

Disability Accommodation Policy and Procedure

The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) has an institutional commitment to provide equal educational opportunities for qualified students with disabilities in accordance with applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and 2008, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. To provide equality of access for students with disabilities, accommodations (including auxiliary aids and services) will be provided to the extent necessary to comply with state and federal laws. For each student, these accommodations will specifically address those functional limitations of the disability, which adversely affect equal education opportunity. The GSBS assists qualified students with disabilities in securing appropriate accommodations.

The term “accommodation” is used in this policy to include not only disability-related accommodations, but also disability-related services and/or auxiliary aids.

Accommodations include those modifications to the course, program, or educational requirements that are necessary and appropriate so that such requirements do not discriminate or have the effect of discriminating on the basis of disability. Academic requirements that are deemed essential to the course or to the program of instruction being pursued by the student or that relate directly to licensing requirements will not be regarded as discriminatory within the meaning of this section. Potential modifications that may be considered include (but are not limited to) changes in the length of time permitted for completion of degree requirements, extended time on an examination or paper, a defined period of leave and other appropriate accommodations which do not fundamentally alter the essential nature of a course or academic program.

Graduate students are eligible for consideration for accommodations if they have a documented disability and the GSBS has met with the student and determined that functional limitations of the disability require such accommodation.

A. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Each student bears the responsibility of initiating a disability-related request for accommodations with the GSBS prior to the time such an accommodation is needed. In addition, and more specifically, it is the responsibility of the student to:

- As early as possible, register with the GSBS and submit documentation of disability as a prerequisite to receiving accommodations.
- Notify the GSBS immediately when an accommodation is not being provided correctly.
- Notify the GSBS immediately when discontinuing an accommodation.
- Provide timely notification to faculty of approved accommodations.
- Provide for personal disability-related needs or services such as transportation, etc.
- Meet the same standards—academic, technical, performance and behavior—expected of all graduate students.

B. DETERMINATION OF ACCOMMODATION(S)

While physicians and/or other evaluators may submit recommendations regarding accommodations, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences personnel, who are familiar with the educational environment at the GSBS, determine the extent to which accommodations are appropriate.

Appropriate accommodations are determined following an individualized assessment of each request and discussion with the student and GSBS personnel. Among the factors considered in determining appropriate accommodations for students are:

- The nature of the student's disability;
- Accommodations that have worked for that student in the past;
- Whether the requested accommodations will allow the student to effectively access and participate in the course or program; and
- Whether the requested accommodations will alter the essential requirements of the course or program.

Academic accommodations may include:

- Changes to a classroom environment or task that permit a student with a disability to participate in the educational process;
- Modifications to policies, practices, or procedures (e.g., reduced course load, extended time to degree, a defined period of leave, etc.);
- Provision of auxiliary aids and services, and/or
- Other adaptations or modifications that enable a student to enjoy the benefits and privileges of GSBS services and activities.

The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences is not required to alter or modify a course or program to the extent that it changes the fundamental nature of that course or program. Although most accommodations are decided upon, and provided by the GSBS, accommodation decisions are often made in collaboration with program/institution administrators and relevant faculty. Recommendations made by the GSBS are not implemented until this collaboration has occurred.

Different types of accommodations exist. While the list below is not exhaustive, it describes different types of accommodations that may be available, depending upon the circumstances, that are unique to each individual student:

1. *Modifying Academic Requirements*

A student with a documented disability may request a modification of certain generally applicable requirements (for example, substitution for otherwise required courses, course retakes or completion of courses, certain aspects of academic standing, etc.). This request must be made with the GSBS in writing as early as possible (that is, at least ten business days before the beginning of the academic quarter, or as soon as the need arises) and should be accompanied by documentation of the disability that supports the request.

Appropriate modifications of academic regulations are determined following an individualized assessment of each request. Among the factors relevant in determining appropriate modifications of academic requirements for students are:

- The nature of the student's disability and its nexus to the requested modification;
- Whether the requested modification of the academic requirement will provide the student an equal educational opportunity; and
- Whether the requested modification of the academic requirement would alter the essential requirements or standards, or would change the fundamental nature of an educational program.

2. *Parking and Transportation Around Campus*

The GSBS works with the appropriate entities on campus to provide students with accessible transportation options around campus.

3. *Non-Academic Requests and Facility Access*

Students must contact the Environmental Health and Safety Office (858-646-3100 x8000) to discuss accommodations for:

- Institute-sponsored extracurricular events and activities; and
- Facility access issues related to classroom building and offices as well as paths of travel (e.g., building needs a power door, potholes and cracked sidewalks create hazards for a wheelchair user).

The GSBS works with the appropriate entities on campus to provide students with accessible transportation options around campus.

C. *STUDENT PROCESS TO REQUEST ACCOMMODATION(S)*

Students must follow the following process to request reasonable accommodation(s):

Step 1 - Provide Documentation and Submit Request

Students must obtain current documentation of the disability from a certified and licensed professional and provide such documentation to the GSBS. The purpose of this documentation is to:

- Verify eligibility for accommodations; and
- Determine that the level of accommodations provided is appropriate to the nature and extent of the disability and its functional impact in the educational setting.

Students must submit the documentation of disability and accommodation request paperwork to:

Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences
Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute
10901 North Torrey Pines Road, Building 1
La Jolla, CA 92037

The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences is at the discretion to determine what type of documentation is necessary regarding the student's disability, and this may vary depending on the nature and extent of the disability and the accommodation requested. In the event that the GSBS feels it is appropriate to obtain a second professional opinion concerning the nature or severity of the disability, the GSBS will bear the cost of obtaining that second opinion not covered by a third party payer.

Step 2 - Attend Intake Appointment and Determine Reasonable Accommodation

After the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences receives the student's request, the student will be contacted for an intake appointment. During the intake appointment, GSBS personnel will determine the student's eligibility for reasonable accommodation(s) and determine which accommodation(s) will be provided. More than one appointment may be required to make this determination.

Step 3 - Provide Follow-up and Feedback

Students need to work closely with Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences personnel to ensure that the quality of accommodations meets a student's disability-related needs. This is a shared responsibility between each student and the GSBS. Students must start the accommodation process early and let GSBS personnel know immediately about any delays, or other problems in the provision of accommodations.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences will maintain confidentiality regarding a student's disability to the fullest extent required by applicable law. To that end, the GSBS will provide information to staff and faculty only when necessary in evaluating and/or facilitating accommodations, auxiliary aids and/or services. Except where permitted by applicable law, disability information will not be shared with third parties without the student's express written permission.

As a general rule, faculty and staff do not have a right to access diagnostic or related information regarding a student's disability, or know details about the disability. Faculty and staff merely need to know that the GSBS has verified the disability and the student's right to appropriate accommodations to meet their disability-related needs.

E. Student Concerns and Complaints

The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences has established formal mechanisms for students who have a concern that they may have been discriminated against on the basis of disability, or may not have received a necessary disability-related accommodation, service and/or auxiliary aid.

If the interactive process does not yield an agreed-upon accommodation or service, for example, the GSBS and Human Resources are available to help resolve the matter.

Students who have concerns about disability discrimination must first contact:

Angelica Rocha, PhD
Program Manager, Institutional Research
Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute
10901 North Torrey Pines Road, Building 1
La Jolla, CA 92037
858-646-3100 x5101

or

Jennifer Whitaker
Manager, Human Resources
Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute
10901 North Torrey Pines Road, Building 1
La Jolla, CA 92037
858-646-3100 x5207