

### **Frequently Asked Questions- Disability Support Services**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability and require that reasonable accommodations be provided to all qualified students with disabilities in all programs and activities within the control of the institution, provided such accommodations would not impose an undue burden on the school and/or fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program or activity provided. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the rights and responsibilities of students in postsecondary education under Section 504 and under ADA. Some frequently asked questions are provided here for reference.

#### **1. Who do I contact with questions I may have pertaining to disability related issues?**

The Chicago School of Professional Psychology provides support services for students with disabilities. Coordinated through the Office of Student Affairs, students with documented needs may access services and support to ensure equal opportunities and to benefit from the programs, services, and activities offered at The Chicago School.

#### **2. Do I have to inform The Chicago School that I have a disability?**

No. However, if you require an academic adjustment or disability services, you must identify yourself to TCSP as having a disability. Likewise, you should inform the school about your disability if you want to ensure that you are assigned to accessible facilities and provided appropriate services. Disclosing a disability is always voluntary.

#### **3. What academic adjustments are available at The Chicago School?**

Appropriate academic adjustments are determined based on disability and individual need. In providing an academic adjustment, The Chicago School will not lower or effect substantial modifications to essential curricular requirements. For example, extended testing time might be an agreed upon accommodation, but The Chicago School will not change the substantive content of the test. In addition, The Chicago School does not have to make modifications that would fundamentally alter the nature of a service, program, or activity, or would result in an undue financial or administrative burden. Finally, The Chicago School does not provide personal attendants, individually prescribed devices, readers for personal use or study, or other devices or services of a personal nature, such as tutoring and typing.

#### **4. If I want an academic adjustment, what should I do?**

The Office of Student Affairs manages services for qualified disabled students requiring reasonable accommodations. Please complete a [Disability Accommodation Request Form](#) available on the school's website, attach any supporting documentation, and forward to the appropriate individual. Submitting scanned forms and documents via email is the preferred submission method because it is considered the most secure. However, you may also submit your documents by post, via fax, or deliver directly to the Student Affairs office.

#### **5. When should I request an academic adjustment?**

Although an academic adjustment may be requested at any time, it is best to request it as early as possible. In order to ensure adequate processing time and time to arrange for an appropriate academic adjustment, The Chicago School asks that requests be submitted a **minimum of six weeks prior to the start of the term** for which the accommodation is being requested.

#### **6. What documentation must I provide?**

Official documentation must provide enough information for you and The Chicago School to decide what is an appropriate academic adjustment. Documentation must be complete and current in order for reasonable accommodations to be established at the postsecondary level of education.

As appropriate to the disability, documentation should include the following elements:

1. A diagnostic statement by a professional whose license or credentials are appropriate to describe or diagnose the disability, provided on professional letterhead. The statement should include the date of the most current diagnostic evaluation, the date of the original diagnosis, and identification of the nature and extent of the disability. (Sometimes identification will include a description of the diagnostic tests, methods, and/or criteria used.)
2. Specific information on the functional limitation as related to the academic environment. (Might include specific test results and the examiner's narrative interpretation.)
3. Description of the current course of treatment including medical side effects. (Might include treatment, medications, and/or

- assistive devices/services currently prescribed or in use.)
4. Prognosis for the disability. (Might include a description of the expected progression or stability of the impact of the disability over time.)
  5. Recommended reasonable accommodations.
  6. The credentials of the diagnosing professional if not clear from the letterhead or other forms.

Please contact your disability services representative if you have questions about submitting your documentation.

#### **7. Once the school has received the necessary documentation from me, what should I expect?**

Your request will be reviewed in light of the essential requirements for your program to help determine an appropriate academic adjustment. It is important to remember that the school is not required to lower or waive essential program or course requirements. If you have requested a specific academic adjustment, the school may offer that academic adjustment or an alternative one, if the alternative also would be effective. You will most likely be contacted to discuss your request. Identifying an appropriate academic adjustment is an interactive process that may require multiple conversations and could include other school administrators or faculty members. Once your request is reviewed, you will receive a "Letter of Academic Accommodations" outlining your approved academic accommodations that you must show to your instructors in a timely fashion. **It is your responsibility to communicate with your instructors about your accommodations by providing them a copy of your "Letter of Academic Accommodations" should you require academic accommodations.**

#### **8. What about confidentiality?**

The Chicago School keeps your records and the status of your disability in the strictest of confidence. Release of any information regarding your disability or the services you receive will only occur through written permission or in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) which may compel the school to release information to school officials on a need-to-know basis. It is your choice if you wish to disclose your disability to your instructors. To protect your privacy, your "Letter of Academic Accommodation" will not include information about the nature of your disability. It is your responsibility to present this notice to your instructor(s) in order to receive accommodations in your courses.

#### **9. How long does The Chicago School keep a file of my disability documentation?**

The Chicago School keeps documentation for seven (7) years after you separate from the institution (degree completion, withdrawal, etc.) and shreds all information after that time elapses.

#### **10. What if the academic adjustment is not working?**

Let your disability services representative know as soon as you become aware that the results are not what you expected. It may be too late to correct the problem if you wait until a course or activity is completed. Your representative will work with you to resolve the problem, where possible.

#### **11. What can I do if I believe someone at the school is discriminating against me?**

If you believe that any school personnel have discriminated against you because of a disability, you have the right to seek a review of such concerns. You have the option of pursuing either an informal complaint or a formal grievance. If you opt to pursue an informal complaint, you may later pursue a formal grievance if not satisfied with the resolution of the informal process. If you believe you have a valid basis for complaint regarding a requested academic accommodation, you should first attempt to resolve the issue with the staff or faculty member involved. If this effort proves unsuccessful, you should discuss the concern with the disability services representative who will investigate the complaint and attempt to resolve the disagreement in a timely manner. If a resolution is not achieved, you may then initiate a formal procedure, which is defined in the Student Handbook under the Student Grievance Procedure.

#### **12. Are accommodations retroactive?**

No. Accommodations are not retroactive. Accommodations for students with disabilities do not take effect until you have self-identified to your disability services representative, provided appropriate documentation, completed a "Disability Accommodation Request" form, been approved eligible for accommodations, and received a "Letter of Academic Accommodations". If you feel you are struggling with your courses due to your disability, it is in your best interest to approach Student Affairs prior to the start of the semester to provide yourself the best possible opportunity for success.