

## **Students with Disabilities Policy**

Chicago State University (CSU) is a public, comprehensive university that provides access to higher education for students of diverse backgrounds and educational needs. The university fosters the intellectual development and success of its student population through a rigorous, positive, and transformative educational experience. CSU is committed to teaching, research, service and community development including social justice, leadership and entrepreneurship.

Chicago State University will be recognized for innovations in teaching and research, and in promoting ethical leadership, entrepreneurship, and social and environmental justice. We will embrace, engage, educate, and empower our students and community to transform lives locally and globally.

### **Abilities Office of Student Services**

The *Abilities Office of Student Services* has been established to ensure barriers that exist, caused by a disability will be accommodated; and that students have access to all of our programs and facilities. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibit colleges and universities that receive federal funding from discriminating against qualified students with disabilities in educational programs and activities. A "qualified student with a disability" is a disabled student who, with or without reasonable accommodation (e.g., architectural access, communication aids/services, or modifications to policies and practices) meets the University's academic and technical standards required for admission or participation in the University's educational programs or activities. The University is committed to complying with Section 504, the ADA and amendments.

The *Abilities Office of Student Services* advances the institutional mission of Chicago State University by delivering quality services, trainings, and resources. The *Abilities Office* is dedicated to ensuring access to education through reasonable and appropriate accommodations for all students with disabilities as mandated by the American with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Chicago State University is committed to providing students with a disability an equal opportunity to access the benefits, rights and privileges of University services, programs and activities in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II), as amended. Qualified students with disabilities, who seek reasonable accommodations and support services, including use of auxiliary aids or programmatic modifications or adjustments, must register with the *Abilities Office*. The registration process will require documentation of the disability. Students shall contact the Abilities Office Coordinator for additional guidelines. The Abilities Office is located in the Cordell Reed Student Union Building, Suite 160, telephone (Voice) (773) 995-2380, (TTY) (773) 995-3761.

### **Reasonable Accommodations and Support Services**

Reasonable academic accommodations promote equal access to students by removing barriers for possible academic success, but accommodations alone do not *guarantee* a student's success. Please note that accommodations cannot significantly alter the nature of a course or its learning outcomes. Reasonable accommodations are determined based upon best practices in the field, previous case studies, professional expertise of staff, and testimony and documentation provided by the student.

Examples of reasonable accommodations are listed below. This list is not all-inclusive, and we may explore unique accommodations that suit each student's circumstances and programs as needed.

- Exam Accommodation's
- Consideration of extended deadlines
- Consideration of flexible attendance
- Permission to record lecture
- Use of adaptive tools in the classroom
- Textbook in alternative format
- Note-taking assistance
- Live captioning
- Alternative classroom furniture and seating
- American Sign Language Interpretation
- Emotional Support and Service Animals

In addition, accommodations include clear course outlines with assessment timelines, and offer multiple ways to deliver content, such as text, audio, or interactive modules. Modify curriculum and training materials to support students with visual, auditory, or cognitive challenges.

### **Requesting Reasonable Accommodations**

A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a course, program, service, job, activity, or facility that enables a qualified student with a disability to have an equal educational opportunity, but does not lower or modify essential requirements, fundamentally alter the nature of a service, program or activity, or result in undue financial or administrative burdens.

A student who wishes to request an academic modification or adjustment should complete a Request Accommodations Form, available on the Abilities Office website.

The process of determining eligibility for, and the nature of, disability accommodations is an interactive and collaborative process, which requires the direct involvement of the student. Reasonable efforts are to be made both by the student requesting reasonable accommodation and the Abilities Office to complete the disability determination process and the consideration of any reasonable curricular or co-curricular modification or adjustment in a timely way.

**Students with disabilities are required to request accommodations for each academic term that they will need accommodations. This process supports modifying accommodations as students' needs change.**

### **Disability Determination**

The first step of the process is a determination of whether the student is disabled within the meaning of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. To be disabled under those laws, a person must have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity. Under those laws, to be "substantially limited" by impairment means that the student cannot perform a major life activity that the average person in the general population can perform or that the student is significantly restricted in performing that major life activity compared to the average person in the general population. In making the disability determination, Student Disability Services considers:

1. Is there a physical or mental impairment;
2. Does the impairment limit a major life activity that an average person can perform with little or no difficulty (e.g. learning, reading, walking, hearing); and
3. Does the impairment substantially limit the major life activity compared to the average person?

