

Office of Accessibility

Student Handbook

Law Students

Welcome

The Office of Accessibility (OA) would like to welcome you to our office and to The University of Akron! Our goal is to provide students with disabilities equal access opportunities and programs geared for academic success. Please use this handbook as a guide for accessing accommodations and services through the Office of Accessibility. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns regarding accessing accommodations.

Office Hours

Fall/Spring Semesters	Summer Semester
Monday through Friday 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	Monday through Friday 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM

Our Staff is Here to Help You

The staff in the Office of Accessibility strives to provide students with full access to, and the opportunity for, full participation in the academic environment at The University of Akron. *Your Disability Specialist will be your “go-to” person on campus whether you have questions, need an advocate, or require assistance coordinating accommodations and services. We are here to assist you!*

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Office of Accessibility Student Handbook

Table of Contents

General Information

Our Mission.....	3
Relevant Federal Laws	3
Maintenance and Disclosure of Records of Disability.....	3

Accessing Accommodations

How to Register with the Office of Accessibility	4
What are Accommodations?	4
How to Request Accommodations.....	5
Testing Procedures.....	7
Accommodations for the Bar Exam.....	8
Supports for Temporary Medical Conditions.....	8
Externship, Clinical Experience, Internship, and Co-op Accommodations.....	8
Roles and Responsibilities in the Accommodation Process	9

Additional Services from the Office of Accessibility

Academic Support Sessions.....	10
Campus Walk-Throughs	10
Equipment.....	10
For Your Success Emails and Office of Accessibility Newsletters	10
Quiet Study Areas	11
Reader/Writer Hours	11

Additional Services from The University of Akron

Additional Tutoring Supports.....	12
Counseling Center	12
Recreation and Wellness Center	12
Residence Life and Housing Accommodations	12

Dispute Resolution Procedures

Dispute Resolution Procedures for Eligibility for Services.....	13
Dispute Resolution Procedures for Determination of Reasonable Accommodations.....	13

General Office Information

Our Mission

The mission of the Office of Accessibility at The University of Akron is to provide students with full access to and the opportunity for full participation in the academic environment. We are advocates of social justice for students with disabilities and work to end oppression by examining the social, cultural, and institutional barriers to inclusion of all students. We embrace the diversity of our student body and celebrate a culturally sensitive and accessible campus through outreach, partnership, and advocacy with all university departments.

Relevant Federal Laws

In addition to the mission of the Office of Accessibility, the following two directives from federal laws guide the efforts at this office and The University of Akron to provide an accessible experience in higher education. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in federally funded programs and activities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in the areas of employment, state and local government, public accommodations and services, transportation, and telecommunications.

College students with disabilities are covered in Title II of the ADA. Students often experience a transition from the provisions of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that guided their services in high school and the federal guidelines of the Rehab Act of 1973 and ADA that are relevant in higher education.

Pursuant to the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, The University of Akron does not discriminate against any student, because of a disability and does not exclude any qualified student with a disability from participation in or from receiving the benefits of the services, program, or activities of the University.

Maintenance and Disclosure of Records of Disability

Policy for Maintenance and Disclosure of Student Records Related to Disability

The Office of Accessibility maintains records of a student's disability according to the guidelines of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). These records are maintained in the Office of Accessibility, separately from the student's academic records, which are maintained elsewhere in the institution (Registrar and/or appropriate academic unit). Records received by the Office of Accessibility that appear to contain information unrelated to the determination and provision of academic accommodations, auxiliary aids and services will be returned to the provider. Information retained by the Office of Accessibility will be only that which is determined to be related to the disability and provision of academic accommodations.

Procedure to Request Release or Review of Student Records Related to Disability

The student should request the release or review of the specific information by filling out the Office of Accessibility "Request for Release or Review of Information" form. The student may need to schedule an appointment to meet with the appropriate Disability Specialist to release or review the requested information.

