



# Medical Students with Disabilities

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**Senior Leader:** Medical School Dean

**Responsible University Officer:** Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education

**Policy Owner:** Office of Undergraduate Medical Education

**Policy Contact:** UMMS Office of Student Affairs

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## POLICY STATEMENT

The University shall: <sup>1</sup>

- (a) provide equitable access to and opportunity in its programs, facilities, employment, and educational programs to people with documented disability conditions;
- (b) provide reasonable accommodations to persons with documented disability conditions in accordance with applicable state and federal law; and in the spirit of these laws.
- (c) promote and practice adopting accessible media, technology, instructional methods, building design for new and renovated facilities, and procurement practices that are inclusive to students, faculty, staff, and guests with disability conditions.

<sup>1</sup> Source: University of Minnesota Board of Regents Policy: Disabilities Services

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## REASON FOR POLICY

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) requires colleges and universities to provide accommodations to meet the needs of qualified students with disabilities. Revisions to these laws by the ADA Amendments Act (2008) that took effect on January 1, 2009, are bringing additional clarity to this issue and may result in more students qualifying as students with disabilities and requesting accommodations.

The Medical School understands its ethical and legal responsibility to provide equal opportunities for qualified medical students with disability conditions. This policy exists to provide qualified medical students who have documented disability conditions with an equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of each course/clerkship and to ensure faculty and administration understand their roles in the accommodation process and treat any disability conditions related information as confidential.

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## PROCEDURES

To ensure that the recommended accommodations are provided, both the student and the institution have specific responsibilities. It is necessary that the medical student and institution understand their roles and carry out their responsibilities in arranging reasonable accommodations during medical school.

### **General Procedures**

- Medical Students who report or suspect they have a disability condition may go directly to, or will be referred to, the University's **Disability Resource Center (DRC)**
- The **DRC** will assist eligible students with obtaining documentation of disability conditions and will work with the students and the Medical School to identify and implement reasonable accommodations.
- The **DRC** will provide the student with an electronic letter once the reasonable accommodations have been determined. The student will provide the letter to faculty and/or staff associated with courses/clerkships in which they seek to use reasonable accommodations. A copy will also be sent to the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs on the Central Campus - Twin Cities, or the Associate Dean for Student Life and Academic Affairs on the Regional Campus - Duluth and, if desired by the student, to their Academic Advisor (Twin Cities campus).
- Students will arrange accommodations in accordance with the steps outlined below.
- Faculty who have questions or concerns about specific accommodations should contact the **DRC**. The name of the student's Access Consultant appears on the bottom of the accommodation letter.
- Students will contact the **DRC** prior to the accommodation letter expiring (typically each semester) to update the letter.
- Students will contact the **DRC** if a change in disability condition impacts occurs or accommodation needs change.
- Students should contact the **DRC** if they encounter any barriers receiving any approved reasonable accommodations through the appropriate medical school channels.

### **Preclerkship Medical Student Accommodations - Twin Cities**

- Students should meet or have direct contact with the **DRC** at the beginning of each academic year and during the transition from the preclerkship to clerkship phase (or more frequently) to evaluate reasonable accommodations and obtain an accommodation letter.
- Once students receive an accommodation letter, in addition to providing a copy of the letter to the individuals outlined above, they will email a copy to the medical school assessment team at [med-doa@umn.edu](mailto:med-doa@umn.edu) **and** to the medical School Foundational Curriculum Manager (see "*Additional Contacts*"). Medical students should send the letter at the **start** of each semester, or as soon as they receive it as delays with sharing the letter could impact the implementation of the accommodations in time for exams.
- When accommodations include testing in alternative exam locations, a medical school assessment team member will email the medical student to inform them of the new location prior to each exam.

### **Preclerkship Medical Student Accommodations - Duluth**

- Students should meet or have direct contact with the Director (or a designate) in the University of Minnesota **Duluth Office of Disability Resources** at the beginning of each academic year and during the transition from the preclerkship to clerkship phase (or more frequently) to evaluate reasonable accommodations and obtain an accommodation letter.
- Once the student receives notice of an accommodation, the Duluth Office of Disability Resources will send a letter to the Duluth campus Medical School Office of Student Affairs stating the nature of the accommodation. The Office of Student Affairs and the Office of Curriculum helps to facilitate accommodations. When accommodations include testing in alternative exam locations and/or extended exam time, the student will contact the appropriate staff member in the Curriculum Office to arrange for a new location and time for each exam.

### **Clerkship Medical Student Accommodations**

- If students have already been receiving accommodations through the Medical School during the preclinical phase, they should contact the Access Consultant for the Medical School at least **six weeks** prior to the beginning of clinical rotations to review existing documentation and to determine appropriate accommodations for clerkships. Otherwise, refer to the **General Procedures** section above for new accommodations requests.
- For students on the Duluth campus, the Duluth Office of Student Affairs will work with the student and the **DRC** on the Twin Cities campus to appropriately transfer accommodations information as part of the transition to the Twin Cities Campus.
- Students will work in collaboration with the **DRC on the Twin Cities campus** to identify reasonable, general accommodations designed to remove barriers in the clinical setting in relation to the essential components of each rotation.
- Students will be responsible for emailing the accommodation letter provided by the **DRC** to the clerkship director and clerkship coordinator for each rotation in which the student wants to use accommodations. This should be done **at least one week** before the rotation begins (see *Appendix B* for a sample message).
- Students will be responsible for sharing the accommodation letter with the physician site preceptor **at least one week prior** to the start of the rotation, to discuss and confirm how the accommodations will be provided. This step is critical for all accommodations other than testing accommodations.
- **Shelf Exams:** Students who are using testing accommodations are responsible for emailing the accommodation letter to [medexams@umn.edu](mailto:medexams@umn.edu) (see *Appendix C* for a sample message). Ideally this should be done at the same time students send their letters to the clerkship director and coordinator. Due to the advanced planning and coordination needed, failure to send the accommodation letter **at least 2 weeks in advance of taking the exam** may result in not receiving testing accommodations for that exam.
- **Non-Shelf Exams:** Students are responsible for scheduling to take non-shelf exams at the **DRC** if informed the site cannot proctor the exam. The **DRC** cannot proctor computerized exams except for the Peds CLIPP exam. [Directions to Schedule to take exams at the DRC.](#)

