Services for Students with Disabilities
Guidebook for Faculty and Staff
Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science
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I. Disability Support at Rosalind Franklin University

At Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science, students with disabilities are welcomed and supported in reaching their full academic potential. Disability is regarded as a form of the rich human diversity that we celebrate as a university. Students with disabilities should feel respected, safe, and protected in all elements of their educational experience.

All questions or concerns regarding disability support and requests for accommodations should be directed to the ADA Coordinator:

   Director for Academic Support  
   HSB L.675  847.578.8482  
   Ada.coordinator@rosalindfranklin.edu

II. Definition of Disability

A person with a disability is defined as any person who (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, (2) has a record of such impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such impairment (ADA, 2016).

Examples of major life activities include breathing, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, working, learning, eating, reading, concentrating, and thinking.

III. Relevant Laws and Governing Agencies

A. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973)

Protects the rights of persons with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. The Office of Civil Rights enforces Section 504.

B. Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)

Title II

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits discrimination based on disability in all services, programs, and activities of state and local governments, including public universities and colleges. The Office of Civil Rights enforces Title II.

Note: Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science is not a public university.

Title III

Title III applies to entities that provide public accommodations, i.e., services to the public. Private colleges and universities are covered under Title III, which is enforced by the US Department of Justice. The requirements of Title III in the educational context are similar to Section 504 and Title II.
C. Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (2008)

This law substantially increased the number of individuals eligible for disability protection under the law by expanding the definition of disability.

Note: Section 504 and Title II and III cover students who are qualified for an educational program. At the postsecondary level, a student is qualified if he or she is able to meet the essential academic requirements and technical standards, with or without accommodations, required for admission and participation in the program.

IV. Universal Course Design

Many of the barriers that students with disabilities (and all students) face can be reduced or eliminated through thoughtful course design. The implementation of universal design practices fosters a culture of inclusion and support. Best practices in universal design include the following strategies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Practice</th>
<th>Student Benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Posting lecture slides/notes prior to class</td>
<td>Students can prepare for class by creating context for learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helps students to create structure and organization of content</td>
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<tr>
<td>Posting supplemental course materials</td>
<td>Allows students to engage with the content in a way that matches their learning style</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helps students to make connections and consider multiple perspectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Posting discussion questions prior to class</td>
<td>Encourages students to set goals for learning, increases attention, and improves the likelihood for creating durable memory and deep understandings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including cooperative learning activities in class</td>
<td>Students can actively engage with content, gain multiple perspectives, and practice in a non-threatening environment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helps students to be better focused and attentive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including online discussions</td>
<td>Students can revisit course content in a meaningful way</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Allows reflective learners to participate in a way that matches their learning style</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recording and posting lectures</td>
<td>Students can review parts of lecture that were unclear initially</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Allows students to pause and engage throughout the lecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing graphic organizers</td>
<td>Helps students understand material conceptually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allows students to engage with the content in a way that matches their learning style</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V. Accommodations

When universal design practices fail to meet the learning needs of a student with disabilities and the student is otherwise qualified to participate in a program of study (able to meet the technical standards with or without accommodations), a university must provide reasonable accommodations (accommodations that do not fundamentally alter the program of study) to the student. This is often a collaborative process where faculty, staff, the ADA Coordinator, and the student work to design appropriate accommodations that are fair to all students and maintain the integrity of the program.
A. Initiating a Request for Accommodations

All requests for accommodations should be directed to the ADA Coordinator. The ADA Coordinator at Rosalind Franklin University is:

Director for Academic Support  
HSB L.675  847.578.8482  
ada.coordinator@rosalindfranklin.edu

If a student discloses a disability to a faculty or staff member, the following procedure should be followed:

• Do refer the student to the ADA Coordinator and follow up with the student via email regarding the referral.

• Do not engage in conversation regarding the disability or accept any documentation related to that disability.

Note: At all times faculty, staff, and administrators should maintain appropriate boundaries. They must remember that their role is educator, not healthcare provider, in their relationship with a student.

