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Accommodations, Resources and Services

Academic accommodations and associated resources and services are designed to provide equal access to courses and programs, but they do not guarantee an outcome or a level of achievement. Academic accommodations need to be reasonable and proportionate to the difficulties experienced by the student and they need not be provided when the accommodation would result in a fundamental alteration of the program or impose an undue financial or administrative burden on the institution. Furthermore, accommodations are not required to address a personal need such as: a personal care assistant, an individually prescribed device, or other devices or services of a personal nature.

Each accommodation is evaluated and granted individually based on the functional limitations specified in the documentation submitted by the student. Accommodations are not granted as a package. Students with disabilities are expected to meet the same standards of academic performance as other students, but may be allowed an accommodation in the manner in which performance is measured, for example, allowing extended time for testing or allowing assistive software in exams. Such accommodations are allowed so that it is academic competency which is being measured unimpeded by the student's disability and its impact.

Accommodations must be requested by a student in a timely manner which will allow ARS to review documentation, determine eligibility, and establish the accommodations. All accommodations are determined as part of an interactive and collaborative process. During such a process, ARS staff will work with a student to determine how to reasonably accommodate their specific, individual needs through possible academic adjustments and/or educational auxiliary aids.

We understand that the requirements for every class are different and since we are unable to anticipate what may be problematic issues (for which an accommodation

might be needed), we often solicit faculty input on what may or may not be feasible for a particular class.

Please note that all accommodations are open to review and where possible ARS advocates for accommodations to be developmental and assist a student towards as much independence as possible.

Fundamental Alteration to a Class or Program Delivery and Assessment Methods

There may be times that Accessibility Resources and Service the ARS requests an accommodation that a professor believes may compromise the academic integrity or create a fundamental alteration of the course and/or program. A fundamental alteration is a change that is so significant that it alters the essential nature of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages or accommodations offered. To determine whether an accommodation fundamentally alters the nature of a course, faculty should:

1. Identify the essential academic standards of the course; requirements that go to the very nature of the subject matter or that are of the utmost importance in achieving the class / program objective.
2. Articulate specific requirements that individual instructors believe are fundamental to teaching the class/ program, taking academic freedom into consideration.
3. Identify the unique qualities of the course/program in relation to its overall objectives and any program in which the course is required.
4. Engage in "reasoned deliberation" as to whether modification of the class / program would change the fundamental academic standards, and
5. Determine whether there are any options concerning the fundamental requirements of the class / program.
6. Why is the standard that the instructor believes will be lowered important to the class / program?
7. Is the standard approach the best way (or the only way) to achieve the desired academic objective?
8. Will the requested accommodation lower the academic standards of the class / program?
9. Can a different method or requirement that will not be altered by the accommodation achieve the required academic or pedagogical result?
10. If not, why not?

The decision to deny an accommodation should not be taken lightly. Institutions have found themselves in legal trouble for devoting insufficient thought to the conclusion that a requested accommodation should be denied.

Answering the above questions and documenting the process will allow instructors to

establish that they have carefully evaluated the awarded accommodation and the course/program objectives. Failure to provide a reasonable accommodation to a student with a disability is a violation of law, putting in jeopardy an institution's federal funding. However, disability laws also require that students with disabilities meet the "essential," "academic," and "technical" standards of the class / program.

Need More Help?

If, at any time, you have questions about any accommodation and the determination process you are encouraged to [Contact ARS](#) [1].

Source URL: <https://ars.unc.edu/accommodations>

Links

[1] <https://ars.unc.edu/about-ars/contact-us>