

SCHOOL OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

Accommodation in Instruction for Students with Disabilities

The School of Veterinary Medicine works in consultation with the University of Wisconsin-Madison McBurney Disability Resource Center, and in compliance with federal and state law and University of Wisconsin policies, to provide reasonable accommodations for students who have documented disabilities. Reasonable accommodations provide the student an equal opportunity to participate in the programs, services and activities of the School of Veterinary Medicine. Such accommodations cannot fundamentally alter or lower the academic standards of the program.

These laws and policies have implications for the roles and responsibilities of students and faculty in the accommodation process. Determining appropriate and reasonable accommodations is an interactive and individualized process involving School of Veterinary Medicine Dean's office and faculty, the McBurney Disability Resource Center, and the student. The roles and responsibilities of each are described below.

Student Roles and Responsibilities

1. Students with disabilities, with or without accommodation, are expected to meet the academic standards established by School of Veterinary Medicine (http://www.vetmed.wisc.edu/Academic_Standards.249.1.html) and required of all students enrolled in the program.
2. Students are responsible for disclosing disability and requesting accommodations. Disclosure can be made to either the Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs or his/her designee or the McBurney Disability Resource Center. These individuals will assist the student in understanding campus mechanisms for documentation of disabilities and eligibility for and delivery of reasonable accommodation in the School of Veterinary Medicine.
3. Students are responsible for providing disability documentation that sufficiently establishes that they have a disability under the law and that the functional limitations arising from the disability require accommodation in the veterinary medical program. Documentation should be provided to the McBurney Disability Resource Center, which determines disability status. Campus documentation guidelines are found at www.mcburney.wisc.edu
4. Once such documentation is submitted, the student enters into an interactive process to determine both eligibility for and delivery of appropriate and reasonable accommodations in the program. This process includes McBurney staff and the Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs or his/her designee. It may also include individual faculty responsible for specific course content.
5. The student is responsible for participating in this interactive process through completion of a service plan.
6. Agreed upon accommodations are noted by the McBurney Center in a Faculty Notification Letter. Any required service training must be completed before the VISA is activated.
7. Students are expected to provide a hard copy of their active Faculty Notification Letter to the Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs or his/her designee and to course

coordinator faculty members prior to the beginning of the semester or as soon as possible once the plan has been created. Accommodation requests made after the beginning of a semester will be considered and provided to the extent possible given the timing of the request.

8. Students are expected to follow School of Veterinary Medicine and McBurney processes for requesting accommodations and meeting stated deadlines for the provision of accommodations as needed each semester.
9. Students may request additional or different accommodations if the nature of the disability changes over time. New documentation will be needed to substantiate a change by the McBurney Disability Resource Center to the service plan.

School of Veterinary Medicine Roles and Responsibilities

1. The Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs or his/her designee is responsible for working with the student, faculty and McBurney Disability Resource Center to determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations for students in the program for whom a disability has been documented.
2. The Associate Dean works with the student to inform faculty about their need for instructional accommodations.
3. The Associate Dean assists the student and faculty in resolving challenges to implementing requested accommodations.
4. The Associate Dean assists the student in accessing other resources and support services available through the School of Veterinary Medicine (e.g., study groups, content tutors, Personal and Wellness Support Services [PAWSS]) or the UW campus (e.g., Writing Center, University Health Services, UHS Counseling Center).
5. The Associate Dean is a resource to faculty with questions about the accommodation process.
6. The School of Veterinary Medicine faculty members have the responsibility to consider accommodation requests and work with the student and the Associate Dean in identifying and delivering accommodations that are appropriate to the individual course as well as the program standards.
7. Disputes regarding compliance with accommodations should be directed to the Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs or his/her designee, with subsequent referral if necessary to resolve disputes to the Educational Policy Committee and Student Appeals Committees of the School of Veterinary Medicine, consistent with the processes for those committees as outlined in the School's academic standards (http://www.vetmed.wisc.edu/Academic_Standards.249.1.html), or directly to the UW-Madison accommodation appeals process (<http://adac.wisc.edu/students/studentappeal.html>).

McBurney Disability Resource Center Roles and Responsibilities

1. The McBurney Disability Resource Center is responsible for determining disability status and making general recommendations regarding reasonable accommodations for enrolled students with disabilities.
2. The McBurney Center works with the Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs or his/her designee and the student to determine appropriate accommodation within the context of the School of Veterinary Medicine academic standards.
3. The McBurney Center is responsible for providing specific accommodations to students including sign language or captioning services, document conversion services, and funding for note taker services.
4. The Center works collaboratively with the student and the Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs or his/her designee in the provision of other services including test accommodations and notetaker recruitment.
5. The Center is responsible for providing training to the student on relevant services.
6. The McBurney Center is the campus repository for disability documentation and other confidential information pertaining to a student's disability. This information is shared with campus members on a need to know basis as part of the accommodation process.
7. Denial of disability status follows McBurney appeals process through review by the ADA coordinator or his/her designee.