### **Documentation of Disability**

Disability determinations normally are based on information that the student provides during an intake meeting as well as current documentation from an appropriate professional regarding the nature and severity of the impairment and a description of the student's functional limitations. The documentation guidelines are available on the Abilities Office website.

Students are to review this information in advance of submitting disability documentation. Once Student Disability Services receives complete documentation, the Abilities Office Coordinator may consult with external medical professionals to review the assessment and any recommended accommodations.

### **Review of Documentation**

Documentation may include an individualized education program (IEP) in accordance with Section 614(d) of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The Abilities Office Coordinator may request additional documentation from a student if the IEP was not in effect immediately prior to the date when the individual exited high school. In addition, the Abilities Office Coordinator may request additional information from a student when documentation of a plan or record of service for the individual from a private school, local educational agency, a State educational agency, or an institution of higher education provided under a Section 504 plan.

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In accordance with Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or in accordance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Documentation of a disability and/or record or evaluation shall be from a licensed professional or provider finding that the individual has a disability. The evaluation shall include a medical and/or mental health diagnosis with accommodation recommendations. The Abilities office shall accept documentation of disability from another institution of higher education and/or military record of disability.

**Student Interview/interactive Process**

Following the review of documentation, documentation is found to be establish the student with a disability; the Abilities Office Coordinator shall conduct an interview (in-person, via phone, or virtual) are all acceptable forms of interaction for interview. The Abilities Office has a set of interview questions that are implemented with all students during this process. The interview process is critical and essentially serves as the conduit for the student with a disability to identify, communicate, and self-advocate for the accommodations that would best meet there needs.

**Provisional Accommodations**

Provisional academic modification or adjustment may be given when: (i) a student has requested a reasonable accommodation; (ii) the student has previously received a reasonable accommodation in an educational setting; and (iii) the process to determine the appropriate academic modification or adjustment cannot be completed before the start of the quarter.

Usually, a provisional academic modification or adjustment is for one quarter only, though in exigent circumstances with prior approval, provisional academic modification or adjustment may continue into the next quarter. Receipt of provisional reasonable accommodation does not imply that the student will qualify for reasonable accommodation on a long-term basis.

At the conclusion of the reasonable accommodation assessment process, even if the student received provisional reasonable accommodation, it may be determined: (1) the student is disabled and a requested academic modification or adjustment will be extended; (2) the student is disabled and a requested academic modification is adjusted to avoid compromise of the essential elements of the academic program, course and/or University sponsored student life activity; (3) the student is disabled but the requested academic modification or adjustment is not reasonable; (4) the student does not have a disability within meaning of the law; or (5) that the student is not a qualified student with a disability.

**Implementation of Approved Accommodations**

Once eligibility for disability services and reasonable accommodations has been established, the Abilities Office Coordinator will collaborate with the student's current instructors during the

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term in which the student is enrolled; to implement the appropriate academic modification or adjustment.

The provision of academic accommodations will align with essential course and program requirements. Both the student and their instructors will be notified in writing of the approved academic accommodations, modifications, or adjustments. Auxiliary aids and services extended to a student may be adjusted if the existing academic modifications are ineffective or if the student's condition changes. The Abilities Office Coordinator will facilitate the implementation of reasonable accommodation(s).

**Accommodations are not retroactive. Once a student meets and establishes accommodations with the Abilities Office, accommodations will be applicable moving forward from the time Accommodation Letters are provided to professors. Accommodations are unable to be applied to issues prior to the establishment of accommodations in the current academic term.**

### **Dissemination of Information**

The Office of Abilities at Chicago State University conducts their office and operations with transparency and explicitly with ensuring that the students with disabilities shall be aware of the accommodation process, including: (1) eligibility process; (2) documentation of disability; (3) review of documentation; (4) interactive process; and (5) implementation of accommodations.

The University shall disseminate the accommodations process in the following ways:

- Policy is included on the Abilities Office website
- Abilities Office Coordinator presents during all new student orientations, which includes newly enrolled, transfer, and returning students with a gap in postsecondary
- Digital media distributed with emails, digital flyers and info-graphs
- Informational workshops with specialized groups on campus, (e.g. athletes, residence life, transfer students, and dual enrollment)