



Policies And Procedures for Requesting Accommodation Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Phillips Theological Seminary recognizes disability as an aspect of diversity, the inclusion of which is vital to the seminary community and to society. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities. The following describes the relationship between the Requesting Student and the Institution in fulfilling requests for accommodations under ADA and details the process of requesting accommodation. Contact the [Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs](#) for additional information on requesting accommodation.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Students requesting ADA accommodation have both rights and responsibilities, which include the following:

- RIGHT to equal opportunity to learn and participate in their chosen academic program, through the provision of reasonable accommodation(s).
- RIGHT to confidentiality of information regarding their disability, except as disclosure is necessary to acquire accommodations, facilitate services and/or is required by law.
- RIGHT to accessible formats for information and means of communication about the request and/or accommodation(s).
- RIGHT to file a complaint, in accordance with the seminary's Section 504/ADA Grievance Procedures if they believe they have been subjected to discrimination based on disability and/or have been denied access to accommodation(s) as required by law.
- RESPONSIBILITY to meet and maintain essential qualifications and standards for the seminary's courses and programs.
- RESPONSIBILITY to follow published procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodation at the seminary.
- RESPONSIBILITY to provide documentation that details the manner in which their disability may impact their participation in the academic classroom that supports each accommodation request. This includes disclosure of a disability that directly affects course contact delivery, even if the student does not request accommodation(s).

Seminary Rights and Responsibilities

The seminary has rights and responsibilities, which include the following:

- RIGHT to identify essential functions, abilities, skills, knowledge and standards for courses and programs and to evaluate all students equally on these bases.
- RIGHT to request and receive current documentation (including documentation from a medical professional) that supports any accommodation request.
- RIGHT to select among equally effective accommodations in response to student's request.
- RIGHT to refuse accommodation requests that alter essential learning outcomes or pose a fundamental alternation to a course, or that pose an undue burden (financial or administrative) upon the school.
- RIGHT to deny a request for accommodation if documentation does not support the request, or if documentation is not provided.
- RIGHT to disclose a student's documented disability to application faculty and staff members if the disclosure directly effects course content delivery, access to library resources, access to learning management software, and/or management to software for the maintenance of student academic and/or financial records.
- RESPONSIBILITY to provide information to students in accessible formats.
- RESPONSIBILITY to provide and facilitate reasonable accommodation(s) for students in Phillips courses and programs.
- RESPONSIBILITY to ensure programs, courses, and facilities are available in the most integrated and accessible settings possible.
- RESPONSIBILITY to maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communications.

Definitions and Terms

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act define a disability as "a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits a major life activity."

Recognized conditions that are eligible to receive disability services include, but are not limited to:

1. Learning Disabilities (ex.: dyslexia, ADD)
2. Physical Disabilities (ex.: visual impairment, cerebral palsy)
3. Psychological disabilities (ex.: anxiety, depression, PTSD)

Reasonable Accommodation

- Mitigates barriers, providing the qualifying student equal access to instructional content and assessment measures while maintaining standards for academic rigor.
- Does not alter essential learning outcomes or post a fundamental alteration to the course.
- Does not pose an undue burden (financial or administrative) upon the school.
- Is supported through active engagement in the requesting student's interactive process with the school's ADA Officer.
- Are not retroactive.
- Cannot impose an unfair advantage for the requesting student in achieving the aims of the course.

Steps for Requesting Accommodation(s)

The following are the steps that should be taken when seeking accommodation for a disability.

1. The requesting student contacts the Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs to obtain resources for requesting accommodation. Request must be made 4 weeks prior to semester start or implementation period.
2. Requesting student submits a written petition (attached) to the Associate Dean, requesting a "Plan of Accommodation." A written petition should attach official documentation of diagnosis penned and signed by a licensed physician (see "Required Documentation," below.)
3. The Associate Dean will meet with the requesting student to understand the student's experience of the disability and its intersection with their classroom experience.
4. The petition is reviewed by the Associate Dean, along with the Vice President of Academic Affairs/Dean, within 5 business days of its receipt.
5. A "Letter of Accommodation" is drafted by the Associate Dean and is presented in writing to the student for acceptance and signature. Implementation expenses, if any, are the responsibility of the student.
6. The "Letter of Accommodation" is submitted to seminary faculty and staff (ex. academic advisor, professor(s), library staff) who are implicated in implementation of the accommodation(s). Information about student disabilities will only be provided to individuals on a need-to-know basis. The Associate Dean serves as a resource for both the requesting student and seminary faculty and staff in implementing approved accommodation(s).
7. The requesting student must initiate conversations with each professor to indicate which accommodation(s) they will be using for a particular class/service before accommodation will be implemented.

Requesting Student must contact the Associate Dean before each academic semester in order to renew the accommodation request.

A student who believes they have been denied a requested academic accommodation or service required by law has the right to file a grievance seeking review of the denial. Please refer to the ADA Grievance Procedure below.

Students who choose not to request accommodation when they enter the seminary do not forfeit their right to receive accommodation(s) at a later date. Accommodations, however, are not retroactive.

Required Documentation

In support of the written petition, students must submit relevant and current documentation of a disability from a licensed physician. Documentation of previously provided accommodation(s) from other educational settings can also be submitted in support of the petition for accommodation.

Appropriate documentation should not be more than 3 years old and should include:

- A description of the diagnosis of disability, specifying duration and severity
- Test scores and interpretation, if relevant
- Information concerning prescribed medications and their potential side effects
- Assessment of substantial disability-based limitations and how they relate to the educational environment
- Recommendations concerning educational accommodation(s)

The seminary reserves the right to request additional documentation, if needed. No documentation will result in a waiver of Phillips' admissions policies, regulations regarding acceptable behavior, or course objectives and requirements, including the attendance policy. Accommodation requests that fundamentally alter the nature of the curriculum, a course's learning objectives, or that post an undue burden (administrative or financial) upon the institution are not considered reasonable under applicable federal laws. All costs for testing and assessment in support of the petition are the responsibility of the student, although testing costs may be reimbursed by health insurance companies.

Documentation is also required for the use of service animals on campus. Please see Appendix I.

Appendix I

Service Animals

If a disabilities qualified student has a service animal, the following shall apply:

A service animal is defined as a guide dog or signal dog trained to work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. The task(s) performed by the dog must be directly related to the person's disability. (At the current time, only *dogs* are recognized as services animals under Titles II, III, and with the ADA.) Pets and therapy animals whose primary purpose is to provide comfort and emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA, though psychiatric service dogs do qualify.

The care and supervision of a service animal is the responsibility of the owner using the animal's services. The owner must ensure that the animal is in good health and has been vaccinated against diseases recommended by the American Veterinary Medical Association. Further, service dogs must wear rabies vaccination tags.

Service animals must be kept on a leash or lead at all times when the animal is in a public area. The owner must also be in full control of the animal at all times. The owner is responsible for the cost to repair any damage done by the service animal to seminary property.

Appropriate documentation must be on file with the Associate Dean before a service animal enters the seminary.