It is important for students to recognize that accommodations are dependent, in part, on the course content and/or instructional style. For example, while a note taker might be useful in a course taught by one instructor, one might not be needed in the same course taught by another instructor who routinely distributes extensive lecture notes. Likewise, in classes where all students are given additional time to complete tests, a student with a disability would not receive time beyond that provided to all students. Thus, it is very important for the student to contact and work with the Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs or his/her designee, individual faculty members, and McBurney Center staff to arrive at an appropriate accommodation each semester.

Specific Suggestions for Veterinary Medical Students

1. If students **know** they have disabilities and have documentation, they should talk with the Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs or his/her designee before the semester begins. He/she and Office of Academic Affairs staff will provide support to help students identify their needs and assist them in the referral process to the McBurney Center to begin the service eligibility process.
2. If students **think** that they may have disabilities, but are not sure, they should discuss their concerns with the Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs or his/her designee who can provide information about campus and community assessment options.
3. Students should be aware of and act on their responsibility to request reasonable accommodations in their course work so they can learn and demonstrate their knowledge of course material.

4. Students should become knowledgeable and comfortable about describing their disabilities so they can advocate for themselves with faculty.
5. If students do not request accommodation and obtain a formal McBurney Center VISA and present hard copies of the Faculty Notification Letter to the Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs or his/her designee and course coordinating faculty, faculty members are not responsible for the provision of accommodations or for the consequences of their absence (e.g. failing academic performance).
6. Students should proactively consider the learning techniques that will best support their specific learning needs, i.e. tape record lectures, sit toward the front of the class to reduce distractions, etc. (Note that permission must be obtained from faculty before tape recording a lecture(s).)
7. Students may consider joining a study group to improve their ability to understand what they learn and incorporate it into their long-term memory. (However, also realize that group studying is not for everyone and may be counter-productive for some students.)
8. The first source of assistance for student questions regarding a specific course or course's content should be the course instructor.
9. If students are having trouble or feeling overwhelmed, they should share their concerns with the staff from the School of Veterinary Medicine's PAWSS office (<http://www.vetmed.wisc.edu/pawss>; 608-890-1608) and/or the Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs or his/her designee.

Additional School of Veterinary Medicine Disability Information

1. No one acting on behalf of the SVM may discriminate against a student on the basis of disability. The student should expect due consideration from everyone associated with the School as regards the student's disability and the accommodation process.
2. No matter what form of accommodation is utilized, students with disabilities are expected to complete each and every requirement of the veterinary medical curriculum by a schedule or plan that can reasonably be accommodated by the School of Veterinary Medicine.
3. A student with a disability has primary responsibility for self-protection during animal contact using adequate personal hygiene and personal protective equipment where appropriate.
4. All other rules and requirements of the UW-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine Academic Standards and Associated Procedures for the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Degree Program (http://www.vetmed.wisc.edu/Academic_Standards.249.1.html) remain in effect.

Background information

The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act

The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law that defines the protection of persons with disabilities from discrimination. Specifically, in the context of instruction, the ADA stipulates that a qualified student with a disability cannot be excluded or treated inequitably on the basis of disability. Important definitions for ADA implementation include “**qualified**” individual, “**reasonable accommodation**” and “**undue burden**”.

- **Qualified individuals** are those who meet the essential eligibility requirements for admission or participation in a program, service, or activity of a covered entity (e.g., the university) with or without reasonable accommodation or modification, such as (1) alteration of rules, policies, and practices; (2) removal of architectural, communications, or transportation barriers; or (3) provision of auxiliary aids. The key question in considering whether a student is "qualified" is: *“Can the student perform the essential requirements of the program or activity, either independently or with reasonable accommodation, without fundamentally altering the nature of the program, service, or activity?”*
- **Reasonable accommodation**, in general, is any change or alteration in the environment or in the ways things are customarily done that would enable a qualified individual with a disability to enjoy equal access to the program, service, or activity, and that would not fundamentally alter the program, service, or activity or be an undue burden. What constitutes reasonable accommodation is determined on a case-by-case basis.
- **Undue burden** is similar to the term "undue hardship" used in employment contexts, and is generally defined as a significant difficulty or expense. Similarly, what constitutes undue burden is determined on a case-by-case basis.

Wisconsin State Statute 36.12

Wisconsin law provides that, "[n]o student may be denied admission to, participation in or the benefits of, or discriminated against in any service, program, course or facility of the UW system... because of the student's race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, disability, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status or parental status."

Additional Background Information May Be Found at the Following Links

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/civilrights/resources/factsheets/504.pdf>
- American's with Disabilities Act of 1990 (<http://www.ada.gov/pubs/ada.htm>)
- Wisconsin Statute 36.12
(<http://nxt.legis.state.wi.us/nxt/gateway.dll?f=templates&fn=default.htm&d=stats&jd=36.12>)
- McBurney Center webpage (<http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>)
- UW-Madison Disability-Related Rights and Responsibilities
(<http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/information/requesting/rights.php>)
- University of Wisconsin-Madison Faculty Document 1071 of 1994
(<http://adac.wisc.edu/1071.html>)
- University of Wisconsin-Madison Faculty Document 1143 of 1995
(<http://adac.wisc.edu/students/assess.html>)
- University of Wisconsin Non-Discrimination on Basis of Disability Policy of 1996
(<http://www.uwsa.edu/bor/policies/rpd/rpd14-10.htm>)