Accessing Accommodations

How to Register with the Office of Accessibility ... Easy as 1, 2, 3!!

- **Get Started at The University of Akron**
 - Applying for admission to The University of Akron and applying for services with the Office of Accessibility are two different processes.
 - Students need to apply, be accepted, and enroll in classes before attending an intake appointment.
 - Students can register with the Office of Accessibility *at any point* while enrolled at The University of Akron.
- **Submit New Student Application and documentation**
 - The Office of Accessibility recommends submitting the New Student Application and documentation 3 months prior to enrollment.
 - Complete the New Student Application to register with the Office of Accessibility. The new student application is a brief online questionnaire designed for students to describe the impacts of a disability. STARS is the online system that allows students to quickly and easily request and notify faculty of approved accommodations.
 - After completing the new student application, students should upload current, disability-related documentation of a disability(ies) completed by a **qualified professional**. The Office of Accessibility has specific guidelines available or in Simmons Hall 105. The Office of Accessibility will not accept disability-related documentation from treatment professionals who are related, in any way, to the student requesting services.
- **Schedule an intake appointment**
 - Once a new student application has been reviewed, including complete documentation, an Office of Accessibility staff member will follow-up to schedule an intake appointment. If any information in the application is incomplete, a staff member will contact the student to address what is needed.
 - During the intake appointment, you will discuss:
 1. Eligible services based upon documentation and disability-related needs.
 2. Training on our online accommodation request system (STARS).
 3. Any other questions/concerns about The University of Akron, our office, and preparation for attending college.
 - You are welcome to bring a support person (parent/guardian, spouse, case manager) to the intake.
 - The appointment will last approximately 1 ½ hours .

What are Accommodations?

An accommodation is a support that is put in place for a course, program, service, job, activity, or facility that is designed to eliminate or minimize disability-related barriers. There are many ways to accommodate a situation or activity. Accommodations vary based on individual circumstances and disability-related documentation.

In order for an accommodation to be considered, it must not:

- Compromise the essential requirements of a course, program, job, activity, or facility.
- Cause an undue administrative or financial hardship.
- Compromise safety to you or others.
- Fundamentally alter a course or program.

How to Request Accommodations

• Schedule your classes

- It is important to organize your schedule in a way that works best for you! Consider the following before meeting with your advisor:
 - ✓ Check MyAkron for your registration dates so that you can schedule your classes as soon as they are open to you.
 - ✓ Should you schedule breaks between classes? This is especially helpful if extended time on testing is one of your accommodations.
 - ✓ When do you function your best? You may want to schedule classes at a certain time of day due to medication or other reasons.
 - ✓ Should you limit the number of “heavy” reading, math-related, or writing-intensive courses that you take at the same time? Try to balance your schedule so that it works best for you.
 - ✓ How important is the specific location of each of your classes?
 - ✓ Is it best for you to take a full or part-time course load?

• Be Aware of Deadlines for Accommodation Requests

- Some accommodations have deadlines in order to have sufficient time to coordinate services. Deadlines are located at www.uakron.edu/access.
- Please request accommodations as soon as possible to avoid deadlines.
- If a deadline is missed, services will **NOT** be denied. However, they may take significantly longer to implement.

• Request Accommodations through STARS

- Students must request accommodations if they intend to use the accommodations in class.
- Log in to the Student Testing and Accommodation Request System (STARS) website <https://andes.accessiblelearning.com/Akron>
- Select the courses that you would like accommodations for and click “Step 2- Continue to Customize Your Accommodations.”
- Mark the specific accommodations that you need for each class.
- Check the box if you would like your accommodation letters to be emailed to your professors. If you do not check the box, the letters will not be emailed to your professors.
- **IMPORTANT**- If you change your schedule, it is your responsibility to update your accommodation request in STARS. We are unable to process requests for added classes or schedule changes unless the accommodation request is updated.

