluate the requested accommodation.

Step 3. The individual with a disability will be notified of the decision by his or her supervisor/faculty member/administrator as soon as possible. If the request is approved, the accommodation will be provided as promptly as possible. If the decision is that the request is denied, the reason(s) will be noted in a letter, prepared by the ADA/504 Coordinator, and sent to the individual making the request. A copy of the letter will be placed on file in the Office of Equity and Diversity.

Temporary Disabilities

Temporary disabilities are not covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), although, if reasonable, the university will attempt to make the appropriate modifications. You can request assistance through the proper contact office.

C. Event/Program Accessibility

1. Departments that offer programs or events which are open to the public must publish information available to participants with disabilities informing them to request in advance any accommodations needed to allow them to attend and fully participate in the program or event. Public events and programs include, for example, theater programs, public lectures and cultural events, graduation, and athletic competitions. Brochures, registration forms, press releases, letters, posters announcing public programs, and events should include one of the following statements:

We encourage persons with special needs or requirements to notify the [name of your department] in advance of the event at [phone number of department or program].

or

We encourage persons with special needs or requirements to notify the Monmouth University ADA/504 Coordinator in advance of the event at 732-571-7577.

Reasonable advance notice to be given by anyone needing accommodations depends on the type of accommodation requested and should be handled on a case-by-case basis. However, any reasonable request, regardless of the time frame will be responded to with the goal of providing access to, and participation in, all Monmouth University programs, services and activities.

2. When the host department designates the ADA/504 Coordinator as the point of contact for accommodation request, the department must notify the ADA/504 Coordinator in advance with the name and telephone number of the designated person(s) in the department who will be responsible for handling requests for accommodations for the program or event.
3. The department or organization sponsoring the event must take into account the cost for reasonable accommodations. If the costs are reasonable and time is critical the department should cover the cost and request reimbursement from the Vice President for Finance through the ADA/504 Coordinator.

IV. Service Animals

Monmouth University recognizes the rights of people with disabilities to be accompanied by their service animal while on campus as students, employees or guests. Where necessary, we will modify our policies to permit the use of trained service animals by an individual with a disability, unless doing so would result in a fundamental alteration or jeopardize the safe operation of the University.

A. Definition of a Service Animal:

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 defines a *service animal* as:

Any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability.

The work or task that the dog performs must be directly related to the individual's disability, and can include a wide variety of services, such as assisting those with low vision, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, pulling a wheelchair, or retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone. The Department of Justice strictly limits the definition of a service animal to dogs, regardless of whether other animals of different species are domestic or trained. Also, animals acting in an emotional support role only are not classified as service animals.

B. Individual Responsibilities:

The owner of the service animal is responsible for the behavior of the service animal. Service animals must comply with leash laws and be under the control of their handlers at all times. The owner must also be responsible to ensure the cleanliness, grooming and good health of the service animal. The owner shall also ensure that the service animal is properly vaccinated and free from disease and infestation. The University has the right to request and obtain proper documentation to ensure that the animal qualifies as a service animal. The service animal must be picked up after, including the proper disposal of all waste. If the service animal's behavior is disruptive, aggressive or destructive, the owner may be asked to remove the service animal from the University premises. The owner may be held responsible for any damage that the service animal may cause through its destructive behavior.

C. Implementation of this Policy

The Office of Student Services (for students and their guests), the Office of Human Resources (for employees and guests), the Department of Disability Services and the appropriate department hosting a program or activity, will establish procedures to ensure that students, employees and guests who have service animals on campus are made aware of this policy. Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Director of Equity and Diversity as the University's ADA/504 coordinator.

V. Sign Language Interpreting

Monmouth University will make a good faith effort to provide sign language interpreters on a case-by-case basis. It is the responsibility of the individual with the disability to identify themselves and request the accommodation well in advance of the event or activity. When notified the Department of Disability Services for Students will make a reasonable attempt to provide this service.

VI. Grievance Procedure

Individuals with a disability at Monmouth University who consider themselves victims of discrimination based on a disability may file a grievance with the ADA/504 Coordinator. Students, employees and guests with disabilities are responsible for contacting the ADA/504 Coordinator, located in the Office of Equity and Diversity, in Wilson Hall, Room 304, if reasonable accommodations are not implemented in an effective or timely way.

VII. Disability Accommodation Resources

Please contact the offices listed below if you have any questions or concerns about services for an individual with a disability, means of accommodating, verification of a disability, or your responsibility for responding to the needs of individuals with disabilities:

Director of Disability Services
For Students:
732-571-3460

Director of Counseling
and Psychological Services:
732-571-7517

The Office of Equity and Diversity provides training and technical assistance to University staff, faculty, students, and guests. General questions concerning this policy or allegations of non-compliance should be directed to the Monmouth University ADA/504 Coordinator, at 732-571-7577.