



Handbook for
Students with Disabilities
Office of Disability Resources

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Contact Information

Office: Lee Hall 401
Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Web site: www.umw.edu/disability

E-mail: odr@umw.edu

Phone: 540-654-1266
VA Relay Service: (800) 828-1140, or 7-1-1

Introduction to the Office of Disability Resources

The Office of Disability Resources (ODR) coordinates the provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodations through an interactive process with qualified students with disabilities. These accommodations may include, but are not limited to, extended time on tests, note taking assistance, sign language interpreters, enlarged print materials, permission to audio record lectures, and distraction-reduced testing sites. Recommended [Documentation Guidelines](#) can be found online.

The [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) defines a person with a disability as anyone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, or learning. Disabling conditions may include - but are not limited to – chronic health impairments such as AIDS, fibromyalgia, and heart disease; visual or hearing impairment; psychiatric disorders; traumatic brain injuries; specific learning disorders; attention deficit disorder, and mobility impairment.

Disclosure of a disability is voluntary. However, in order to receive accommodations, the student must self-disclose, register with the Office of Disability Resources, and follow institutional procedures for requesting accommodations.

Student Records

Confidentiality

The Office of Disability Resources (ODR) collects and holds student disability documentation. Information will be shared only on a “need to know” basis with student approval, through a student signed confidentiality form. Please direct all questions about ODR’s management of confidential information directly to the ODR office.

Maintenance of Records

A confidential file is maintained on each student that includes documentation of the disability, a record of each contact, and action taken. A database is utilized for caseload management purposes on a secure server with limited access. Student records will be shredded/deleted five years after the last contact. Since students may need their documentation for GRE’s, LSAT’s, and other universities, we recommend that every student keep a copy of their documentation. Please monitor your UMW email for updated information on changes to this process.

Accessible Parking

All UMW students who wish to park on campus must purchase a UMW parking decal. Students who have a Virginia accessible parking hangtag or license plates may park in any accessible parking space on campus. Please review the [Accessible Parking Information](#) or contact Parking Management directly with questions.

Students who do not have an accessible parking hang tag from the state of Virginia, but need to use accessible parking spaces on campus, or need to have receive permission to have their car on campus (for Freshman) should contact the UMW parking office at 540-654-1129 for information on required documentation.

Rights and Responsibilities

UMW students with disabilities have the right to:

1. Reasonable and effective accommodations according to your disability based on documentation.
2. Equal access to educational and co-curricular programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities available through the university.
3. To be treated with respect and dignity and receive equal and fair treatment.
4. Confidentiality in all matters of your documentation and educational record.
5. Information reasonably available in accessible formats.

UMW students with disabilities have the responsibility to:

1. Initiate services with the Office of Disability Resources (ODR).
2. Provide documentation of my disability to the ODR (please review recommended [Documentation Guidelines](#)).
3. Request accommodations in a timely manner from the ODR to ensure that they are in place as soon as possible. I also understand that I may request accommodations at any time during my tenure at UMW.
4. Meet with my professors, provide them with a copy of my accommodation letter, and discuss accommodation needs each semester. ODR strongly recommends meeting with your professor(s) at the beginning of each semester to develop a plan to best meet your needs as accommodations are not retroactive and do not take effect until the letter is presented and a plan has been put in place.
5. Advocate for myself and monitor my own progress. I will communicate with ODR if I need assistance with accommodation related issues as soon as possible.
6. Maintain up-to-date documentation, contact, and disclosure information with the ODR.
7. Follow all testing policies and procedures. The ODR will assist with providing testing services or with helping faculty locate space only in the event that my professor(s) cannot provide appropriate testing accommodations.
8. Abide by the UMW Honor Code.

The Office of Disability Resources has the right to:

1. Maintain the college's academic standards;
2. Require current documentation from a student completed by an appropriate professional source to verify the need for reasonable accommodations and/or auxiliary aids;
3. Discuss a student's need for reasonable accommodations and/or auxiliary aids with the professional source of his/her documentation with the student's signed consent authorizing such discussion;
4. Select among equally effective and appropriate accommodations and/or auxiliary aids in consultation with students with disabilities;
5. Deny a request for accommodations and/or auxiliary aids if the documentation does not identify a specific disability or the documentation fails to support the need for the requested services; and
6. Refuse to provide an accommodation or auxiliary aid that is inappropriate or unreasonable, including any that: pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others; constitute a substantial change or alteration to an essential element of a course; or pose undue financial or administrative burden on the college.

