

PERTINENT INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WEST LOS ANGELES SCHOOL OF LAW

I. OVERVIEW

The University of West Los Angeles School of Law is committed to providing services and accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Our ADA Program is monitored by the ADA Compliance Officer who reports to the Dean of the School of Law. The Director of Student Services, the Compliance Officer, is involved in the determination and facilitation of academic and examination accommodations.

Any student, who desires to receive services from the ADA Program, should carefully review all the program's policies and procedures. While the University of West Los Angeles recognizes its legal obligation to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities, students requesting and/or utilizing these services have certain obligations and responsibilities surrounding their use of such services.

II. CONFIDENTIALITY

Information about who has a disability and the nature of that disability is highly confidential information. However, it is sometimes necessary for the ADA Officer to provide disability information to University personnel in the consideration and facilitation of academic and examination accommodations for students with disabilities. As a general rule, only the members of the law school staff will have specific information about a student's disability so that reasonable and appropriate accommodations can be determined. Only when necessary for carrying out the responsibilities of their jobs is disability information given to other University personnel. Written consent of a student with a disability to share information with personnel other than the referenced University personnel, is necessary before disclosure will be made.

Therefore, the following is a list of personnel, by department, who may have information regarding students with disabilities:

Personnel Who May Have Access to Students' Disability Files:

1. ADA Officer
2. Dean of the School of Law (and administrative assistant)
3. Academic Dean (and administrative assistant)

Personnel Who May Need to Have Knowledge That a Student Has a Disability, But Who Will Not Have Access to the Nature of Disability:

1. Examination Proctors
2. The student workers for Notes and Recorded Readings Accommodations
3. Financial Aid Office staff (if student with a disability is a client of the Department of Rehabilitation)
4. Business Office staff

III. PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING DISABILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS

A. Verification of Disability

In 1999, the School of Law adopted the guidelines set forth by the Committee of Bar Examiners which establish the criteria that must be met before accommodations will be provided.

The process requires the student and the diagnostician to complete a specific form as part of the application process. There are separate forms for physical, learning, and mental disability. Specific testing requirements are outlined as well.

Students are required to submit the necessary forms to the ADA Officer as early in the term as possible, to allow time for review, or submission of additional information. Late submissions may result in the student being ineligible to receive accommodations for the term.

Since the forms must ultimately be submitted to the Committee of Bar Examiners, original forms are returned to the student and a copy is maintained in the student's ADA file.

The School reserves the right to submit the request and test results to an independent licensed consultant who is contracted with the School. In this instance, the student's name will be redacted to preserve anonymity. If the student withholds permission to forward the request to an independent consultant, accommodations may be denied.

An information sheet outlining the CBE's guidelines follows this section. A complete application packet is available in the School of Law office. All students who believe they may need accommodations are encouraged to contact the Compliance Officer as early as possible.

B. Verification of Temporary Disability

Students seeking accommodations on the basis of a temporary disability must provide documentation verifying the nature of the condition, stating the expected duration of the condition, and describing the accommodations deemed necessary. A temporary disability is not a handicap within the meaning of Section 504; however, it is the policy of the University to provide reasonable academic accommodations for such disability whenever possible. Such verification must be provided by a professional health care provider who is qualified in the diagnosis of such conditions. The assessment or verification of disability must reflect the student's current level of disability, and **shall be no older than 60 days**. The cost of obtaining the professional verification shall be borne by the student.

If the initial verification is incomplete or inadequate to determine the extent of the disability and appropriate accommodations, the University shall have the discretion to require supplemental assessment of a temporary disability. The cost of the supplemental assessment shall be borne by the student.

IV. GENERAL ACCOMMODATIONS

A. Procedure for Requesting Accommodations

Reasonable and appropriate academic and examination accommodations are defined as alternative means to access information or facilities, or alternative ways to demonstrate knowledge, without compromising essential academic objectives and without undue financial or administrative burden on the institution. All students requesting services are required to submit the forms required by the CBE including a form filled out by the student and one filled out by an appropriate professional with supporting documentation prior to receiving services from the ADA Program. Additionally,

documentation of accommodations received at another educational institution or place of work may be helpful in determining accommodations in the law school setting.

