

Disability Support Services FAQs for Students

What is Disability Support Services (DSS)?

The Disability Support Services (DSS) office at Concordia University, Nebraska works with students, faculty, and the campus community to coordinate accommodations that allow for equal access and opportunity for all students.

How do I get connected with DSS?

Students are always welcome to ask about resources. Interested students need to speak with the DSS Coordinator about their situation and the potential need for accommodations and other resources. Accommodations and other assistance cannot be coordinated otherwise. **Students *must* initiate this contact.**

Disability Support Services

800 N. Columbia Ave.

Link 143 (office is located on the south end of the Link Library)

Seward, NE 68434

Phone: 402-643-7187

Fax: 402-643-4218

Email: bethany.landrey@cune.edu or ada@cune.edu

Who qualifies as disabled under the law?

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 defines an individual with a disability as a person who:

1. Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of that person
2. Has a record of such impairment, or
3. Is regarded as having such an impairment

A disability may be evident, such as a visual impairment, hearing impairment, or mobility impairment. Or a disability may be something not visible, such as a learning disability, ADD/ADHD, a psychological disability, autism, or a chronic condition such as Crohn's disease, fibromyalgia, Parkinson's, etc.

Any disability, as defined by Section 504, may be qualified to use resources facilitated by DSS.

What is the process for requesting and receiving accommodations?

Students who have a documented disability are responsible for contacting DSS to request accommodations. When making a request, students must complete the following steps:

1. Complete and submit an Disability Support Services Intake Request Form to the DSS Coordinator

2. Submit appropriate documentation (See Documentation Guidelines)
3. Make an appointment with the DSS coordinator to review and discuss accommodations, complete relevant paperwork, etc.
4. DSS reviews and assesses the granting of reasonable and appropriate accommodations
5. Once approved, notifications are sent to faculty, and implementation of approved accommodations begins
6. Continued communication with the DSS Coordinator concerning the accommodations for each academic semester.

When should students make a request?

For initial requests, students should contact the DSS Coordinator well in advance of their class start date. This allows time for all relevant documentation and paperwork to be processed, for a meeting to be scheduled, and allows time for accommodations to be put into place.

Students must self-identify and initiate the request with DSS.

** Should an issue arise in the middle of the semester/term, students should contact the DSS Coordinator as soon as possible to request same-semester assistance. ***We strive to respond to requests in a timely manner; however, please note that certain types of accommodations may take up to several weeks to implement after being requested. Accommodations are not retroactive.***

How are accommodation decisions made for students with disabilities?

DSS determines accommodations on an individual, case-by-case basis. When evaluating a request for accommodations, the following are considered:

- Barriers resulting from the interaction between the disability and campus courses, programs, services and activities;
- Possible accommodations that may remove the barriers;
- Whether or not the individual has equal access without accommodations;
- Whether or not the essential elements of the program or course are fundamentally altered by the accommodations;
- Reasonable and unreasonable accommodation guidelines

The student is responsible for initiating contact with DSS to request accommodations and provide appropriate documentation. If the student does not initiate this process, accommodations are not provided.

Any cost associated with obtaining and/or providing documentation is the responsibility of the student.

What are accommodations?

Accommodations are modifications to the ways in which things are usually done. The purpose of effective accommodations is to remove barriers and provide students with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate and benefit from college. Some examples of possible accommodations are as follows:

- Changes to a classroom environment or task, such as extended time for a test, private testing location
- Removal of architectural barriers, such as adapting a classroom to meet the needs of a student who uses a wheelchair
- Exceptions to policies, practices or procedures such as priority registration or accessing assignments early
- Provision of auxiliary aids and services such as providing a sign language interpreter, providing a notetaker.

In accordance with the law, there are also some modifications that Concordia University, Nebraska does not provide. Examples include:

- Personal devices such as wheelchairs, walkers, scooters, etc.
- Personal services, such as private tutoring or personal attendants
- Accommodations that would place others at health's or safety's risk as a result of the accommodation
- Modifications that lower or change course standards or program standards
- Modifications that would change the essence of a course or program
- Services that create an undue burden – administratively or financially

What is considered an unreasonable accommodation?

Concordia University, Nebraska is not required to offer or provide an accommodation, to admit or continue to admit an individual with a disability to any course, program, service or activity, or to provide educational opportunities and other services when:

- The educational standards or mission of Concordia University, Nebraska would be substantially altered;
- The nature of the course, program, service or activity would be fundamentally altered;
- The student is not otherwise qualified (with or without accommodations) to meet the academic and technical standards required for admission or participation in a course, program, service or activity;
- An undue financial or administrative hardship would be created by the accommodation
- The individual or accommodation would pose a direct threat to the health and/or safety of self or others