

## **Disability Student Services Student Success Center**

### **Mission**

The mission of Disability Student Services is to assist students in attaining their academic goals through learning support activities. These activities include academic advising, career counseling, probationary advising, study skills training, testing services, tutoring (group and individual), Supplemental Instruction, First-Year Experience and the provision of reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. The University of Tennessee at Martin wants every student to succeed.

### **Vision**

The vision of Disability Student Services is to develop and implement services for students with disabilities that allow for access to higher education.

### **Goals**

- To provide equal educational opportunities, programs and activities for any student with a documented disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- To serve as a liaison between students, Vocational Rehabilitation and UT Martin.

### **General Information**

It is the policy of the University of Tennessee at Martin to provide reasonable accommodations (academic adjustment and auxiliary aids) to assist students with disabilities in negotiating the University system. P.A.C.E. (Program Access for College Enhancement) serves students with learning disabilities and ADD.

UT Martin is an Equal Opportunity Institution and does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, color, religion, national origin, age, disability or Vietnam veteran status in provision of educational opportunities. UT Martin does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the education programs and activities which it operates, pursuant to the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Section 504 provides that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall, solely by reason of his (or her) disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance, or under any program conducted by any executive agency or by the United States Postal Service.

Individuals requesting accommodations must self-identify and provide current documentation to the Disability Student Services office located in the Student Success Center (731.881.7744 or 731.881.7605). Guidelines for licensed professionals who will be documenting the disability and making appropriate post-secondary recommendations

are listed in this document in the Services and Academic Accommodations Section:

[Click for Services and Academic Accommodations](#)

In order for students with disabilities to be successful in college, they need to be adequately prepared with programs, information resources and accessible facilities. The following Web sites from the University of Washington DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking and Technology) Center are designed to help students, faculty, administrators and staffs create accessible environments, programs and resources for students with disabilities; for more information, go to [www.washington.edu/doiit](http://www.washington.edu/doiit)

- The Faculty Room - a site for faculty and academic administrators at postsecondary institutions to learn how to create classroom environments and academic activities that maximize the learning of all students, including those with disabilities.
- The Conference Room - a site for staff and administrators at postsecondary institutions to learn how to create facilities, services and resources that are accessible to all students, including those with disabilities.
- The Board Room - a site for high-level administrators at postsecondary institutions to learn how to create and facilitate the development of programs and services that are accessible to all students, including those with disabilities.
- The Student Lounge – a site that outlines resources to help students with disabilities prepare for and succeed in college.

These Web sites were created with funds from the U.S. Department of Education as part of its "Demonstration Projects to Ensure Quality Higher Education for Students with Disabilities."

## **Policy and Procedures**

The information provided herein is designed to assist students, parents, faculty and staff by detailing accepted procedures for assuring otherwise qualified students with disabilities equal access to services, programs or activities provided by the University of Tennessee at Martin.

## **Services and Academic Accommodations**

Students should proceed as follows after they receive their letters of acceptance from UT Martin:

- **Self-identify** with Disability Student Services (DSS), 203 Clement, by completing the "Disability Services Introductory Questionnaire" and mailing or faxing it, with current and appropriate medical or professional documentation, to the DSS office.
- **Provide documentation** to establish eligibility as a person with a disability. This also allows the DSS adviser to be prescriptive in assigning those accommodations necessary for equal access. This documentation, typed or printed on official

letterhead and signed by an evaluator qualified to make the diagnosis, must include the following:

1. Clearly stated diagnosis or DSM-IV diagnosis of the disability or disabilities. NOTE: The diagnosis must be current, i.e., completed within the last five years for a learning disabilities, one year for psychological disabilities or three years for ADHD and all other disabilities;
  2. Description of the functional limitations resulting from the disability or disabilities as related to an academic setting;
  3. Complete educational, developmental and medical history relevant to the disability for which accommodations are requested;
  4. Suggested reasonable accommodations that would, in the evaluator's professional opinion, be most appropriate;
  5. A list of all test instruments--reliable, valid and standardized for use with an adult population--used in the evaluation report and relevant subtest scores used to document the stated disability; and
  6. Information on the impact of any medication and/or treatments currently being used.
- **Make an appointment** with the DSS office to meet with a DSS adviser. The adviser, working with the student, will determine what reasonable accommodations and services will be needed and the procedures for receiving services. The student must subsequently meet with the adviser each semester he or she is seeking accommodations and provide updated information, as requested.