Students will be notified in writing of the accommodations granted and/or denied, or if additional information is necessary. Every effort will be made to respond timely to student requests.

Should the student disagree with the decision, the student is encouraged to contact the Officer to discuss concerns, in an effort to resolve the matter informally. If the matter cannot be resolved informally with the ADA officer, the student may file a grievance under the School's Complaint Procedure for Discrimination.

B. Recorded Textbooks

A free, public service known as Recordings For The Blind and Dyslexic provides recorded textbooks and textbooks on computer disks (IBM compatible) to students with documented disabilities that would affect reading (such as visual impairments and dyslexia). If a student requires recorded textbooks, it is the student's responsibility to apply for RFB&D services. It is important to note that it takes about a month to have an application from RFB&D processed. Also, it can take up to three months to have a law textbook recorded that has not already been recorded. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to submit an application to RFB&D as soon as possible. Reasonable effort must be made in a timely manner to obtain recorded textbooks from RFB&D.

C. Liaison Services With the State Department of Rehabilitation

The Department of Rehabilitation offers services to students with disabilities, such as special adaptive equipment, books, supplies, tuition and employment counseling. Students must have a verifiable disability and meet their criteria to qualify for services. For more complete details about Rehabilitation Services, please contact a counselor at the California State Department of Rehabilitation.

D. Reader Services

All students requiring recorded textbooks should receive this service from Recordings For the Blind. There are occasions, however, when students with visual impairments or learning disabilities need material on tape that is not available through RFB. The ADA Officer may provide readers or recording services in these cases if documentation is on file justifying the accommodation. The ADA Officer must receive, in writing, a student's request for either a reader or for material to be recorded by the ADA Office. The request must be submitted within ten (10) days, for every one hundred pages to be recorded, in advance of the due date. The ADA

Officer may accept requests for reader/taping services that do not meet the above time lines and every reasonable effort will be made to provide the service. However, the ADA Officer cannot guarantee the timely completion of the request without the aforementioned notice. This request must include the book title, author, page numbers, and the date you need the recording. In some cases, you may need to leave your book with the ADA Office so the material can be recorded. All recordings made by the ADA Office are the property of the Program and must be returned to the ADA Officer upon completion of the semester, or upon withdrawal from the University.

E. Library Assistants, Proofreaders, Scribes

During the course of the semester, students with disabilities may require assistance in the library, or the use of proofreaders to check for mechanical errors in written work, or may need someone to write for them as they dictate information. If the diagnostician has stated that such services are required as a result of the disability, every effort will be made to accommodate the request. Please note that a minimum of twenty (20) business days is required to facilitate such services. Therefore, all written requests must be received 20 business days in advance of the date the student expects to need the requested accommodation. While written requests received by the Officer without such notice will be accepted, every reasonable effort will be made to facilitate the request, but no guarantees can be made.

F. Reduced Courseload as an Accommodation

The State Bar of California requires that, students must enroll on a full-time or part-time basis. However, some students, because of the specific impact of their disability, may need a reduction in courseload. Should you believe that your disability requires such an accommodation, your diagnostician must so indicate in the statement provided. Students are advised that carrying a reduced courseload may result in ineligibility to participate in the financial aid program, ineligibility to sit for the "Baby Bar" in the advent of disqualification from UWLA, and an extension of the date of graduation. All students carrying a reduced courseload must sign a statement accepting responsibility for any consequences that may occur as a result of taking the reduced courseload.

G. Recording Accommodation

Some students with disabilities may be unable to take adequate notes in a classroom situation. As is the case with all accommodations, professional documentation of the disability must support the need for notetaking services. Generally student assistants are utilized for notetaking. ADA students may record lectures by borrowing a tape recorder from the office. Tapes will be provided. (ADA students must give the Officer advance notice of the intent to tape.)

