

University of Rochester School  
of Medicine and Dentistry



**ASSISTANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**

To be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the School of Medicine and Dentistry is committed to making reasonable accommodations to assist students with documented disabilities to fulfill their educational objectives.

**ADA Eligibility for Reasonable Accommodations**

Candidates with disabilities who wish to request accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act must follow the University's procedures for verification of a disability. This procedure, in summary, requires forwarding a request for verification of ADA eligibility as well as supporting documentation to the University Disability Resources Office (UDRO).

Once the UDRO verifies an individual's ADA eligibility, it will notify the medical school's ADA coordinator. At this point the ADA coordinator will be in touch with the candidate regarding arrangements for accommodations. For further information about documentation requirements and the UDRO process, please call Kathleen M. Sweetland, University ADA Coordinator, at (585) 275-9125.

**Procedures for Requesting Accommodations**

A student with a disability requests verification of ADA eligibility by the University Disability Resources Office (UDRO). The student will be notified of the verification. Once a student's ADA eligibility has been verified, there is no need to repeat the UDRO process unless the student's situation or needs change.

The UDRO notifies the medical school's ADA coordinator about a student's ADA eligibility. Any confidential records and documentation submitted by the student to the UDRO to support determination of ADA eligibility will be retained and kept confidential in the UDRO office. The medical school's ADA coordinator will receive from the UDRO a notice of the individual's ADA eligibility and guidelines related to reasonable accommodations appropriate for the individual's needs.

It is the responsibility of the student to request needed accommodations. Once a request is made, the student will sign a release authorizing the school's ADA coordinator to send letters to course directors specified by the student. Unless a request is made and the student authorizes release of the need for accommodations to appropriate others (faculty, staff, etc.), the medical school will not proceed with arranging accommodations. No retroactive consideration will be given to students who fail to request or complete the approval process.

Notification to faculty and others about a student's need for accommodations will contain a statement of the student's ADA eligibility as well as guidelines for

necessary accommodations. No information about the student's diagnosis, condition or history will be available in any way to course instructors or others from whom a student might request an accommodation.

The Medical School's ADA coordinator will maintain a folder containing all release forms signed by the student as well as eligibility and accommodation information forwarded by the UDRO. Such materials will be retained separate from the student's academic file, and access to such material will be limited and appropriate confidentiality will be maintained. The school will not release details of a student's diagnosis or fact that accommodations were provided (for example to residency programs, etc.) without the permission of the student.

Students will be apprised of ADA eligibility within the time frame that is established by the University Disability Resources Office. If a request for eligibility verification is made at the start of an academic period, temporary accommodations will be provided, pending the verification process. Because of the number of verifications being processed at the beginning of academic periods, students are urged to submit their requests for eligibility verification and accommodations as far in advance as possible. Advance preparation will ensure the smoothest availability of needed accommodations.

Students with concerns about eligibility verification decisions and provision of accommodations may appeal the decisions according to the process established by the UDRO and the medical school. Contact the School of Medicine and Dentistry (SMD) ADA coordinator for further information about this process.

### **Resources to Assist Students**

Whenever a person with an ADA eligible disability begins a new activity or program, it may be necessary to consider whether new or different reasonable accommodations will be necessary. The School of Medicine and Dentistry strongly urges ADA eligible students to plan ahead for accommodations. The medical school's ADA coordinator as well as the school's Ombudsperson for Students with Disabilities can assist students in such planning, as well as in related matters. In addition, the University has developed a variety of offices and services across the institution with responsibility for ensuring systems and a culture that invites and fosters opportunity and achievement for individuals with disabilities.

### **Among available resources are:**

The latest version of the SMD's Technical Standards.

A copy of Classroom Accommodations, A Resource Guide for Students with Disabilities, updated annually and distributed from the University Disability Resources Office (UDRO).

The University's Disability Policies and Procedures, available on the UDRO web page as well as in print from the UDRO staff.

The SMD's Ombudsperson for Student with Disabilities: Matthew J. Starr, MPH, Rochester Prevention Research Center, (585) 276-2122.

Students with learning disabilities are encouraged to schedule an appointment with Dean Vicki Roth, Assistant Dean, Learning Assistance Services (275-9049) in Latimore 107 (on the River Campus) to explore any needs for additional accommodations, given their learning style.

Review the procedures and documentation requirements for requesting accommodations for the USMLE.

### **ADA OMBUDSPERSON**

The School of Medicine and Dentistry's ADA Ombudsperson, Matthew J. Starr, MPH, is available to assist with issues related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), student disability and illness, and accommodations requested of the School of Medicine and Dentistry. Because of the sensitive nature of some of these issues, the ADA Ombudsperson is a resource in addition to, and separate from, the ADA-related services provided by the School of Medicine and Dentistry's administration.

Among the ways the Ombudsperson may be able to provide assistance are:

- To explain the application, if any, of the ADA to a personal situation;
- To discuss the decision whether to disclose a disability to the School of Medicine and Dentistry;
- To identify disability resources in the University and the Rochester community;
- To explain and interpret University and School of Medicine ADA-related requirements, procedures and documentation;
- To advocate on a student's behalf with respect to the provision of ADA-related accommodations, and
- To assist and participate with students, faculty and medical school administration in continuous quality improvement with respect to ADA-related policies and procedures.

The ADA Ombudsperson, Matthew Starr can be reached by video telephone (276-2122) or email ([matthew\\_starr@urmc.rochester.edu](mailto:matthew_starr@urmc.rochester.edu))

### **Additional Student Responsibilities**

Students will be responsible for contacting each course director to review their individual needs. The ADA Coordinator should be contacted if the students encounter difficulty in accessing the accommodations.

The ADA Coordinator will meet with each student once a semester to review the accommodations and any requests for modifications.

### **Assistance for Students Who Become Disabled After They Matriculate**

The same procedures will be followed to assist students who become disabled after they matriculate. If a student is suspected of having a learning disability, the student will be referred to the Learning Assistance Services for a preliminary assessment. If there is sufficient evidence to warrant a full neuropsychological evaluation, the student will be responsible for the cost of the evaluation. The student retains the right to withhold the results of any evaluations from the school. However, if accommodations are desired, appropriate documentation would need to be provided.

A letter will be sent to the SMD's Financial Aid Office requesting an adjustment to the student's financial aid budget (loan) if the student has limited resources to cover the cost of the evaluation. As is the case for the neuropsychological evaluations, students will be responsible for the cost of all assessments to document other ADA eligible disabilities. The exception to this policy will be when the Medical Student Promotions and Review Board mandates; as a condition for continued matriculation, that a student be evaluated. In such instances the Medical School will be responsible for all related costs and will have access to the full reports.