B. Assessing the Need for Accommodations

It is the responsibility of the ADA Coordinator to evaluate all requests using student interviews and accompanying documentation to determine whether accommodations are appropriate and reasonable. If it is determined that the student can meet the program’s technical standards and learning objectives without fundamentally altering the program of study, accommodations will be offered. When necessary, the ADA Coordinator will consult with faculty members regarding the appropriateness of the accommodations to ensure that they are reasonable and do not fundamentally alter the program of study.

C. Faculty Notification Memos

If accommodations are appropriate, the ADA Coordinator will issue a Faculty Notification Memo (Appendix A) to the student, describing the accommodations and their terms for course/clerkship coordinators/directors.

It is the responsibility of the student to submit this Faculty Notification Memo to each relevant course/clerkship coordinator/director/course director at least two weeks prior to the need for accommodations for each course in which the student requests accommodations.

Students and faculty/staff members are encouraged to discuss the implementation of accommodations. It is not appropriate for students and faculty/staff discuss the student’s disability. The focus of this collaboration is to ensure that accommodations are clearly understood and do not alter the learning objectives and outcomes of the course. Discussion should focus on the accommodation and implementation, not the disability.

Note: Accommodations are NOT retroactive and may only be implemented after the request has been made and approved by the ADA Coordinator.
D. Implementation of Approved Accommodations

As a university, we have specific responsibilities to provide the approved accommodation to each student as indicated. No other accommodation can be provided without full approval and each accommodation approved must be implemented with the appropriate requests from the student. Should you have questions or concerns, please contact the ADA Coordinator.

Note: Students are not required to use their approved accommodations. Students often choose to use their accommodations in some classes and not others. A student’s choice of whether to use accommodations and to what extent must be respected.

E. Confidentiality

All disability related information, including Faculty Notification Memos and consultations, is considered confidential and must be managed according to FERPA regulations. Accommodation needs must be shared only with those individuals who have a need to know, such as those responsible for implementation. Disability related information and/or accommodation requests should NOT be shared with other faculty or staff who do not have an explicit need to know.

F. Accommodations in the Classroom

The following accommodations are commonly approved by the ADA Coordinator and provided to students in classroom settings. Additional accommodations may be determined depending on the student’s needs.

1. Additional Time for Exams

   Additional time is generally approved when a student’s disability affects cognitive processing speed or the physical ability to respond to exam questions in a timely manner.

2. Breaks During Exams

   Some students may require additional time during an exam to take medication, check glucose levels, rest, or refocus. In this case, “stop the clock” breaks may be provided. The breaks do not add extra time to take the exam.

3. Reduced Distraction or Private Testing Rooms

   Students who may be easily distracted by extraneous stimuli, such as students with ADHD, anxiety disorders, and autism spectrum disorders, may be provided an alternate testing location. Students whose disability requires them to stand, talk out loud, or use assistive technology may also be provided with a private room to avoid distracting other test takers.

4. Priority Seating

   Students with low vision or hearing or students whose disability affects focus and concentration may be provided with priority seating in the classroom.
5. Other Standard Accommodations

Examples of other commonly utilized accommodations in the classroom setting include note-takers, assistive technology, adjustments to classroom attendance requirements, and lecture recordings.

G. Accommodations in Clinical Settings

Accommodations in the clinical setting require advance planning and team collaboration. The clinical placement coordinator, the clinical program director, the student, and the ADA Coordinator work together to ensure that the student has access to all facets of the clinical experience while maintaining the integrity of all program requirements. It is beneficial for students to visit clinical sites early to get a sense of the requirements and determine in advance if there are potential barriers.

1. Clerkship Location

Considerations regarding proximity to a student’s health care facility and/or transportation needs may be factored into the clerkship location assignments as an accommodation. To eliminate these barriers, students with disabilities can be given priority status in the selection process.

2. Scheduling

Students with disabilities may have special requirements related to scheduling, such as time off needed for disability-related appointments or difficulty with long or overnight shifts. In this case, accommodations regarding scheduling should be considered, as long as the requirements of the program can still be met.

