POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES

Western Governors University

Western Governors University recognizes and fulfills its obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and similar state laws. Western Governors University is committed to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified disabled learners in University programs and activities as is required by applicable law.

The determination of reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities, and compliance with the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act, are the responsibility of the Western Governors University ADA Compliance Committee. The ADA Compliance Officer serves as chair of the committee and principal point of contact for students with ADA questions or concerns.

POLICY

1. Western Governors University prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities, and provides training and resources to encourage and increase sensitivity and awareness of disability issues.

2. Western Governors University is dedicated to providing reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. Therefore, Western Governors University will strive to provide services and access to academic courses, activities and programs in accordance with these policies and procedures.

3. Western Governors University respects the independence, rights, and dignity of people with disabilities, therefore identifying oneself and/or requesting accommodations is completely voluntary.

4. In accordance with data privacy laws, Western Governors University will handle all data on learners with disabilities confidentially. Disability records are stored in locked filing cabinets and in secure electronic files. The ADA Compliance Officer may share disability-related information with University personnel who demonstrate a need to know to inquire about reasonable accommodations.

LEARNERS’ RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

People with disabilities at Western Governors University have the right to:

- Inclusion in courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities offered through the University;
- An equal opportunity to learn and to receive reasonable accommodations;
- Appropriate confidentiality of all information regarding disabilities and the ability to choose to whom this information may be disclosed, except as disclosures are required or permitted by law;
- Information available in accessible formats, when providing such information could be a reasonable accommodation, or as otherwise required by applicable law.
People with disabilities at Western Governors University have the responsibility to:

- Meet qualifications and uphold University standards for courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities;
- Voluntarily identify oneself as an individual with a disability when an accommodation is needed and to seek information, counsel, and assistance as needed;
- Contact the ADA Compliance Officer to request reasonable accommodations;
- Provide written documentation from a licensed health care provider qualified in the area of the disability that describes the nature of the disability, indicates how it would limit participation in the student’s educational program at Western Governors University, and suggest the specific accommodation(s). Please refer to the documentation guidelines below.

WESTERN GOVERNORS UNIVERSITY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Western Governors University has the right to:

- Request current documentation for assessing the need for reasonable accommodations;
- Deny a request for accommodations if appropriate documentation is not provided, or if the documentation received does not support the need for accommodations;
- Decide on reasonable accommodations that may be different from but equally effective as those suggested by the licensed health care professional;
- Refuse an unreasonable accommodation that would impose an undue burden on, or would fundamentally alter, Western Governors University or its programs or activities.

Western Governors University has the responsibility to:

- Present information to people with disabilities in accessible formats upon request when doing so would be a reasonable accommodation, or is otherwise required by applicable law.
- Provide reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities in courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities;
- Maintain confidentiality of records and communication, except where permitted or required by law.
PROCESS FOR ACCOMMODATION

Students may begin the procedure for requesting an accommodation at any time after being formally admitted to the University. We recommend that students complete the accommodation process at least six weeks in advance of referring for an assessment.

1. SELF DISCLOSURE
   Complete and submit the online self-disclosure form at [www.wgu.edu/wgu/ada_form](http://www.wgu.edu/wgu/ada_form) or contact the ADA Compliance Officer directly:

   ADA Compliance Officer
   Western Governors University
   4001 South 700 East, Suite 700
   Salt Lake City, Utah 84107-2533
   Phone: 801-428-5267
   Email: ADAsupport@wgu.edu

2. RELEASE OF INFORMATION
   Complete and submit the following form: Release of Information for Disability Services

3. DOCUMENTATION
   We require written documentation from a certified diagnosing professional that is dated no more than three years prior to the anticipated WGU enrollment date. The University may request more current information on an alleged disability at its discretion. The ADA Office at Western Governors University cannot determine or authorize any reasonable accommodation unless it is supported by documentation.

   The documentation must include each of the following:
   a. Statement of disability, including DSM-IV diagnosis where appropriate.
   b. Statement of clearly defined limitations related to the disability. (Note that these limitations must affect a major life activity as established by the ADA).
   http://www.access-board.gov/about/laws/ada-amendments.htm
   c. Provide relevant educational, developmental, and medical history.
   d. Statement of likely duration of the disability.
   e. Describe the specific accommodation(s) being requested for Western Governors University courses of study and/or assessments.
   f. All documentation must be on letterhead, signed and dated by the diagnostician, and include contact information for the individual providing the diagnosis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Diagnostician</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADD, ADHD</td>
<td>Psychologist, Psychiatrist, Physician</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional Disability</td>
<td>Psychologist, Psychiatrist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visual Impairment</td>
<td>Ophthalmologist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hearing Disability</td>
<td>Certified Otologist, Audiologist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Disability</td>
<td>Psychologist, Neuropsychologist, School Psychologist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Disability (Other Medical)</td>
<td>Physician, Nurse Practitioner</td>
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4. **ACCOMMODATION**

WGU is committed to providing equal access to educational programs for all students. Once we receive documentation of a student's disability and the possible accommodations suggested by the diagnosing professional, we will endeavor to meet the student's needs in a prompt, reasonable, and effective manner. Students should keep in mind that different accommodations may require different amounts of time to arrange, from several days to several weeks. Once a student and the ADA Compliance Officer reach agreement on a reasonable accommodation, the student will be given an accommodation letter to be signed by both the ADA Compliance Officer and the student.

Academic needs are determined by the documentation and a consultation with the learner. The following list contains examples of accommodations. The list below is not all-inclusive, as individual needs may call for other accommodations.

- Extended time on proctored assessments (50% or 100%)
- Breaks on proctored assessments
- Visual Assistance (Enlarged Print)
- Textbooks on audiotape or electronic format
- Sign language interpreters for proctored assessments

5. **COMMUNICATION**

The ADA Compliance Officer will notify the student’s mentor(s) of the agreed upon accommodation(s) and ensure the accommodation(s) is provided.

6. **APPEALS**

In the event that agreement on an accommodation cannot be reached, or that an agreed upon accommodation is felt to be inadequate, the student may make an appeal in writing to the Provost and Academic Vice President, whose decision in these matters is final. Contact:

Office of the Provost and Academic Vice President  
Western Governors University  
4001 South 700 East, Suite 700  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84107-2533  
Phone: (801) 274-3280
- Mentors help their students select the learning resources they are best able to use. When students take courses or use other learning resources from one of WGU’s educational providers the provider’s ADA policies and procedures prevail. WGU cannot guarantee that the same accommodation will be available, and students may have to request separate accommodation from the provider in some circumstances.
- Any substantial change in a disability, or any new disability, that occurs while a student is enrolled at WGU necessitates a return to step one in this Process.
- Employment issues related to ADA compliance at Western Governors University are to be directed to the Human Resources Department.

*Portions of this policy and procedures document were adapted from ADA materials in use by other universities.*