- *Forget how to request your accommodations through STARS? We can help you!*
 - ✓ Watch the “How to Request Accommodation Letters” tutorial at www.uakron.edu/access.
 - ✓ Come to the OA during office hours and a staff member will assist you.
 - ✓ Schedule a meeting with your Disability Specialist for assistance.
- **Accommodation Letters are Emailed to Law School Administrators**
 - Accommodation letters are the formal description of the services and accommodations students will receive through the Office of Accessibility.
 - One week before the start of the semester, letters are emailed to **Misty Franklin** who will work with the student to coordinate accommodations through the School of Law. Instructors do not receive the accommodation letter at this time.
 - Letters can be emailed to professors at any time, upon the student’s request.



Letter of Classroom Accommodation - Spring 2015

Student Name: **Zippy Roo**
 Student ID: 00 - 000 - 01
 Class: 1000 100.001 - OA EXPERIENCE (CRN: 10000)

The above named individual is a student with a disability who has requested accommodations and assistance from the Office of Accessibility. He/She has provided this office with individualized, confidential documentation from a qualified professional that substantiates the disability.

Federal law and University policy require that the University create an environment where students with various disabilities can partake of the programs and services we have to offer in a nondiscriminatory manner. In pursuant to University policy #33-59-20-01 subsection C, The University of Akron recognizes its responsibility for creating an institutional atmosphere in which students with disabilities have the opportunity to be successful. The recommended classroom accommodations for this student are as follows:

1. Alternative Testing

- Time extensions for completing tests and in-class work equal to 50% additional time. Students must notify instructor and make arrangements prior to test date. If the instructor is unable to provide the testing accommodations, the student may be required to contact the Office of Accessibility a minimum of four days prior to the test date for scheduling.
- Testing in a distraction reduced space (provided by the instructor whenever possible, or by the Office of Accessibility)

2. Equipment

- Use of tape recorder in the classroom. Student may be asked by the professor to sign the tape recorder agreement form. This form can be requested by the student or professor by contacting the Office of Accessibility.

The accommodations based on a disability are intended to remove barriers to learning and demonstration of knowledge between students with disabilities and students without. Students may choose not to use all of these accommodations in your class. Office of Accessibility policy suggests that students speak to you about these accommodations and maintain necessary communication with you and the Office of Accessibility to coordinate services throughout the semester. Each student is ultimately responsible for notifying you of these accommodations in a timely manner. In some courses, students may be required to perform technical standards which may not be reasonable accommodations. Consultation with the Office of Accessibility may be necessary in these situations.

If you have any questions concerning the implementation of these accommodations in your classroom or if you believe that any of these accommodations are incompatible with fundamental course objectives, please call me at 330-972-7928.

Sincerely,

Jessica DeFago

* Sample Accommodation Letter

- **Schedule an Appointment with Law School Administrators to Coordinate Services**
 - After registering with the Office of Accessibility, each student is required to meet with Law School administrators to review how accommodations will be implemented by the School of Law. Maintaining good communication with instructors, the School of Law, and the Office of Accessibility is key to making this a smooth process.

Misty Franklin, Assistant Director of Student Affairs
 (330) 972-6456
 misty@uakron.edu

**Ask your Disability Specialist if you would like assistance communicating with the Law School.*

- **Contact your Disability Specialist if You Have Questions**
 - Call (330) 972-7928.
 - Email directly.
 - Stop into the Office of Accessibility during office hours.

IMPORTANT: Accommodations are NOT retroactive. This means that services and accommodations apply only from the point at which the student requests the accommodations and communicates the desire to use each of their approved accommodations.

Testing Procedures

All testing accommodations for Law students are coordinated, scheduled, and proctored by the School of Law. The following Law School administrator will work with you to coordinate testing services:

Misty Franklin, *Assistant Director of Student Affairs*
 (330) 972-6456
 misty@uakron.edu

Examples of Testing Accommodations

- **Extended time-** The specific amount of extended time depends on the impact of the disability and is determined by the student's Disability Specialist.
- **Distraction reduced space-** Small, quiet rooms are available for testing; we are unable to guarantee isolated space.
- **Test proctors (reader and/or scribe)-** Readers may read and repeat test questions verbatim for student; Scribes write down answers to test questions verbatim as dictated by student.
- **Use of technology on tests-** Includes computers, CCTV, adaptive software, etc. depending on students' disability-related needs. Students are not able to use their own personal devices when testing.

