



Medical Students with Disabilities

Senior Leader: Medical School Dean

Responsible University Officer: Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education

Policy Owner: Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education

Policy Contact: Assistant Dean, Student Affairs-TC

Policy Statement

The University shall:¹

- (a) proactively 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 creating or 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.

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 UMMS maintains a strong institutional commitment to equal educational opportunities for qualified students with disabilities who apply for admission to, or who are already enrolled in, the medical school. 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.

Procedures

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

¹ Source: University of Minnesota [Board of Regents Policy: Disabilities Resources](#)

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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)**; this is inclusive of students who believe they are, or will be unable, to meet one or more of the UMMS' Technical Standards
- The **DRC** will assist eligible students with obtaining documentation of disability conditions and will work with the students and UMMS 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 Dean of Students for their campus and, if desired by the student, to their Academic Advisor
- 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 there is a change in the documented disability or the approved accommodations need change
- Students should contact the **DRC** if they encounter any barriers receiving any approved reasonable accommodations through the appropriate medical school channels

Foundations Phase Medical Student Accommodations - Twin Cities & St. Cloud

- Students should meet or have direct contact with the **DRC** at the beginning of each academic year and during the transition from the Foundations phase to the Clinical Immersion 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 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 assessments
- 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

Foundations Phase 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 (ODR)** 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 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.

Clinical Phase Medical Student Accommodations - All Campuses

- If students have already been receiving accommodations through the Medical School during the Foundations phase, they should contact the DRC/ODR Consultant for their campus at least **six weeks** prior to the beginning of clinical rotations to review existing documentation and to

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determine appropriate accommodations for clerkships. Otherwise, refer to the **General Procedures** section above for new accommodations requests.

- Students will work in collaboration with the **DRC on the Twin Cities campus or the ODR on the Duluth 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/ODR** 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 (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:** Non-Shelf exams are proctored online. The **DRC/ODR** do not proctor computerized exams except for the Peds CLIPP exam.

Additional Contacts

Role/Office	Contact	Email
Disability Resource Center - Twin Cities & St. Cloud	Alex Schlicker	maple032@umn.edu
Disability Resource Center - Twin Cities & St. Cloud	Erika Theiler	etheiler@umn.edu
Office of Disability Resources- DU	Tim Walters	walt0295@d.umn.edu
Assistant Dean - Twin Cities	Michael Kim	mikekim@umn.edu
Assistant Dean - Duluth	Kendra Nordgren	nordgre@d.umn.edu
Assistant Dean - St. Cloud	Jill Amsberry	amsberry@umn.edu
Foundational Curriculum Manager - Twin Cities	Elle Fasteland	efastela@umn.edu

Definitions

Disability Condition

A disability is any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions).

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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.

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 in the Twin Cities, Kendra Nordgren, PhD, Assistant Dean in Duluth, or Jill Amsberry, DO, Assistant Dean in St. Cloud 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.

Related Information

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

History

Date Effective: February 2012

Amended: July 2019

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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

Reviewed and Approved: Senior Associate Dean, UME, April 2025

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)

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]