The Office of Disability Resources has the responsibility to:

1. Keep student documentation and information secured and confidential;
2. Provide reasonable accommodations and/or auxiliary aids for students with disabilities upon a timely request by a student; and
3. Inform students with disabilities of University policies and procedures for filing a formal grievance through the Office of Human Resources and through external agencies (e.g., Office for Civil Rights).

UMW faculty and staff have the right to:

1. Require students with disabilities to provide a faculty accommodation letter;
2. Expect that students with disabilities will communicate their requests for accommodations in a timely manner;
3. Uphold standards for courses and expect that, with or without accommodations, students with disabilities will complete the same or equal course requirements.

UMW faculty and staff have the responsibility to:

1. Ensure that reasonable accommodations are arranged, provided, and/or allowed;
2. Provide information and materials in alternative formats as noted on the student's accommodation letter.
3. Treat all students with the same fundamental fairness;
4. Protect confidentiality of disability-related information; and
5. Discuss any issues that arise concerning a student with a disability with the Office of Disability Resources in a timely manner.

How to Request Accommodations

All students in need of accommodations at UMW are required to complete the Student [Registration Form](#), provide the office with documentation of a disability and participate in an interactive process to determine appropriate accommodations at UMW. Once accommodations are in place, students are encouraged to request accommodations through their Accommodate portal prior to the start of each semester (or upon onset of disability). This is true even if they are requesting the same accommodations, as not all course requirements or settings are the same and may require adjustments to the approved accommodations. ODR also understands that a need may arise later in the semester that warrants a new accommodation plan. It is advised to be proactive in communication with ODR and instructional faculty about accommodation needs. Additional information on how to submit requests is available on the ODR website and by contacting ODR@UMW.EDU.

Requesting Classroom Accommodations each semester:

If you have already received classroom accommodations at UMW, you may request an updated Accommodation Letters each semester through your Accommodate portal by completing a Next Semester Letter Renewal. A guide for completing a next semester letter renewal is found in the resource library within your accommodate portal. Students will be able to complete a next semester letter renewal approximately two weeks prior to the start of your Fall and Spring Semesters. Summer semesters are subject to change. ODR will communicate with students via their UMW email address each semester, providing information on when they can log into their portal to submit their next semester letter renewal. If you would like to request new accommodations that you have not yet been approved for, you are required to schedule an additional accommodation request meeting with an ODR Specialist through your accommodate portal.

Once you have submitted the Semester Letter Renewal our office will prepare your letters, which will include the accommodations which have been approved. This letter will be available through your Accommodate portal to both you and your faculty. Should you like to opt out of ODR automatically providing a copy of your Accommodation Letter to your faculty members, please notify ODR of this request, by emailing ODR@UMW.EDU. Should students add or change their course schedule during the ADD/DROP period at the beginning of a semester, students are required to email ODR@UMW.EDU to notify us of your class changes. This will allow a specialist to create additional letters for your additional classes.

Whether your Faculty receive a copy of your Accommodation Letter from ODR or by having you either email or deliver a printed copy; students are still required to engage each professor in a conversation about their accommodations and how they will be utilized within the course. ODR recommends that students discuss their accommodations with faculty as soon as possible, as accommodations are not retroactive. See “Strategies for Discussing Accommodations with Faculty Members” section of this Student Handbook.

Requesting Course Substitutions:

Course substitutions are offered on a case-by-case basis for the General Education Intermediate Competency in Second Language requirement. Substitutions for Math are no longer made as UMW does not have a math requirement, only a quantitative requirement.

Students are able to request a Second Language Substitution at any time during their educational career at UMW, in the same manner they are able to make requests for any other academic accommodation, however it is recommended that students start this process well before their Junior year.

For more information please see: [Second Language Course Substitution Process](#).

