

COMPLIANCE WITH EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION REGULATIONS FOR DISABLED INDIVIDUALS

INTRODUCTION

UMass Dartmouth undertakes affirmative steps to provide equal employment and educational opportunities to qualified disabled individuals. A “qualified” disabled person is defined as one who can perform the essential functions of the job with or without a reasonable accommodation. “Reasonable Accommodation” is defined as an accommodation that does not pose undue hardship on the University. “Undue hardship” is a practice, procedure, or financial cost which unreasonably interferes with business operations at the University.

In accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), UMass Dartmouth defines a disabled individual as “any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person’s major life activities, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment”. These terms are defined as follows:

- a. “major life activities” include, but are not limited to, functions such as caring for one’s self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. For the purpose of Section 503 of the ADA, primary attention is given to those life activities that affect employability;
- b. “has a record of such impairment” includes records which predate the relevant law and includes disabilities with which the individual is no longer afflicted; and
- c. “is regarded as having such an impairment” refers to those individuals who are perceived as having a disability, regardless of whether the individual has a disability.

OBJECTIVES

It is the policy of UMass Dartmouth that no qualified disabled person shall, on the basis of his or her disability, be subjected to discrimination in employment or admission under any program or activity operated or contracted by this University. The specific objectives of the campus EEO/AA program under this policy include the following:

1. To publicize the legal obligation and commitment of the campus in the area of EEO/AA for disabled people;
2. To promote a supportive atmosphere for disabled individuals;
3. To provide mechanisms to identify personnel policies and practices that may have a negative impact on disabled employees and which are not essential to the operation of the institution, and to correct these policies and practices;
4. To ensure that qualified disabled individuals, both on campus and off campus, are recruited for position openings;
5. To provide formal mechanisms for resolution of complaints of discrimination or requests for reasonable accommodation from disabled employees or applicants (*see Appendix F*);

6. To ensure that there is ongoing monitoring and support of these EEO/AA initiatives; and
7. To ensure that the University does not participate in any contractual or other relationship with an entity or individual (including, but not limited to, labor unions) who discriminates against qualified disabled individuals.

RESPONSIBILITY

The Chancellor has the ultimate responsibility for campus compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, as well as implementing their regulations.

The Assistant Chancellor for EODO has been delegated administrative responsibility for monitoring EEO/AA as it relates to the disabled. Responsibilities in this area include:

1. Advising the Chancellor, the Vice/Assistant Chancellors and other supervisors about relevant laws and their implementation on this campus; and
2. Carrying out the specific objectives of initiatives that are established.

The Assistant Chancellor for EODO shall be responsible for implementing the University's Equal Opportunity & Anti-harassment Complaint Procedures (*Appendix D*), as it relates to disabled employees, applicants and students.

Department Chairpersons are responsible for:

1. Adhering to the campus EEO/AA policy and procedure;
2. Promoting a supportive atmosphere for disabled students/employees;
3. Bringing problems that cannot easily be resolved involving disabled students/employees to the attention of the Assistant Chancellor for EODO; and
4. Attending informational meetings and/or training sessions regarding EEO/AA policies or procedures.

The Director of Human Resources is responsible for promoting a supportive atmosphere for disabled employees and individuals seeking employment opportunities.

ACCESSIBILITY

The University is committed to improving its accessibility for persons with disabilities. A vast majority of the Dartmouth campus is accessible to persons with disabilities. Widened doorways, accessible bathrooms and facilities, walkways between buildings, reserved parking for HP and V plated cars, automatic doors, braille labeled accessible elevators and having many volume controlled telephones

throughout the campus are just a few ways in which UMass Dartmouth strives to become fully accessible to persons with disabilities.

Disabled Student Services

Disabled Student Services, located in Group I Room 016, was founded in 1979 and serves students with both learning and physical disabilities. The office's main objective is to lessen the impact of the disability on the student. Services provided by the office include alternative testing, note taking, reading and writing assistance, typing assistance, peer and professional counseling, course work assistance, advocacy, sign language interpreters, and much more.

One goal of the Office of Disabled Student Services is to function as a faculty resource in offering students equity and excellence in education, maximizing each student's educational potential while helping him or her develop and maintain independence. Disabled Student Services' philosophy is one that encourages self-awareness, self-determination, self-advocacy, and independence in an accessible environment. The office works with faculty, staff, and students on campus to ensure that appropriate academic adjustments are made that allow all students an equal footing inside the classroom and around campus.

While the client population of Disabled Student Services continues to grow each year, the staff continues to work with the students and develop their expertise in order to ensure a successful college experience for all students.

ADA IMPROVEMENTS

During the last year, the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth completed many improvements continuing its commitment to provide a barrier free campus for all persons. The following is a list of the major project access enhancements that have been initiated since our 2002-2003 Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Plan.

Library, Campus Center & Auditorium

- ❖ Installation of HC Pushbuttons to 1st floor restrooms
- ❖ Upgraded to be fully ADA compliant per new ADA regulations

Admissions, Tripp Athletic Center, Group I & Group II

- ❖ Installed and resurfaced entrance concrete slab HC ramps leading to entrance doors

Library & Charlton College of Business

- ❖ Increased handicapped parking spaces

Group I & Group II

- ❖ Installed and upgraded fire alarms for the audio and sight impaired

The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth will continue to include handicapped accessible tables for wheelchair users in all classroom renovations.