H. Priority Registration for Courses

The ADA Office may make special arrangements with the Admissions Office for students with disabilities to register early if the specific impact of such disabilities necessitates priority registration. Please see the ADA Officer to request this accommodation.

V. EXAM ACCOMMODATION

Accommodations for exams will be made as necessary to minimize the effect of a particular disability

and to accurately measure a student's performance in the course. All examinations taken with accommodations are under the supervision of the ADA Officer. All correspondence regarding exam accommodations, exam dates and times, and exam locations, should be directed to the ADA Officer.

Students with disabilities taking accommodated exams under the supervision of the ADA Office are subject to the same rules and regulations as outlined in this Student Handbook. The only exceptions to the rules and regulations set forth in the aforementioned publication are the accommodations themselves approved by the ADA Officer. In addition, some of the administrative procedures may differ from the general exam process. Therefore, please review the following information about examinations administered under the auspices of the ADA Program:

1. Ascertain your exam number from the School of Law prior to checking in the day of the exam. Failure to do so may result in loss of exam writing time.
2. You are required to check in at the School of Law office 15 minutes prior to the scheduled exam start time. Failure to check in on time may result in loss of exam writing time.
3. You are strongly discouraged from discussing your exam accommodations with professors.
This is to preserve the anonymous exam and grading process.
4. You may not bring any unauthorized books, notes, papers, briefcases, purses, handbags or like materials into an examination room or use them for reference. You must place these materials in your car before reporting to the office.
5. The ADA Officer, ADA exam proctors, and the Deans may enter the examination room at any time. Each of these people has the right to inspect any and all materials in the room.
6. Students who, because of disability, have been allowed to bring food and beverages into the examination room are limited to one, small lunch bag and a reasonable sized beverage container. The ADA proctor will inspect this bag prior to the onset of the examination and at any time during the course of the examination.
7. Students who have the use of a personal computer as an accommodation for disability must do all the proofing, editing, saving, etc. within the specified exam time. No extension of time

- will be granted for these purposes. The same rule applies if a transcriptionist is being utilized.
- The student is responsible for instructing the transcriptionist accordingly, and structuring time accordingly.
8. Examinees may not speak to another student for any purpose after an examination has begun.
 9. Any breaks must be taken within the exam period unless otherwise stated as a separate exam accommodation.
 10. No extension of time will be given if a student is late for the examination. Arrival more than 15 minutes after the scheduled starting time, will result in eligibility to sit for the examination and a grade of “Administrative X” for the examination. Receipt of the “Administrative X” may be avoided only on the basis of extraordinary and compelling excuse as determined by the Dean.
 11. The proctor will not talk to students except to give a 5-minute warning at the end of the exam and then will inform students when the exam period is over. The proctor is the time keeper and will enter the room at the end of the exam to pick up all the materials. Please comply with the proctors. If there are any questions as to starting time and/or extended exam allowance, please check with the ADA Officer before the exam date.
 12. Should a student become ill and unable to sit for the examination, immediate notification to the ADA Officer is necessary. Any decision about the change in time or date can only be made by the ADA Officer in consultation with the Dean.
 13. Students must leave campus immediately after the exam. Since ADA students may take an exam before the balance of students, discussion of the exam content is cause for disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct. ADA students will be required to sign an affidavit agreeing to this condition. Failure to do so may result in denial of accommodations.

VI. Readmission to the University

ADA students who are academically dismissed are subject to the same policies as other academically dismissed students. (See the policy outlined on page 8 of this Handbook).

Students may not request retroactive ADA status. Each student has an affirmative duty to notify the ADA Office of a possible disability and to provide documentation as stated in Section III, prior to receiving accommodations.

The Rehabilitation Act states that accommodations are given to disabled students to “level the playing field” to allow them to compete in the University setting. ADA students are not given accommodations to provide an advantage nor are they counted as a liability. The recommendations are solely a leveling agent and students are evaluated on their adjusted/accommodated ability.