Requesting Housing and Emotional Support Animal (ESA) Accommodations:

For Housing Accommodation Requests:

Download and complete the [Housing Accommodations Request Form](#).

Students complete Part 1, and Part 2 is completed by the treating physician, physiologist, psychiatrist or other licensed individual, who has direct knowledge of your housing needs based on the impact of your disability. You must then submit a completed Housing Accommodation Request Form to the Office of Disability Resources, through the Accommodate portal. New students can attach the completed form to the Registration Form for review, while current ODR students can upload their completed form, to their Accommodate portal for review. A guide for uploading additional documentation can be found in the resource library within your accommodate portal. Housing applications are reviewed by the Housing Accommodation Committee throughout the academic year. Students are notified of the Committee's decision via their UMW email address. Please review the [Housing Accommodation Request Process](#).

For Emotional Support Animal Requests:

Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) include any animal with a primary role of providing a person with a disability emotional comfort. These animals are not required to undergo specialized training and therefore are not considered service animals. ESA requests are treated as housing requests under the Fair Housing Act. However, there is a separate [Emotional Support Animal Request Packet](#) that is required to be completed. ESAs may not reside in residences without prior completion of the ESA procedures outlined on our [Service Animals and ESAs webpage](#) and the approval from the Housing Accommodation Committee.

Strategies for Discussing Accommodations with Faculty

1. Stop by during the instructor's posted office hours or make an appointment.
2. Read the course syllabus and your accommodation letter before speaking to the instructor. Both contain valuable information.
3. It is strongly advised for you to arrange time to communicate with all your instructors about your accommodation letters. This communication should allow for the discussion of private information (such as office hours instead of right before class when time is very limited). Without this communication, it is difficult for instructors to understand your needs and many accommodations require prior understanding on both the student and instructor's part in order to properly implement.
4. It is strongly advised for meetings with instructors to take place as early in the semester as possible. This gives you time to work out how the accommodations will be provided and answer any questions.
5. Rely on your past experiences. Tell the instructor what has worked for you.
6. Ask the instructor if he/she has any ideas for accommodating your disability.
7. In your meeting, make sure you reach an agreement that gives both sides a clear understanding of the accommodations that will be provided and the student's responsibilities. For example, the instructor may want a reminder before an exam if you are to be given extended time on an exam.
8. If you and/or the instructor have any questions or concerns about accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Resources.

Adapted from "Disability Compliance for Higher Education, Volume 7, Issue 1, August 2001.

Assistive Technology

Assistive technology is technology used by individuals with disabilities in order to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible. ODR works to provide students with information on assistive technology devices available across campus, on loan from ODR, or items that may assist with personal study.

[Assistive Technology Available for Loan](#)

[Campus Wide Technology Access](#)

[Personal Items Recommended by ODR](#)

Accessible Materials

Accessible materials include all print, online, visual, or auditory material to be available in an alternate format that allows for individuals with disabilities to gain access. Students can request accessible materials by filling out the [Accessible Text Request form](#) and providing proof of purchase. Obtaining or creating accessible materials can take up to 4 weeks depending on the length and type of material, please remember to request your accessible materials as early as possible.

Dietary Considerations

Many individuals require unique considerations to their diet. ODR can work with students through an interactive process to determine whether housing accommodations or additional resources are appropriate and required for a student to ensure equal access to all UMW programming.

Campus Dining offers a variety of menu options designed to fit a broad range of dietary preferences or requirements. The Top of the UC offers the most selections, but specialty items are also available from our retail locations.

- For detailed information about **dining options** that fit with your dietary restrictions, contact Marketing Manager **Rose Benedict**: rbenedic@umw.edu.
- For questions related to **meal plan changes or special diet accommodations**, contact UMW Dining Services Liaison and Meal Plan Manager **Chris “CJ” Porter**: cjporter@umw.edu. The meal plan exemption request form and additional information can be found online: [Meal Plan Information](#).