3. Record Keeping

Charting and clinical record keeping using electronic medical record (EMR) systems can present a barrier to students with dyslexia, low vision, and other disabilities. Assistive technology can provide access to EMRs and other medical records. Advance planning is recommended to ensure compatibility with hospital technology. Students, the ADA Coordinator and clinical faculty need to collaborate to ensure that accommodations are appropriate and effective.

3. Patient Safety

Patient safety is a priority in determining appropriate and reasonable accommodations. It is important that clinical faculty, the ADA Coordinator, and the student collaborate in determining accommodations that help the student to learn while keeping patients and their medical records safe. “In determining whether an individual poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, a [school] must make an individualized assessment, based on reasonable judgment that relies on current medical knowledge or on the best available objective evidence, to ascertain: the nature, duration, and severity of the risk; the probability that the potential injury will actually occur; and whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures or the provision of auxiliary aids or services will mitigate the risk” (Meeks, L., 2016).
V. Rights and Responsibilities

A. Student Rights

Students with disabilities have a right to equal access to courses, programs, services, activities, jobs, and facilities at RFUMS. RFUMS must provide appropriate and reasonable accommodations to qualified students. Information related to a student’s disability is confidential according to FERPA regulations, except in the case of an emergency or litigation.

B. Faculty Rights

Faculty and staff should be given adequate time to process requests and implement accommodations. Students must give at least two weeks notice prior to the need to use accommodations.

C. Student Responsibilities

- Provide timely notice (four weeks prior to the need for accommodations) to the ADA coordinator of a disability.
- Meet with the ADA Coordinator to discuss history of diagnosis and accommodations.
- Ensure that documentation meets the standards outlined in this guide.
- Meet the technical standards of the program.
- Notify relevant course/clerkship coordinator/director of accommodations (see Appendix C: Faculty Notification Memo) in a timely manner (at least two weeks prior to the need for accommodations) for each course in which the student requests accommodations.
- Negotiate the details of the approved accommodations with the course/clerkship coordinator/director.
- Notify the ADA Coordinator of any obstacles related to the implementation of approved accommodations or of any change in functional limitations or educational demands that would necessitate a modification to the approved accommodations.
- Renew accommodations requests prior to the start of each academic year.

D. Faculty Responsibilities

- Refer students to the ADA Coordinator when appropriate.
- Include the standard disability support statement in all syllabi (Appendix B).
- Universally design course materials and activities that reduce barriers for all students.
- Participate in the interactive process of determining reasonable accommodations.
- Assist with the implementation of approved accommodations.
- Hold students accountable for meeting technical standards and program requirements.
VI. Faculty Communication Guide*

At Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science it is everyone’s responsibility to ensure a welcoming, inclusive, and accessible environment for all students.

Outcomes

It is our hope that by reading this guide faculty will be able to understand:

• The importance of appropriate communication
• Common pitfalls in faculty communication
• How to avoid communicating assumptions
• How to avoid unintended discrimination
• How to respond to student’s disclosure(s)
• Verbal micro-aggressions and their impact
• Guiding principles for all communication

When students disclose their disability, faculty should:
  • Support the student
  • Avoid inquiring into too many details around disability
  • Refer the student to Academic Support and ADA Coordinator ada.coordinator@rosalindfranklin.edu
  • Reiterate that students with disabilities are welcome in their program

Guiding Principles for Communication
• Be clear and concise.
• Communicate and follow up in a timely manner.
• Refer students to the appropriate offices.
• Don’t ask! Students are not obligated to disclose personal information unrelated to arranging accommodations to faculty or administrators.
• Avoid committing verbal micro-aggressions against students with disabilities by being mindful with your communication.

Direct Disclosure-Faculty Actions
If a student self-discloses a disability:
  • Avoid engaging with students about disability specifics
  • Thank the student for sharing the information, and inform the student that RFUMS has an Office of Academic Support. The Director for Academic Support can be reached at 847-578-8482, ada.coordinator@rosalindfranklin.edu.

Do not ask for specific information about disability, medical diagnosis, or other medical information. If it is disclosed unprompted, do not provide medical advice or suggestions to the student regarding their diagnosis.

