

**SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
EEO/INSTITUTIONAL ACCESS AND EQUITY**

POLICY NUMBER: 2.4

REVISED AS OF: January 25, 2016

NEEDS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- A. It is the policy of the University to encourage qualified persons with disabilities to participate in University activities, programs, services and as applicants for admission or employment. The University will not discriminate or deny access or participation in its activities, programs, services, admissions or employment on the basis of an individual's disability, on the need to provide reasonable accommodation for a disabled person, on a perception of disability, or because an individual is affiliated with a disabled person
- B. A person with a disability is one who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a "major life activity," has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. With respect to employment, a qualified person with a disability is one who, "with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the 'job' in question." A qualified student or applicant with a disability is one who, with or without reasonable accommodation, meets the academic standards requisite to admission to the University's educational program.
- C. This policy shall guide facility design, modification, and location of classes and events, whether permanent or temporary, to assure accessibility and accommodation in integrated settings appropriate to the needs of disabled persons. Where structural design may prevent accessibility, alternative methods or relocation may be employed to secure a more appropriate accessible and integrated site.
- D. A qualified individual with a disability is one who does not pose a "direct threat" which is defined as a significant risk of substantial harm to the health and safety of himself/herself or others that cannot be eliminated or reduced by a reasonable accommodation.
- E. The University shall endeavor to provide special teaching aids, services and integrated reasonable accommodations to assure that qualified disabled persons are not deprived of opportunity or access to participate in classes, activities, programs, services and employment.
- F. In accordance with applicable laws, the University shall provide reasonable accommodations to an otherwise qualified individual with a disability, unless such accommodation imposes an undue hardship on the institution. An undue hardship is an action that requires significant difficulty or expense or fundamentally alters the nature of a service or program. A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to the work or academic environment that enables a qualified individual with a disability to enjoy equal employment and academic opportunities. Examples of

reasonable accommodations may include making existing facilities accessible, job restructuring, modified work schedules, reassignment to a vacant position, acquisition or modification of equipment, and the provision of qualified readers and interpreters. During the accommodation process, the preference of the individual with a disability will be considered, but the University reserves the right to make the final selection of the accommodation that best serves the needs of the individual and the University. All determinations of reasonable accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis.

- G. Any work alterations made outside of the procedures outlined in this policy will not be considered reasonable accommodations under applicable laws. Temporary, non-chronic impairments of short duration with little or no residual effects (such as the common cold, seasonal or common influenza, a sprained joint, minor or non-chronic gastrointestinal disorders, or a broken bone that is expected to heal completely) usually will not substantially limit a major life activity and be considered a disability.

PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITY

- A. The President has overall responsibility for development and implementation of appropriate plans and programs relevant to this policy. The Office of Institutional Access and Equity shall serve as the coordinator to assist in the development and implementation of University policy and programs regarding the needs of persons with disabilities.
- B. The Provost and Vice Presidents are responsible for development and implementation of plans and programs in their areas of responsibility and for monitoring compliance.
- C. Deans, directors and managers are responsible for development, implementation, and/or monitoring of plans and programs in their areas. These include, but are not limited to, Personnel, Institutional Access and Equity, Admissions, Student Life, academic departments and other academic units.
- D. The Office of Institutional Access and Equity should be consulted as needed during the accommodation process to ensure compliance with this policy. The Director of Institutional Access and Equity has been designated as the University's ADA/504 Coordinator and is available to the University community for guidance and counseling.
- E. Departments are responsible for funding and coordinating reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities in their areas.

PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

A. Employees (Faculty and Staff)

Employees initiate the reasonable accommodation process by submitting an Employee Reasonable Accommodation Request Form and an Employee Documentation of Disability Form to the ADA/504 Coordinator in the Office of Institutional Access and Equity. The Documentation of Disability Form must be completed by an appropriate and qualified health care professional and

be submitted before accommodations can be considered. Once the ADA/504 Coordinator establishes that the employee is a qualified individual with a disability, he/she will engage in an interactive process with the employee and his/her supervisor to identify and discuss potential reasonable accommodations that will enable the individual to perform the essential functions of the position or to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment.

In compliance with applicable laws and regulations, medical documents relating to a request for a reasonable accommodation will be treated as confidential and will not be included in the employee's personnel file. Such records will only be shared with University employees on a need-to-know basis in order to implement the accommodation or with others as required by law.

- B. Applicants for Employment
Applicants for employment should contact the Department of Human Resources to request reasonable accommodations during the hiring process.
- C. Students
Students should contact the Office of Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies to request reasonable accommodations. To receive academic accommodations, students must register with the Office and submit appropriate medical documentation.
- D. Visitors
Departments are responsible for providing reasonable accommodations for visitors with disabilities. Visitors to the University who require an accommodation should contact the department sponsoring the program or service that brings the visitor to campus.

COMPLAINTS

Violations of this policy or complaints of discrimination on the basis of a disability can be filed with the Office of Institutional Access and Equity. Complaints will be resolved in accordance with the procedures outlined in the University Grievance Policy and Procedure, Policy 2.8.