**Reasonable accommodations** may include, but are not limited to:

- Permission to tape record lectures
- Preferential classroom seating
- Notetaker service
- Extended time on tests
- Distraction-free testing environment
- Books on tape
- Interpreting/transliteration services
- Special advising and strategic scheduling of classes
- Scribe
- Reader

**Unreasonable accommodations** may include, but are not limited to:

- Personal care assistance
- Personal study assistance
- Reader for personal use or study
- Transportation to and from class
- Tutoring beyond the tutoring available to any UT Martin student

If reasonable accommodations involve cooperation from professors, the DSS adviser will provide the student with two letters for each professor, an original and a copy. The letter will explain that DSS has disability documentation on file qualifying the student for the academic accommodations outlined in the letter.

The student will be given a choice as to whether he/she wants the disability listed in the letter. It is not required for professors to know the specific disability; however, having this information can often be beneficial for them to know how to best help the student. It is the student's responsibility to take the letter to each professor; he or she should schedule an appointment with each professor or go to his/her office during scheduled office hours to deliver the letters for that class and to have a discussion about individual needs and how they can be met in the event the professor has any questions. At the end of this discussion, the student and professor sign both letters; one letter is for the professor's records and the second letter is returned to the DSS office to be placed in the student's file. Professors are responsible for providing accommodations only from the time they receive notice of the disability via the letter from DSS. Students who deliver their letters late in the semester are not eligible for retroactive accommodations.

### **Accessible Parking and Handicap Permits**

Persons with disabilities who possess a state-issued handicap plate, placard or disabled veteran's plate will be issued a campus parking permit commensurate with what the state has issued.

Vehicles with handicap plates or placards may park in designated handicap spaces, all legal parking spaces, or timed parking areas.

Persons with short-term disabilities (sprains, etc.) must provide an appropriate statement from a physician or Student Health. This permit will extend parking privileges to all legal spaces and timed areas **only**; it does not permit access to designated handicap spaces. Detailed information is available by contacting the Department of Public Safety at 731-881-7777.

### **Service Animal Policy**

The following information is provided to help define the role of service animals at The University of Tennessee Martin in promoting the safety, dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

The ADA defines a service animal as:

{A}ny guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability. If they meet this definition, animals are considered service animals under the ADA regardless of whether they have been licensed or certified by a state or local government.

Service animals that pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others or would fundamentally alter a campus function (for example, disruption of a class) may be excluded regardless of training or certification.

The guidelines set forth hereinafter have been developed with the understanding that most service animals working on the campus will be dogs. If another kind of animal is to be employed as a service animal on campus, the partner should contact the DSS office as soon as possible to explore any additional health or safety concerns.

In many cases it is easy to discern whether or not an animal is a service animal by observing the animal's harness, cape or backpack, or the partner's disability. However, in some instances an animal may only have a leash or the partner's disability is not visible. Therefore, it may be appropriate to ask the partner whether or not the animal in question is a service animal. This inquiry is a legitimate inquiry about whether an animal is or is not a service animal and, as such, does not reflect a violation of policy.

## Definitions

- **Partner/Handler:** A person with a service animal. A person with a disability is called a partner; a person without a disability is called a handler.
- **Pet:** A domestic animal kept for pleasure or companionship. Pets are not permitted in university facilities. Permission may be granted by a professor/instructor, dean or other college administrator for a pet to be in a campus facility for a specific reason at a specific time (*e.g.*, a pet dog is used for a demonstration tool in a zoology class).
- **Service Animal:** Any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability. Service animals are usually dogs, but may be monkeys. A few other animals have been presented as service animals. If there is a question about whether an animal is a service animal, contact the Director of Disability Support Services. A service animal is sometimes called an assistance animal.
- **Team:** A person with a disability, or a handler, and his or her service animal. The twosome works as a cohesive team in accomplishing the tasks of everyday living.

