

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS DARTMOUTH
Procedure for Accommodating Students with Disabilities in Housing
Office of Housing & Residential Life

One goal of the Office of Equal Opportunity, Diversity & Outreach is to coordinate and monitor the University's services and programs to achieve equal opportunity, including compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504). The Assistant Chancellor for Equal Opportunity, Diversity & Outreach serves as the University's ADA and Section 504 Coordinator to ensure equal opportunity to all qualified disabled individuals.

In accordance with Section 504 and the ADA, UMass Dartmouth defines a qualified 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, and learning.
- 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.
- 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.

The ADA Coordinator works with divisions and areas within the University to ensure compliance with the ADA and Section 504, including Disabled Student Services, Counseling and Housing. The ADA Coordinator works with various representatives throughout the University community to make a good faith effort that appropriate and other adjustments are made that afford all students an equal footing inside the classroom, in housing and around campus.

Eligibility for Reasonable Housing Accommodations

By law, students with a disability do not have to self-disclose or register with the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS) or the Office of Housing & Residential Life. If, on the other hand, a student is seeking housing accommodations or adjustments, he/she must contact the Office of Housing & Residential Life during the established time period to request services or accommodations for the upcoming academic year. All housing accommodations are determined on a **case-by-case basis** by the Office of Housing & Residential Life.

A student requesting housing accommodations must:

- Disclose his/her disability as it concerns housing needs.
- Complete an ADA Reasonable Housing Accommodation Request Form (See Attachment A).
- Provide medical documentation that specifically addresses the need for housing accommodation(s). Documentation should be typed or printed on letterhead, dated, signed and legible with the name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator or medical provider. All documents need to be recent: should be within six (6) months for psychiatric disorders and within twelve (12) months for other disabilities. Most importantly, the documentation should clearly spell out why it is essential that the accommodation be granted as it pertains to housing. This documentation must be submitted within the established

timeframe along with the ADA Reasonable Housing Accommodation Request Form to the Director of Housing & Residential Life at the Elmwood Hall Office.

- If necessary, participate in a conversation with the Office of Housing & Residential Life to determine a reasonable and appropriate accommodation(s).
- Request reasonable housing accommodations on an annual basis, within the established timeframes designated by the Office of Housing & Residential Life, following all of the steps outlined above.

Staff within the Office of Housing & Residential Life will:

- Review the student's submitted medical documentation provided by a certified evaluator(s)/medical provider(s) and ADA Reasonable Housing Accommodation Request Form.
- Request additional information/clarification from student and /or evaluator/medical provider as necessary to process housing accommodation request.
- If necessary, participate in a conversation with the student to learn as much as possible about the requested accommodation, as well as determine a reasonable and appropriate accommodation(s).
- Contact student as to eligibility or status of application within ten (10) business days upon receipt of the application and medical documentation.
- Decide what housing accommodation(s) will be granted for only one (1) academic year.

When there is a Disagreement

If a student challenges an offered accommodation(s) from the Office of Housing & Residential Life that has been determined to be reasonable and appropriate, the University will make every effort to resolve the issue within five (5) business days by the following procedure:

1. The student must, within two (2) business days of receipt of Housing's decision on the housing accommodation request, present to the ADA Coordinator, or designee, within the Office of Equal Opportunity, Diversity & Outreach, a written statement that reflects the disagreement about his/her requested housing accommodation(s). He/she should clearly express their concerns about the offered accommodation(s). The issues expressed by the student must be outlined in detail, along with what may be some alternatives.

2. The ADA Coordinator, or designee, will attempt to resolve the issue within three (3) business days of receiving the student's written disagreement statement. Every effort will be made to resolve the disagreement as expeditiously as possible. The ADA Coordinator's decision is final.

It is the policy of UMass Dartmouth not to discriminate against any applicant for admission or employment, or against any employee, or in any educational program, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, veteran's status, disability, gender, or sexual orientation. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Assistant Chancellor for Equal Opportunity, Diversity & Outreach, Foster Administration Building, Room 324, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, MA 02747-2300. Telephone 508-999-8008 or TTY 508-999-9250. Inquiries concerning the application of nondiscrimination policies may also be referred to the Regional Director, Office of Civil Rights, John W. McCormack Post Office & Courthouse, Room 701, Boston MA 01209-4457. Telephone 617-223-9662 or TTY 617-223-9695.

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