



HFCDHP

Harris Family Center for Disability and Health Policy

Student Handbook

# Table of Contents

HFCDHP Contact Information 1

Mission and Purpose 2

Definitions 2

Eligibility 3

Disabilities Covered Under Section 504 4

Determination and Provision of Accommodations 5

Requesting Accommodations – Interactive Process 5

College Accommodations Liaisons (CALs) 6

Requirements for Disability Documentation 7

Rights and Responsibilities of WesternU Students 7

Rights and Responsibilities of HFCDHP 8

University Obligation 9

Confidentiality and Release of Information 9

Types of Accommodations 10

Student Academic Accommodation Grievance Procedures 10

Resources 12

# HFCDHP Contact Information

Western University of Health Sciences

Harris Family Center for Disability and Health Policy (HFCDHP)

Telephone: (909) 469-5441

Email: [disabilityaccommodations@westernu.edu](mailto:disabilityaccommodations@westernu.edu)

Fax: (909) 469-5503

Web Page: <https://www.westernu.edu/CDHP/>

Address: 309 E. Second Street

Pomona, CA 91766, Building 390

# Mission and Purpose

## Harris Family Center for Disability and Health Policy (HFCDHP) Mission

The mission of the Harris Family Center for Disability and Health Policy (HFCDHP) is to increase the number of qualified individuals with disabilities to successfully pursue careers in the health professions at Western University of Health Sciences. We support the University’s commitment to equity and diversity by providing support services and academic accommodations to students with disabilities. We share information, promote awareness of disability issues, and ensure access for students within the University community.

## Vision

We envision a WesternU that leads by example in recognizing, welcoming, and celebrating disability as an integral part of a diverse health professions campus.

## Purpose

Western University of Health Sciences (hereafter referred to as WesternU) is committed to providing equal educational access for qualified students with disabilities in accordance with state and federal laws including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended in 2008, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. To ensure equal access for students with disabilities, HFCDHP’s policies formalize WesternU’s criteria for requesting reasonable accommodations, define parameters for consideration of such requests, and outline procedures for appeal. Compliance with this policy is mandatory for applicants and students enrolled in all WesternU degree-granting programs and certificate programs, and for WesternU administration and faculty responsible for implementing and managing educational program technical requirements for admission in accordance with accreditation standards as well as state and federal laws.

# Definitions

Auxiliary aids and services: items, equipment or services that assist in effective communication between a person who has a hearing, vision or speech disability and a person who does not. These will be determined on a case-by-case basis with regard to the individual’s documented disability and the technical requirements of the educational program.

Disability: a person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, or a record of such impairment.

Qualified student with a disability: a student with a disability who meets the academic and technical standards requisite for admission or participation in the institution's educational program or activity.

Academic adjustments: modifications in how students participate in classes and activities. These modifications allow students to meet standards, but do not change them. Academicadjustments give students equal access to the educational opportunities of the University.

Reasonable Accommodation:modifications or adjustments to the tasks, environment or to the way things are usually done that enable individuals with disabilities to have an equal opportunity to participate in an academic program or a job.

# Eligibility

To be eligible for disability-related services, individuals must have a documented disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and/or the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Eligible disabilities are any physical or mental impairments that may include, but are not limited to vision, hearing, mobility, learning, chronic illness, psychiatric condition, and brain injury that substantially limit one or more major life activities. Students requesting accommodations at WesternU must submit documentation of their disability. Eligibility for reasonable accommodations and services are determined holistically considering disability documentation, student report of how their condition impacts them, perceived need for accommodations, history of accommodations (if any) and program requirements including technical standards.

# Disabilities Covered Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act[[1]](#footnote-1)

The U.S. Department of Education, Section 504 regulation defines an "individual with handicaps" as any person who (i) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, (ii) has a record of such an impairment, or (iii) is regarded as having such an impairment. The regulation further defines a physical or mental impairment as (A) any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological; musculoskeletal; special sense organs; respiratory, including speech organs; cardiovascular; reproductive; digestive; genitourinary; hemic and lymphatic; skin; and endocrine; or (B) any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities. The definition does not set forth a list of specific diseases and conditions that constitute physical or mental impairments because of the difficulty of ensuring the comprehensiveness of any such list.

The key factor in determining whether a person is considered an “individual with handicaps” covered by Section 504 is whether the physical or mental impairment results in a substantial limitation of one or more major life activities. Major life activities, as defined in the regulation, include functions such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

The impairment must have a material effect on one's ability to perform a major life activity. For example, an individual who has a physical or mental impairment would not be considered a person with handicaps if the condition does not in any way limit the individual, or only results in some minor limitation. However, in some cases Section 504 also protects individuals who do not have a handicapping condition but are treated as though they do because they have a history of, or have been misclassified as having, a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. For example, if you have a history of a handicapping condition, but no longer have the condition, or have been incorrectly classified as having such a condition, you too are protected from discrimination under Section 504. Frequently occurring examples of the first group are persons with histories of mental or emotional illness, heart disease, or cancer; of the second group, persons who have been misclassified as mentally retarded. Persons who are not disabled may be covered by Section 504 also if they are treated as if they are handicapped. For example, if they are infected with the human immunodeficiency virus.