## Types of Service Dogs

- **Guide Dog:** A carefully trained dog that serves as a travel tool for persons with severe visual impairments or who are blind.
- **Hearing Dog:** A dog who has been trained to alert a person with significant hearing loss, or who is deaf, when a sound occurs (*e.g.*, knock on the door).
- **Service/Support Dog:** A dog that has been trained to assist a person who has a mobility or health impairment. Types of duties the dog may perform include carrying, fetching, opening doors, ringing doorbells, activating elevator buttons, steadying a person while walking, helping a person up after the person falls, etc.

- **SsigDog:** A dog trained to assist a person with autism. The dog alerts the partner to distracting repetitive movements common among those with autism, allowing the person to stop the movement (*e.g.*, hand flapping). A person with autism may have problems with sensory input and need the same support services from a dog that a dog might give to a person who is blind or deaf.
- **Seizure Response Dog:** A dog trained to assist a person with a seizure disorder; how the dog serves the person depends on the person's needs. The dog may stand guard over the person during a seizure, or the dog may go for help. A few dogs have reportedly learned to predict seizures and warn the person in advance.

### **Responsibilities of Faculty/Staff/Students When Dealing with Service Animals**

- Allow a service animal to accompany the partner at all times and everywhere on campus, except where service animals are specifically prohibited.
- Do not pet a service animal. Petting a service animal when the animal is working distracts the animal from the task at hand.
- Do not feed a service animal. The service animal may have specific dietary requirements; unusual food or food at an unexpected time may cause the animal to become ill or to be distracted.
- Do not deliberately startle a service animal.
- Do not separate or attempt to separate a partner from her or his service animal.

### **Responsibilities for Disabled Individuals Using Service Animals on Campus**

All persons with disabilities who are planning extended use of service animals on campus should provide documentation of their disability to the DSS office in order to establish the formal status of their service animals. Use of a service animal by a resident or potential resident in University Housing is discussed below.

The cost of care, arrangements and responsibility for the well-being of a service animal are the sole responsibility of the owner at all times. Service animals on campus must:

- **Meet Non-University Requirements:** All requirements for the presence of animals in public places (vaccinations, licensure, ID tags, etc.) mandated by state or local ordinance must be followed.
- **Be Healthy:** The animal must be in good health. Animals to be housed in University housing must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian.
- **Be Under Control of Partner:** The partner must be in full control of the animal at all times. Reasonable behavior is expected from service animals while on campus. The animal must not be allowed to sniff people, restaurant tables or the personal belongings of others; must not initiate contact with someone without the handler's direct permission; must not display any disruptive or aggressive behaviors or noises (*e.g.*, barking, whining, growling or rubbing against people);

and must not block an aisle or passageway. If a service dog, for example, exhibits unacceptable behavior, the partner is expected to employ the proper training techniques to correct the situation.

- **Be Cleaned Up After:** The partner must follow local ordinances in cleaning up after the animal defecates. Partners who physically cannot clean up after their own service animal will not be required to do so. However, these individuals should use marked service animal toileting areas when such areas are pre-approved by the grounds supervisor.

### **Removal of Service Animals**

- **Disruption:** The partner of an animal that is unruly or disruptive (*e.g.*, barking, running or jumping, bringing attention to itself) may be asked to remove the animal from University facilities. If the improper behavior happens repeatedly, the partner may be told not to bring the animal into any University facility until the partner takes significant steps to mitigate the behavior. Mitigation can include muzzling a barking animal or refresher training for both the animal and the partner.
- **Ill Health:** Service animals that are ill should not be taken into public areas. A partner with an ill animal may be asked to leave University facilities.
- **Uncleanliness:** Partners with animals that are unclean, noisome and/or bedraggled may be asked to leave University facilities. An animal that becomes wet from walking in the rain or mud or from being splashed on by a passing automobile, but is otherwise clean, should be considered a clean animal. Animals that shed in the spring sometimes look bedraggled; in that case, if the animal in question is usually well groomed, the animal should be considered clean even though its spring coat is uneven, messy or wet from weather or weather-related incidents.

