



UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
SCHOOL of LAW

Accommodations 101: A Guide for Faculty, Staff, and Students at UM School of Law

The School of Law is committed to providing all students equal learning opportunities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines an individual with a disability as a person who (a) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of the person's major life activities; (b) has a record of such an impairment or, (c) is regarded as having such an impairment. Academic accommodations are reasonable academic adjustments that provide equal academic opportunity. Academic accommodations cannot be provided when they would result in a fundamental alteration of the educational program or an undue financial or administrative burden on the University.

What Are Accommodations?

Accommodations are adjustments or modifications that provide equal access to education for students with disabilities. They ensure that all students have an equitable opportunity to succeed without altering fundamental course requirements.

Legal Framework

- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** Prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in public life, including education.
- **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act:** Ensures that individuals with disabilities are not denied access to federally funded programs.

Federal acts, continuing legal opinions, and interpretations of the law may establish precedents that affect the provision of services at the university level. Disability services providers use these laws, statutes, and precedents along with the findings of the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) to develop services and guide decision-making.

Types of Accommodations

- **Testing Accommodations**
 - Extended time on exams
 - Reduced-distraction environments
- **Classroom Accommodations**
 - Peer notetaking support
 - Preferential seating
 - Alternative formats for course materials (e.g., braille, enlarged print)
- **Assistive Technology & Support Services**
 - Screen readers and magnifiers
 - Sign language interpreters and real-time captioning

Addressing Concerns About Accommodations

- **Extended Time on Exams:** Research shows that while extended time may improve performance for all students, it is crucial for students with disabilities, as they face additional cognitive and processing challenges.
- **Fairness vs. Equity:** Accommodations do not provide an unfair advantage but rather ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge.
- **Academic Integrity:** Accommodations do not compromise academic standards; they align with a student's documented needs while maintaining course expectations.

Faculty & Staff Responsibilities

- **Confidentiality:** Maintain student privacy when discussing accommodations. Office of Belonging preserves the confidentiality of student records as provided in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Information concerning students who receive disability services is kept confidential. The office will not release information pertaining to an individual's disability to a third party. Request for such a release will be denied.
- **Implementation:** Work with the Office of Belonging and Accessibility Services to ensure seamless accommodation implementation.
- **Communication:** Engage in proactive discussions with students who require accommodations while respecting their autonomy.

Student Responsibilities

- **Self-Advocacy:** Register with Accessibility Services and communicate accommodation needs early.
- **Documentation:** Provide required medical or psychological documentation to support accommodation requests.
- **Utilization:** Use accommodations responsibly and provide feedback if additional support is needed.

Resources at UM School of Law

- **Accessibility Services:** The Director of Accessibility coordinates accommodations and provides support for students with disabilities. This team is within the Office of Belonging. Email: access@law.miami.edu
- **Requesting Accommodations and Documentation Requirements:** Requesting and deciding on accommodation involves an interactive process between the student and Accessibility Services. How to [here](#).
- **Counseling & Wellness Center:** Offers mental health support, which may be relevant for students requiring accommodations related to mental health conditions. . [Counseling Center](#)
- **Title IX Office:** Protects students and employees from discrimination based on sex in educational programs. It also protects pregnant students. [Title IX Office](#)

Additional Resources

[Bar Information for Applicants with Disabilities](#)

[Reasonable Accommodations for Lawyers with Disabilities: EEOC Fact Sheet](#)