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## ADDITIONAL CONTACTS

Subject	Contact	Phone	Fax/Email
<b>Primary Contact</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Fax/Email</b>
Disability Resource Center - TC	Jill Weigley	612 626-7379	<a href="mailto:weigl012@umn.edu">weigl012@umn.edu</a>
Disability Resource Center - TC	Erika Theiler	612 626-7379	<a href="mailto:etheiler@umn.edu">etheiler@umn.edu</a>
Disability Resource Center - DU	Tim Walters	218-726-6130	<a href="mailto:walt0295@d.umn.edu">walt0295@d.umn.edu</a>
Medical School Student Affairs - Twin Cities	Michael Kim	612 625-5180	<a href="mailto:mikekim@umn.edu">mikekim@umn.edu</a>
Medical School Student Life - Duluth	Robin Michaels	218-726-8872	<a href="mailto:rmichael@d.umn.edu">rmichael@d.umn.edu</a>
Foundational Curriculum Manager - Twin Cities	Elle Fasteland		<a href="mailto:efastela@umn.edu">efastela@umn.edu</a>

## DEFINITIONS

### Disability Condition

A disability condition is a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities such as seeing, hearing, walking, sleeping, eating, concentrating, learning or self care.

### Reasonable Accommodation

An accommodation is a modification that is made to a course, program, service, job, activity or facility that eliminates or minimizes disability-related barriers. For an accommodation to be considered reasonable it must not compromise essential requirements of a course, program, job, activity or facility nor cause undue administrative or financial hardship. In addition, it must not compromise the safety of the student receiving the accommodation or of others and it must not fundamentally alter a course or program.

### Shelf Exam

Shelf Exams are nationally standardized subject exams from the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) given at the completion of specific clinical clerkship to ascertain readiness to continue on in medical school. These exams must be administered in accordance with NBME requirements for accessing, grading, and proctoring.

### Non-Shelf Exam

Non-Shelf Exams include standardized institutional assessments other than those provided through the NBME, such as the Aquifer Pediatrics Exam (formerly Pediatrics CLIPP Exam). Requirements for administration may vary by exam type.

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## RESPONSIBILITIES

## Faculty and Administration

The responsibilities of faculty and administration who receive a Disability Resource Center accommodation letter from a medical student are to:

- Maintain the information in a confidential manner.
- Discuss with the student how the accommodations will be provided within the requirements of a course or clerkship.
- Inform the student if there is a need to share the accommodation information and with whom it will be shared.
- Contact: the Disability Resource Center, Dr. Michael Kim, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs in the Twin Cities, [mikekim@umn.edu](mailto:mikekim@umn.edu), or Robin Michaels, PhD, Associate Dean for Student Life and Academic Affairs in Duluth with questions about the accommodations or how the accommodations can be implemented in a specific course or clerkship.
- Work together with the student to implement the accommodations.

## Medical Student

Medical students can refer to the General Procedures and the procedures specific to their academic phase and campus for details on their responsibilities in the accommodation process.

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## RELATED INFORMATION

**Office of Disability Resources - Twin Cities:** <https://disability.umn.edu/>

**Office of Disability Resources - Duluth:** <http://www.d.umn.edu/disability-resources>

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## HISTORY

**Date Effective:** February 2012

**Amended:** July 2019

**Approved By:** Disability Resource Center-Twin Cities, July 2019

**Approved By:** Undergraduate Medical Education, July 2019

**Approved By:** Duluth Campus Office of Student Affairs, July 2019

**Approved:** Associate Dean UME, June 2021

**Reviewed and Approved:** Senior Associate Dean, UME, May 2023

## Appendix A

### Suggested Email Template for Preclerkship Students

Subject: Preclerkship Accommodations for [Course Number and Name],

Dear Course Manager:

I am a preclerkship student and am forwarding you an accommodation letter from the Disability Resource Center for this semester. I look forward to hearing from you at least a day before any exam to learn the location of my exam room which will allow me to use the reasonable testing accommodations noted in my accommodation letter.

[Student Name and ID#]

## Appendix B

### Suggested Email Template for Clerkship Students (to be sent to the Clerkship Director, Coordinator, and Site Preceptor)

Subject: Clerkship Accommodations for [Rotation Name] ,

Dear Dr. [Clerkship Director Name],and Clerkship Coordinator

I am registered for your clerkship during the period \_\_\_\_ and am forwarding you an accommodation letter from the University of Minnesota's Disability Resource Center. Please let me know if you have any questions regarding my accommodation needs. I will also share this letter with the Site Director and meet with them to discuss how the accommodations will be provided during my rotation.

Thank you.

[Student Name]  
[Email and phone]

## Appendix C

### Suggested Email Template for Clerkship Students for Shelf Exam Accommodations (to be sent to [medexams@umn.edu](mailto:medexams@umn.edu))

Subject: Clerkship Phase Shelf Exam Accommodations for [Rotation Name] ,

To Whom It May Concern ,

I am scheduled to take the \_\_\_\_\_ Shelf Exam on [Date] and I am forwarding you an accommodation letter from the University of Minnesota's Disability Resource Center. Please let me know if you have any questions regarding my accommodation needs.

Thank you.

[Student Name]  
[Email and phone]