

Resources for Students with Disabilities Seeking Accommodation--UME 710

POLICY CONTENTS

Category: UME	Implementation: 5/1/2021 Last update: 6/1/2022
Additional Details	Responsible Office: Office of Student Affairs
Contacts: Maria Sheakley, PhD Maria.sheakley@med.wmich.edu	Responsible person: Associate Dean for Student Affairs

LCME Standards

10.5 - Technical Standards

Scope

MD Degree Program

Policy Statement

Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine (WMed) is committed to providing an affirming and inclusive environment for students with disabilities, as well as cultivating a diverse healthcare workforce and student body. The policy establishes how WMed determines who is a qualified student with a disability, what accommodations may be appropriate, how students may appeal accommodations decisions, and the responsible parties in these processes.

It is the policy of WMed to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities, as necessary to afford them an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, WMed courses, programs, and activities. A qualified student is a student with a disability who meets WMed's admissions standards and Technical Standards for Admission, Advancement and Graduation (see policy UME416), with or without the benefit of reasonable accommodation.

Under WMed's non-discrimination policy (see policy GEN03), a "reasonable accommodation" is a modification to WMed's practices, policies and/or procedures that allows a qualified student with a disability to have equal access to WMed's educational program and activities but does not result in a fundamental alteration of WMed's educational program, activities or impose an undue burden, or create a direct threat to the health or safety of the student or others.

Decisions regarding reasonable accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis, in compliance with [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) guidelines. Because WMed conducts an individualized assessment of each request, there is no standard accommodation for any particular type of disability. WMed is committed to protecting the privacy of all students throughout this process. If at any time a student requires accommodation, it is their responsibility to self-identify and follow the procedures and policy below for seeking accommodation.

Accommodation Procedure:

Step 1: Complete the Request for Reasonable Accommodations

Students may request accommodations at any point during the program, however accommodations are not retroactive. Please contact the Director of Student Life and Well-Being at accommodations@med.wmich.edu as soon as possible (upon admission is best) to ensure that eligibility for accommodations is determined and accommodations are in place prior to the start of medical school.

- An accepted applicant or student can complete the '[Request for Reasonable Accommodation](#)' Form to initiate the process of requesting Reasonable Accommodations to meet the Technical Standards (see policy UME416).
- Contact Director of Student Life and Well-Being at accommodations@med.wmich.edu at any time to request more information about accommodations or receive assistance with the Request for Reasonable Accommodation Form.

Step 2: Meet with the Director of Student Life and Well-Being

Contact the Director of Student Life and Well-Being at accommodations@med.wmich.edu to request an appointment. Follow

up will typically occur within 5 business days to schedule an appointment to engage with the student in the interactive process to better understand what barriers impact the student's full inclusion in the program and/or ability to meet the Technical Standards. Meetings can take place via phone, Teams, or in person.

Step 3: Provide Disability Information

Guidance will be provided regarding the extent and type of records needed during the initial meeting with the Director of Student Life and Well-Being. Students who do not have documentation of their condition, and/or who believe they have an undiagnosed condition, should contact the Director of Student Life and Well-Being for consultation.

The Director of Student Life and Well-Being may request that the student provide medical/educational records regarding the need for the requested accommodation when the adjustments required to provide accommodation or the reasonableness of a requested accommodation are not readily apparent.

The disability documentation should be created by a healthcare professional with the relevant training and expertise to diagnose and/or treat the particular medical condition or conditions which are the basis of the accommodation request. Disability documentation should include the diagnosis/condition, nature, functional limitations, impact, and duration of a disability, and should be written on official letterhead of the provider. In rare circumstances, and at its expense, WMed may ask a student to obtain an additional medical assessment or medical documentation review from a healthcare professional of WMed's choice.

Step 4: Determine Eligibility and Accommodations

Generally, accommodations for didactic and/or non-clinical environments are determined via an expedited review process by the Chair of the Accommodations Committee in consultation with the Director of Student Life and Well-Being. The Accommodations Committee is composed of the Chair, the Director of Student Life and Well-Being, one clinical faculty member, one non-clinical faculty member, and one member of the examinations team. Accommodations in clinical and/or laboratory spaces, or otherwise at the discretion of the Director of Student Life and Well-Being, will be determined by the Accommodations Committee. The Director of Student Life and Well-Being will work directly with the corresponding faculty and/or curriculum administrators to ensure that the requested accommodations uphold the essential features of the curriculum and technical standards. The participation of all relevant parties in the interactive process including the student, Director of Student Life and Well-Being, and faculty is essential.