### **Areas Off-Limits to Service Animals**

- **Research Laboratories:** The natural organisms carried by dogs and other animals may negatively affect the outcome of the research. At the same time, the chemicals and/or organisms used in the research may be harmful to service animals.
- **Mechanical Rooms/Custodial Closets:** Mechanical rooms, such as boiler rooms, facility equipment rooms, electric closets, elevator control rooms and custodial closets, are off-limits to service animals. The machinery and/or chemicals in these rooms may be harmful to animals.
- **Areas Where Protective Clothing is Necessary:** Any room where protective clothing is worn is off-limits to service animals. Examples impacting students include pottery shops, wood shops, metal/machine shops and other special facilities.
- **Areas Where There is a Danger to the Service Animal:** Off-limits rooms would include any room, including a classroom, where there are sharp metal cuttings or other sharp objects on the floor or protruding from a surface; rooms

where there is hot material on the floor (*e.g.*, molten metal or glass); rooms where there is a high level of dust; or rooms where there is moving machinery.

- **Food Preparation Areas.** Any area in which food is prepared for public consumption, such as cafeteria kitchens, is off-limits to service animals. This does not include common areas in university housing units in which food is prepared by the residents.

### **Exceptions to Off-Limits Areas**

A laboratory director may open her or his laboratory to all service animals.

A laboratory director of a research laboratory or an instructor in a classroom or teaching laboratory with moving equipment may or may not grant permission to an individual animal/partner team to enter the research laboratory or classroom or teaching laboratory with moving machinery. Admission for each team will be granted or denied on a case-by-case basis, with the final decision based on the nature of research or machinery and the best interest of the animal. For example, the machinery in a classroom may have moving parts at a height such that the tail of a large dog could easily be caught in it; this would be a valid reason for keeping large dogs out. However, a very small hearing dog may be shorter than any moving part and, therefore, considered for admission to the classroom.

Access to other designated off-limits areas may be granted on a case-by-case basis.

### **Service Animals in University Housing**

Service animals may not reside in University Housing without express approval of University Housing. Such requests will be processed, as follows:

- A requesting individual should provide the DSS office appropriate documentation at least 30 days before prospective housing will be needed for the service animal of the individual's disability and the need for a service animal.
- The DSS office will review the documentation and seek to arrange a meeting with a University Housing representative, the person requesting that a service animal be housed in University Housing and a DSS office staff person. Residence Hall Directors/Managers are not authorized to approve the housing of service animals in University Housing.
- A person who has a service animal on campus (including University Housing) is financially responsible for property damage caused by his or her service animal.
- All service animals to reside in University Housing must weigh no more than 125 pounds.
- The DSS office, in consultation with the Director of University Housing, may approve or disapprove a request under this policy when an exception is deemed necessary due to unique circumstances.

### **Conflicting Disabilities**



If another person on campus has a covered disability under the ADA and it includes an allergic reaction to animals, and that person has contact with a service animal approved for presence on campus, a request for assistance will be made to the ADA Coordinator who will consider all facts surrounding the contact and make an effort to resolve the issue.

## **Grievance Procedures**

The University has an Equity and Diversity Officer/Title VI Coordinator responsible for investigating all complaints (sexual harassment, Title VI, age discrimination, disability discrimination, employment discrimination based on gender, etc.). Anyone who believes he/she has been discriminated against should contact the Equity and Diversity Officer/Title VI Coordinator.

The complaint procedures for the University of Tennessee at Martin are as follows:

- A signed, written complaint should be filed within 300 days of the date of the alleged discrimination.
- The Equity and Diversity Officer/Title VI Coordinator investigates all complaints reported to that office. The complaint must include the name, address and telephone number of the aggrieved victim (complainant); an explanation of the action or conduct complained of; and the name and address of the person or department allegedly responsible for the discriminatory action. The individual or department/unit against which the complaint is made will be notified of the complaint.
- The Equity and Diversity Officer/Title VI Coordinator or investigative committee appointed by the Chancellor will interview, and take statements from, the complainant, the accused individual or unit/department and any witnesses, as appropriate.
- The Equity and Diversity Officer/Title VI Coordinator or investigative committee will analyze the findings and determine if the evidence supports the charge of discrimination alleged by the complainant.

All findings, along with statements detailing the bases for them, will be submitted by the Equity and Diversity Officer/Title VI Coordinator to the appropriate administrator, in this case, the Chancellor. The aggrieved victim (complainant) will receive a copy of the findings. If the findings support the charge of discrimination (or unfair treatment), the Equity and Diversity Officer/Title VI Coordinator or investigative committee will consult with the Chancellor to determine the appropriate penalty or penalties for the discriminatory conduct.

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**All documentation is confidential**

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