# Determination and Provision of Accommodations

As per Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the ADA, academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, and program modifications will be provided to qualified students with a disability to enable students to have an equal opportunity to participate in any program, course, activity, or service offered by WesternU.

WesternU is committed to ensure reasonable academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, and/or program modifications (accommodations) to otherwise qualified students who self-identify as having a disability. In general, it is the responsibility of the student with a disability to notify HFCDHP of an accommodation request and to provide appropriate documentation to substantiate the limitations of the student’s disability.

# Requesting Accommodations – Interactive Process

HFCDHP is the designated office at WesternU to determine and approve specific academic modifications or accommodations. HFCDHP’s involvement in the accommodation process is intended to provide students with disabilities, with the legally mandated and necessary support to work toward a higher education and provide legal protection for faculty members or instructors. When a student informs their college of the need for academic accommodations, the college should refer the student to HFCDHP. The student should then contact HFCDHP to begin the accommodation request process.

To request accommodations and start the interactive process at WesternU, students should visit the HFCDHP webpage (https://www.westernu.edu/cdhp/) to learn more about the registration process, requirements for disability documentation and to complete the Student Intake Form. Students are required to complete the Student Intake Form and submit documentation of their disability to Disabilityaccommodations@westernu.edu. Once the Student Intake Form has been submitted, the student will receive an email from the HFCDHP office within three (3) business days regarding scheduling an intake appointment. Communication will be sent directly to the students WesternU email address.

Through the interactive process, HFCDHP will work with the student to discuss the criteria for disability, potential accommodations to address any barriers to the curriculum or clinical practicum and ensure that any requested accommodations are reasonable and that they do not alter an essential feature of the curriculum or technical standards of the program.

When a student is approved for academic accommodations, HFCDHP will need to notify the college at least three (3) business days before the accommodations can be implemented. HFCDHP will provide an Accommodation Memorandum to the College Accommodations Liaison (CAL) and designated personnel within the college, a copy will also be provided to the student for their records. Accommodations are valid for the duration of the student’s program unless otherwise stated on the Accommodation Memorandum. If a student experiences barriers within their curriculum or assessments, the student is responsible to contact HFCDHP immediately to discuss adjustments or modifications to their academic accommodations. Students can request a re-evaluation of their accommodations or request new accommodations at any time during their academic program. In such instances, additional documentation may be necessary. Once approved, all accommodations must be implemented according to its scope and application in all applicable settings.

# College Accommodation Liaison (CAL)

Each college within WesternU has a designated CAL. This individual works in collaboration with HFCDHP to implement reasonable accommodations and academic adjustments for students with disabilities. CAL(s) are responsible to manage student academic accommodations within the college.

# Requirements for Disability Documentation

Students requesting accommodations at WesternU must submit documentation of their disability. Documentation should be emailed to [disabilityaccommodations@westernu.edu](mailto:disabilityaccommodations@westernu.edu) as a PDF document (no image files).

Eligibility for reasonable accommodations and services are determined holistically considering disability documentation, student report of how their condition impacts them, perceived need for accommodations, history of accommodations (if any) and program requirements including technical standards. Lack of accommodations history or specific documentation should not prevent a student from making a request for accommodations.

HFCDHP may request additional documentation to support an accommodation request if needed.

Please see the Requirements for Disability Documentation section on our webpage (<https://www.westernu.edu/cdhp/cdhp-documentation/>), which outlines the information to be included and types of disabilities.

# Rights and Responsibilities

## Rights and Responsibilities of WesternU Students

### ****Rights:****

* To an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from courses, programs, services, or activities offered through the college
* To an equal opportunity to work, to learn, and to receive reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services
* To appropriate confidentiality of disability-related information except as disclosures are required/permitted by law
* To information, reasonably available, in accessible formats
* To file an informal or formal complaint or grievance if a violation of rights is suspected

### Responsibilities****:****

* To meet qualifications and maintain essential institutional standards for courses, programs, services, or activities
* To self-identify as an individual with a disability and request accommodation(s) in a timely manner
* To demonstrate and/or document (from a licensed professional) how the disability limits participation in courses, programs, services, or activities
* To follow operational procedures for obtaining information, services, and reasonable accommodations
* To contact the HFCDHP if reasonable accommodations are not implemented in a timely manner

## Rights and Responsibilities of WesternU HFCDHP

### Rights:

* To request and receive documentation that supports current requests for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary services
* To evaluate and/or identify functional limitations of the student’s disability to determine appropriate academic adjustments and accommodations needed for courses, programs, services, and university activities
* To deny a request for reasonable accommodation, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary services if the documentation demonstrates that they are not warranted or if the individual fails to provide appropriate documentation
* To select among equally effective, reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services
* To deny a request for an unreasonable accommodation, adjustment, and/or auxiliary service or one that imposes an undue hardship or fundamental alteration of a program or activity of the university

### ****Responsibilities:****

* To ensure that qualified students receive accommodation and/or academic adjustments for courses, programs, activities, and services in the most integrated and appropriate settings
* To provide information, upon request, to students with disabilities in accessible formats
* To evaluate each request for an accommodation on an individual basis
* To maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication except where disclosures are permitted/required by law.

