

POLICY ON STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Texas Christian University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding students with disabilities.

For purposes of this policy, a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

TCU does not discriminate on the basis of disability, including in the admission process or with access to, or treatment of, or participation in, its programs and activities. No otherwise qualified individual shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in the services, programs and activities of TCU solely on the basis of a disability. TCU shall make reasonable accommodations in policies, practices, and procedures, when the accommodations are necessary to afford the opportunity for equal access to educational programs, activities and services to qualified individuals with disabilities, unless the accommodations would fundamentally alter the nature of the programs, activities or services.

How to seek a disability accommodation

Accommodations are not retroactive, a student¹ seeking an accommodation under this policy should contact the Center for Academic Services-Student Disabilities Services Office ["DS Office"] as soon as possible in (or before) the academic term for which the student is seeking the accommodation; however, a student seeking a housing accommodation should contact the DS Office as soon as possible after the student has completed a Housing and Residence Life application. The DS Office is located in the Center for Academic Services, Sadler Hall Room 1010, phone number 817-257-6567.

The student must complete several steps: (1) present relevant, verifiable, professional documentation about his or her impairment and the associated limitations, (2) complete an intake packet, and (3) meet with and engage in an interactive process with designated staff in the DS Office. The student should confer with the DS Office to understand TCU's documentation guidelines and requirements, and in some situations TCU requests that the student execute an authorization permitting health care providers to discuss the student's impairment, associated functional limitations, and accommodations with the DS Office.

Information concerning a student's disability is treated in a confidential manner in accordance with University policies as well as applicable federal and state laws. Documentation presented shall be reviewed by the appropriate staff within the DS Office, who may consult with other appropriate professional(s) to evaluate whether there is a disability, to consider accommodations, and assess whether granting accommodations may fundamentally alter a TCU program or cause an undue burden. Further documentation may be required from the student to substantiate the claim of a disability or to assist the University in determining appropriate accommodations.

¹ For purposes of this policy, the term "student" includes a prospective student.

The determination of accommodations occurs following an interactive process between staff in the DS Office and the student, and each student's situation is evaluated on a case-by-case basis in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

TCU strongly encourages students with disabilities to know their rights and responsibilities and to personally engage in the interactive process referred to in this policy. It is the student's responsibility to initiate the request for accommodation, and during the interactive process, TCU ordinarily communicates directly with the student and expects the student to advocate for himself/herself. This policy is designed to empower students to advocate for themselves.

Once all steps are complete, the student's request for accommodation is reviewed by the Disabilities Services Documentation Review Committee ["Committee"], which determines whether or not the student qualifies for accommodation and, if so, what accommodations are reasonable and appropriate. Once the Committee decides, the DS Office notifies the student via his/her official TCU e-mail account and asks the student to schedule an appointment with designated staff in the DS Office to discuss the decision.

Accommodations are typically limited to a specific time period; for example, the student must renew a request for a Housing accommodation yearly and academic accommodations letters must be requested by the student each semester.

What happens after approval of a disability accommodation

If the student qualifies for a classroom accommodation, an accommodations letter is prepared by the DS Office for faculty members concerning specific, reasonable academic adjustments for the student. The student is responsible for promptly delivering the accommodation letters, conferring with faculty members, and returning signed Verification forms of the receipt of the letters to the DS Office. Accommodations take effect only after delivery of accommodations letter and conference with faculty. Please allow faculty a minimum of one week to arrange for testing accommodations.

If a student qualifies for a Housing accommodation, the DS Office notifies Residential Services of the required accommodations. Housing accommodations do not guarantee assignment to specific Residence Halls, rooms or specific roommates.

The DS Office consults with the student and with University faculty and staff to promote delivery of appropriate accommodations, and serves as liaison between the student and faculty members as needed. The student must promptly notify the DS Office if an accommodation granted by TCU is not being properly performed or is not effective.

How to file an appeal or grievance

A student who wishes to appeal a decision regarding appropriate accommodations may do so in writing to the affirmative action officer, who shall promptly and equitably decide

the appeal, at TCU Box 297090, Fort Worth, TX 76129. The affirmative action officer's decision may be appealed within seven calendar days in writing to the provost, whose decision may be appealed in writing to the chancellor within seven calendar days. At any step during such an appeal, the person requesting the appeal may confidentially consult with appropriate professionals/advisers within or outside the University.

A student who wishes to file a grievance, which is not an appeal regarding accommodations, over disability-related discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should proceed under TCU policy 1.005, whose subject is discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct and retaliation.

Designation of responsible persons

The Director for the Center for Academic Services and the Director of Employee Relations are the persons designated by the University to coordinate its efforts to comply with and carry out the responsibilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504). A qualified individual with a disability who desires assistance within the University to seek a reasonable accommodation may contact the following:

For students:

Ms. Marsha Ramsey
Director, Center for Academic Services
TCU Box 297710
Sadler Hall 1010
Fort Worth, TX 76129
817/257-6567
m.ramsey@tcu.edu

For employees:

Ms. Kristen Taylor
Director, Employee Relations
TCU Box 298200
3100 W. Berry St.
Fort Worth, TX 76129
817/257-4161
Kristen.Taylor@tcu.edu