Guidelines for Utilizing Testing Accommodations

- Students should request exam accommodations utilizing the The University of Akron, School of Law, Special Exam Accommodations form, located at:
<http://uakron.edu/law/docs/Special%20Accommodation%20FORM.pdf>.
- Students should request exam accommodations by the deadline indicated by the School of Law. The School of Law will make a good faith effort to fulfill requests submitted after this deadline, but it cannot be guaranteed.
- Students who request exam accommodations will receive an email outlining the details of each exam, including date, time, and exam location. Students should be aware that they may be assigned to a testing room with other students receiving testing arrangements, including those who may be enrolled in the same course section.
- If a change of testing date or time is needed due to the student's disability, the student must

consult with his/her Disability Specialist and the School of Law to determine if the request is reasonable.

- Students are expected to begin their exams on the date and time indicated by the School of Law, which may differ from the start time indicated for non-accommodated exams. All tests in one room will begin at the same time; however, students will be free to leave once they have completed their exam. For evening and weekend exams, if extra time is included in a student's accommodations, the accommodated student will generally be asked to begin the exam before the scheduled start time.
- Students who require distraction-reduced space will be given a place to complete their exams that is distraction-reduced; isolated space cannot be guaranteed.

Please note: Some students may need to test in the Office of Accessibility. The Office of Accessibility is committed to maintaining the highest academic standards possible in the office testing environment. In order to meet this goal, we utilize a closed-circuit video system to monitor tests. If a student utilizes any unauthorized resources during a test, the Office of Accessibility will report the situation to the course instructor and Student Judicial Affairs.

Accommodations for the Bar Examination

Each state controls its own accommodation for the bar exam. Law students with disabilities who believe they will require accommodations in taking the bar examination should inquire early in their legal education as to what will be necessary to obtain accommodations. Students should contact each state in which they intend to take the bar exam to learn that state's process and to access necessary forms. Only the state administering the bar exam knows its own requirements and process; the School of Law does not have this information provided by each state.

Many state boards of bar examiners will request that the Law School provide information on accommodations provided during law school upon a written release from the student. However, please note that receiving accommodations in Law School does not guarantee accommodations on the bar examination.

Students who will be requesting academic accommodations for the bar exam should contact Brian Fuller or Mary Cooke at the School of Law, who can assist with seeking information from various state bar authorities.

Supports for Temporary Medical Conditions

Temporary medical conditions, including injured limbs, surgeries, pregnancy, and short-term illnesses, may require temporary, short-term accommodations. While the University is not obligated to provide accommodations for students with temporary medical conditions, the Office of Accessibility attempts to accommodate students who may need temporary support accessing the physical campus and the educational curriculum. Please contact us if you have questions about a temporary medical condition.

Externship, Clinical Experiences, Internship, and Co-op Accommodations

Internship and/or co-op experiences are often very different than a typical classroom format and frequently involve hands-on experiences. As a result, the type of academic accommodations that would be reasonable for these experiences will often be different than those that have been used in the classroom setting.

Guidelines for Students

- Meet with Associate Dean of Career Services and Strategic Initiatives **Alisa Benedict O'Brien** (ab139@uakron.edu) to understand what is needed to perform the functional requirements of the

internship/Co-op experience (i.e. physical strength, visual acuity, attendance, etc.).

- After understanding what is needed to perform these requirements, meet with a Disability Specialist at least **one month prior** to the scheduled start date of the internship/co-op experience.
- A Disability Specialist will consult with the student, the department, and the on-site supervisor as needed to determine and implement any modifications to the student's current accommodations.
- Accommodations are NOT retroactive.