All accommodation reviews will take into consideration the information provided by the student, provided documentation/records, the academic and technical requirements of WMed, and the recommended specific accommodations, if any. Consideration should be given to the specific accommodation requested by the student and health care provider unless it is deemed not appropriate because other reasonable accommodations are available. Accommodations recommended by healthcare providers may be accepted or rejected in making the final determination regarding accommodations. Additional documentation or clarification from the student may be required during this process. If provided documentation is deemed by the Director of Student Life and Well-Being or Accommodations Committee to be complete, but the committee requires an additional independent evaluation, WMed bears the cost. The second evaluator must be a qualified professional and is of the committee's choosing. The student may request additional review if there is additional information or a justified concern that the defined process was not followed.

Members of the Accommodations Committee must recuse themselves from participating in the review of students for whom they have provided sensitive health, psychiatric, or psychological care; served as the student's private tutor or designated individual mentor; or otherwise have a conflict of interest related to the student.

Step 5: Accessing Accommodations

Accommodation Approval: If a student is eligible for accommodations, the Director of Student Life and Well-Being will provide the student with a copy of their accommodation decision letter that describes their eligibility for services. The student can also meet with the Director of Student Life and Well-Being to review policies and procedures regarding the provision of accommodations. Established procedures for each level of the medical curriculum are in place to ensure successful implementation of the accommodations.

Accommodation Denial: If the requested accommodations cannot be provided, the Director of Student Life and Well-Being will provide the decision and rationale to the student in writing in an accommodation decision letter.

Step 6: Informal Resolution and Appeals Process

If a student's accommodations are not being properly applied, the student should first address the issue with the Director of Student Life and Well-Being, who will make every effort to resolve the matter. If the Director of Student Life and Well-Being is notified that a student's approved accommodations are not being implemented, the Director of Student Life and Well-Being is required to notify the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. If no resolution results, or if direct contact with the Director of Student Life and Well-Being is inappropriate under the circumstances, the student should initiate an appeal.

The student may formally appeal any Accommodations decision. To initiate the appeals process, the student must file the appeal within 60 days of the event(s) giving rise to the complaint. Appeals must be filed in writing and include the following:

- a. The student's name, email address and phone number
- b. A full description of the problem
- c. A description of what efforts have been made to resolve the issue informally
- d. A statement of the remedy requested

Appeals for didactic and/or non-clinical accommodations that were granted by the Chair of the Admissions committee in an expedited review will go to the Accommodations Committee for review. Appeals for any accommodations that were granted by the Accommodations Committee will go to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs for review.

On appeal, the Accommodations Committee or Associate Dean for Student Affairs will review the appeal, the meeting minutes for the specific accommodation request, and any documentation that was available to the Director of Student Life and Well-Being. All of this information is also available to the student making the appeal.

If the Committee or Associate Dean finds the accommodation decision resulted from unfair, inappropriate, or incomplete application of the process for determining accommodation, they will work with the Director of Student Life and Well-Being to amend the decision of the Committee and inform the student and Accommodations Committee of the revised accommodation. The Accommodations Committee applies the new decision and notifies all parties of the revised decision via the normal notification processes.

If the Committee or Associate Dean finds that the accommodation decision resulted from fair and complete application of the process for determining accommodation, they inform the student in writing that the appeal cannot be granted, and the appeal process is terminated.

Accommodations by Other Entities

WMed cannot guarantee that accommodations provided by WMed will be provided by other entities, such as the NBME for USMLE examinations.

Privacy

Requests for accommodations, the minutes and actions of the Accommodations Committee, and the accommodations that are provided by the medical school are considered confidential. Students are permitted access to the meeting minutes for their case upon request. Information about accommodations, including requests for accommodations, is protected under FERPA (see policy UME518). This information is provided to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, to faculty and staff as needed, but is not reported on transcripts or the Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE) and is not released to outside persons or entities, except in response to an order from a court of competent jurisdiction or otherwise required by law.

Non-Retaliation

Requesting disability accommodation will not adversely affect a student's opportunity to enjoy equal terms, benefits, privileges, or conditions of WMed's programs, including social or recreational activities. It is a violation of WMed's policy to take adverse action against a student based on a student's disability status, request for accommodation, or filing of a complaint. If you feel you have been retaliated against for requesting accommodations, please contact the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

Approval

Maria Sheakley, PhD

Associate Dean for Student Affairs _____ Date: _____

Procedures

Additional Contacts

Forms

Related Information

History