Emergency Planning

Emergency Management and Safety focuses on campus safety procedures, from fire safety inspections; evacuation procedures for all students, including students with disabilities; accident reporting; chemical procedures, chemical storage and handling, in addition to many other areas and safety needs of campus. While, it is important for all students to be aware of the evacuation procedures at UMW, students with disabilities (mobility impairments, visual impairments, hearing impairments, psychological needs, chronic health, etc.) should pay close attention to the ADA evacuation procedures found at [Emergency and Safety Planning](#).

If you need help determining if you will need assistance in an emergency evacuation, please utilize the “**Will you need assistance in an emergency evacuation?**” chart on page 12.

Here are a few **recommendations** for those that will need assistance in an evacuation:

- Program the Campus Police Department number in your personal cell phone: 540-654-4444. Keep your cell phone on/near you at all times.
- Be prepared to share the following information:
 - The nature of the emergency – i.e. a fire alarm is sounding at your location
 - That you have a disability and need assistance
 - The name of your building and room number (or approximate location)
- Participate in the practice fire drills on campus
 - Three practice fire drills are held each semester (during different times of the day).
 - During a practice fire drill it is appropriate to contact the Campus Police Department and share that a practice drill is currently in progress and you are practicing what you would do if it were not a drill.
- Develop a Personal Support Network
 - This is a network of individuals on campus who are aware of your individual needs and can assist you in an emergency.
 - Individuals to include are as follows: RA’s, Faculty, and Advisors. It is not recommended to rely on roommates or fellow classmates.

It is important to be prepared in the event of an emergency. ODR recommends becoming familiar with guidance from well-informed sources, such as:

- [American Red Cross](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control](#)
- [Department of Homeland Security](#)
- [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#)
- Seek advice from your licensed provider about ways to prepare for an emergency.
- Utilize the [UMW Rave Guardian app](#) on your cell phone.
- If you have a [service animal or emotional support animal](#), include your animal in safety planning.
- Create your own emergency plan. Be sure to practice it every time there is an opportunity, such as drills.

Will you need assistance in an emergency evacuation?		
Do you experience any of the following conditions that could interfere with your ability to quickly evacuate a building?		
Yes	No	Limitations that interfere with walking or using stairs (joint pain, mobility device user – wheelchair, canes, crutches, walker).
Yes	No	Reduced stamina, fatigue or tire easily (due to a variety of temporary or permanent conditions not limited to those on this list).
Yes	No	Respiratory (cardiac [heart] conditions, asthma, emphysema, or other symptoms triggered by stress, exertion, or exposure to small amounts of dust or smoke etc.).
Yes	No	Emotional, cognitive, thinking, or learning difficulties (may become confused when dealing with unfamiliar and unusual activity during an emergency, lose sense of direction, or may need emergency directions explained in simple steps or basic concepts).
Yes	No	Vision loss (may require assistance in learning the emergency evacuation routes or assistance in moving down stairs).
Yes	No	Hearing loss (may require modification to the standard way emergency announcements, notifications and instructions are provided).
Yes	No	Temporary limitations resulting from, but not limited to:
		Surgery,
		Accidents and injuries (sprains, broken bones),
		Pregnancy
Yes	No	Do you rely on technology or medication which may not work in an emergency (hearing aids, wheelchair, gas mask, elevator, lighting, sounds)?
Yes	No	Other:

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Furniture Accommodations

ODR works with students to make sure the furniture in their classrooms allows for access on a case by case basis. If furniture accommodations are approved, ODR will work with Facilities to place appropriate furniture in each of the students' classrooms. ODR works to communicate with faculty on behalf of students, verifying that furniture has been placed appropriately to allow for an inclusive experience. ODR encourages students to reach out if any issues arise with the placement of this furniture. A students' communication is a very important part of receiving this accommodation, as classrooms at UMW are utilized by multiple parties to include but not limited to, faculty and student groups.

Grievance Procedure

If at any time you believe that you have been discriminated against by one or more persons serving in an official capacity for the University because of your disability, you may file a grievance by following the [Grievance Procedure](#).

You may also file a complaint with:

1. [U.S. Department of Education \(Office for Civil Rights\)](#)
 - (P): 800-421-3481
 - (TDD): 800-877-8339
 - OCR@edu.gov
2. U.S. Department of Justice
 - (P): 202-514-4609
 - (TTY): 202-514-0716