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Example Email Response to a Student Alluding to a Disability or Difficulty
Dear Student,
I am sorry to hear you are having difficulty. You may want to seek assistance with the student support offices available, including Academic Support, Student Counseling Services, and the ADA Coordinator. These offices may be able to provide some support for you academically, and many students find them helpful.
Best Regards,
Dr. Franklin

Follow-up Email after Student Self-Identifies
Dear Student,
Thank you for meeting with me today. Because you self-identified as having used disability-related accommodations in the past, I wanted to follow up with information about the Office of Academic Support at RFUMS. I have also copied the Director for Academic Support and ADA Coordinator, on this email, as you expressed interest in speaking with a disability support staff member. I encourage you to make an appointment with ADA Coordinator to explore the possibility of using accommodations. I hope you find this resource helpful.
Best Regards,
Dr. Franklin

Poor example of a faculty follow-up email
Dear Student,
Thank you for coming in today. After our discussion, it sounds like you will be fine in the course without any accommodations. If you need them Academic Support and the ADA Coordinator are always there, but hopefully you keep working hard and will not need them!
Best,
Dr. Franklin

Inclusive Communication with Students with Disabilities
When a student discloses their disability, or provides you with a memo from the ADA Coordinator, it is important for you as the course director, not only to facilitate the accommodation, but to provide an inclusive learning environment for ALL students, including those with disabilities. Microaggressions provide an unsafe environment for students.

A microaggression is a statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group

Examples of Verbal Micro-aggressions
• Using the terminology: “suffers from or confined/restricted to”
• Referring to “special accommodations” or “accommodated test-taker”
• Questioning accommodations, “They are not going to get extra time in the ‘real world’”.
• Threats to “out” the student, “If I’m writing you a recommendation letter, I’ll need to include the fact that you used accommodations.”
• Using commonplace, albeit potentially offensive phrases such as, “the blind leading the blind” or “don’t have a leg to stand on”
• Attempting to communicate that “you get it”: “I’m totally OCD about my files!”
• Minimizing: You have a disability? Which one? It must be mild!
• Challenging: You don’t have a disability. You’re too bright.

As members of the Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science community, faculty members play a critical role in providing inclusive and accessible learning environments for all students. Thank you for supporting our students.

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MEMORANDUM

To: RFUMS Faculty
From: 
Date: 
Re: Academic Accommodations for NAME

Please be aware that NAME has provided documentation verifying a disability that qualifies NAME for the following academic accommodations:

- Accommodations listed here

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE ABOVE ACCOMMODATIONS ARE APPROVED FOR THE 2016-2017 ACADEMIC YEAR ONLY AND THAT STUDENTS MUST RENEW THEIR APPROVAL FOR ACCOMMODATIONS AT THE START OF EACH ACADEMIC YEAR.

NAME has been notified that it is NAME’s responsibility to:

- Present this memo to you at the beginning of your course or clerkship (or as soon as he/she receives approval for the accommodation) and discuss the above approved accommodations and implementation of them during this initial meeting
- Students are strongly encouraged to again discuss accommodations at least 2 weeks prior to the time that such accommodations are required.

Please be advised that, as a University, we have specific responsibilities to provide the approved accommodation to each student as indicated. No other accommodation can be provided without full approval and each accommodation approved must be implemented with the appropriate requests from the student. Should you have questions or concerns for which I can be of assistance, please feel free to contact me at (847) 578-8482.

C: file
Appendix B

SYLLABUS STATEMENT

Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science is committed to providing equal access to learning opportunities for students with documented disabilities. To ensure access to this class and your program, please contact the ADA Coordinator at 847.578.8482 or ada.coordinator@rosalindfranklin.edu to engage in a confidential conversation about the process for requesting accommodations in the classroom and clinical settings.

Accommodations are not provided retroactively. Students are encouraged to register with the ADA Coordinator as soon as they begin their program. Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science encourages students to access all resources available. More information can be found on the Academic Support InSite page or by contacting the ADA Coordinator.
REFERENCES