# University Obligation

WesternU has an obligation to confirm that students receiving accommodations have verified disabilities according to state and federal law. We request disability documentation and develop accommodation and service recommendations based on this information. Accommodations and services may not be provided if the student does not provide documentation of a disability, does not have a diagnosed disability, or does not follow HFCDHP and WesternU policies and procedures. Disability documentation is maintained in a confidential student file and does not become a part of the student’s academic record.

# Confidentiality and Release of Information

HFCDHP is committed to ensuring all information regarding students remain confidential as required or permitted by law. This information may include grades, biographical history, disability information and case notes. Only authorized staff within our office have immediate access to student files.

Disability-related information is treated in a confidential manner. Disability-related information provided to the HFCDHP, or the University is considered an **educational record**; therefore it falls under the protection of the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html) (FERPA). FERPA permits the HFCDHP to share information about the impact of a disability and accommodation eligibility with other University school officials who have a legitimate educational interest. A school official includes but is not limited to faculty and instructional staff, academic deans, and security. Legitimate educational interest means the school official needs to review an educational record or receive educational record information in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities. Sharing this information does not require student consent under FERPA. Disclosure of educational record information to a University official having a legitimate educational interest does not, however, constitute authorization for that person to transmit, share, or disclose any or all of that information to a third party who does not have a legitimate educational interest.

When Disability-related information may need to be shared with a third party as part of the accommodation review, a student may sign a written consent form giving our office permission to discuss the disability with a third party, such as parents who require further information. Information will not be released to a third party without written consent from the student unless it is required by federal or state law.

# Types of Accommodations

HFCDHP will provide accommodations as mandated under the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. As each disability and the circumstances surrounding each request for accommodations are unique, accommodations for students will be determined on a case-by-case basis. The following is a list of potential accommodations, which may be granted based on the student’s disability and how it impacts him or her in a post-graduate environment. Modifications and accommodations for qualified students with disabilities may include, but are not limited to:

* Test accommodations
* Note taker accommodation
* Sign language interpreter
* Alternative text
* Alternative course materials
* Adaptive equipment
* Removal of architectural barriers
* Special furniture

# Student Academic Accommodation Grievance Procedures

HFCDHP determines academic accommodations through a deliberative and interactive process involving the appropriate members of the university community, and, of course, the individuals with disabilities themselves.

We recognize that disagreements may occur about the appropriateness of accommodations. We also acknowledge that even with the best efforts a problem may occur. To this end, we recommend a range of options to resolve concerns about accommodation and eligibility decisions, services received, treatment by university staff and faculty, and university policies related to students with disabilities.

Issues often occur because of misunderstandings, miscommunication, or lack of education around disability. In these instances, clarification and effective communication can lead to a quick and effective solution. If a problem arises regarding the delivery of accommodations, determination about accommodations, or other issues of access, we encourage students to reach out to the Associate Director of HFCDHP immediately.

WesternU will attempt to serve our students’ needs and concerns through internal resolution as a first step. Of course, students have multiple options available for grieving their concerns (more information can be found in the Grievance Procedures section of our webpage, <https://www.westernu.edu/cdhp/grievance-procedures/>). Throughout any of these steps, students can expect to be treated with respect, receive a timely response, not experience any form of retaliation, and have their concerns dealt with in a confidential manner to the greatest extent possible. The university encourages students to bring up any concerns early, give clear and detailed information, and alert the Associate Director of HFCDHP in writing.

# Resources

American Council of the Blind ([www.acb.org](http://www.acb.org))

American Diabetes Association (<https://www.diabetes.org/>)

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (<https://www.ada.gov/>)

Anxiety and Depression Association of America (<https://adaa.org/>)

Association on Higher Education and Disability (<https://www.ahead.org/home>)

Brain Injury Association (<https://www.biausa.org/>)

International Dyslexia Association (<https://dyslexiaida.org/>)

Job Accommodation Network (<https://askjan.org/>)

Learning Ally (<https://learningally.org/Solutions-for-Home/Dyslexia-Resources>)

Learning Disabilities Association of America (<https://ldaamerica.org/>)

Mental Health America (<https://mhanational.org/>)

National Association of the Deaf (<https://www.nad.org/>)

National Multiple Sclerosis Society (<https://www.nationalmssociety.org/>)

National Stroke Association (<https://www.stroke.org/>)

United Cerebral Palsy (<https://ucp.org/>)

REVISED 08/2021

1. This Section is from the United States Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights [↑](#footnote-ref-1)