Please Note: The priority of School of Law exams supersedes all out-of-classroom experiences.

Roles and Responsibilities in the Accommodation Process

Office of Accessibility Responsibilities

- Review and explain what documentation is needed to determine eligibility for services
- Determine your eligibility for individualized accommodations based on documentation
- Discuss with you how your disability may impact you at The University of Akron
- Maintain student files in a confidential manner
- Send letters to faculty members that detail your accommodations, per your request in STARS
- Make a reasonable, good faith effort to provide accommodations, aids, and services for eligible students in a timely manner

Student Responsibilities

- Register with the Office of Accessibility by providing necessary documentation
- Meet with your Disability Specialist to discuss your unique needs
- Submit accommodation requests through STARS each semester
- Speak to your professors about your accommodations and maintain necessary communication with instructors and the Office of Accessibility to coordinate services throughout the semester
- Be aware of out-of-classroom/hands-on learning experiences in your program and communicate with your Disability Specialist and professors to determine appropriate accommodations for those experiences
- Notify your Disability Specialist if additional accommodations should be considered
- Contact your Disability Specialist and/or professors if you have any questions/concerns

Faculty Responsibilities

- Understand accommodations recommended by the Office of Accessibility
- Collaborate with the student and/or the Office of Accessibility to coordinate accommodations
- Contact the Office of Accessibility if there are questions/concerns regarding accommodations
- Know the essential elements of a course or program

Additional Services from the Office of Accessibility

Academic Support Sessions

Our Disability Specialists are available to meet with you for Academic Support Sessions throughout each semester. We are here to help if you would like assistance with time management, organization, connecting to campus resources, accessing your accommodations, and communicating with your professors. Some students benefit from regular check-ins, while other students make appointments on an as-needed basis. Please do not hesitate to contact your Disability Specialist by phone or email at any time.

Campus Walk-Throughs

The Office of Accessibility staff is available to walk with you through campus to find your classrooms, determine accessible routes, and assess classroom furniture prior to the beginning of each semester. Campus walk-throughs are intended to help you feel prepared and confident at the onset of each semester.

Equipment

The Office of Accessibility has equipment that can be loaned from our office, including (but not limited to): Tape recorders, Assisted Listening Devices, Digital Recorders, and AlphaSmarts. Students may be asked to complete a Tape Recorder Agreement form when checking out a tape recorder. Your Disability Specialist may make recommendations for you to utilize a specific piece of equipment and will determine your eligibility.

For Your Success Emails and Office of Accessibility Newsletters

The Office of Accessibility periodically sends emails and newsletters to students registered with our office. These correspondences will be sent to your University of Akron email account, as email is the preferred method of communication at The University of Akron. We will inform you of deadlines, important dates, and helpful tips For Your Success!

Quiet Study Areas

The Office of Accessibility has multiple quiet rooms that are available for student registered with our office to utilize during office hours. These rooms provide a quiet, distraction-reduced environment for students to study. Quiet study rooms may not be available during high volume testing times, including the weeks of midterms and finals. Please call (330) 972-7928 to make a reservation or stop in the Office of Accessibility to check the availability of a room.

Reader/Writer Hours

Reader and Writer hours are available by appointment. These hours may be limited based on availability and point in semester. Contact your Disability Specialist if you are interested in utilizing these services. A reader reads the directions, questions, and answer choices to a student. A reader does not interpret, re-word, or explain the assignment. A writer writes down, or otherwise records, student responses. The writer does not create answers for the student or help the student identify answers.

Supports for Temporary Medical Conditions

Temporary medical conditions, including injured limbs, surgeries, pregnancy, and short-term illnesses, may require temporary, short-term accommodations. While the University is not obligated to provide

accommodations for students with temporary medical conditions, the Office of Accessibility attempts to accommodate students that may need temporary support accessing the physical campus and the educational curriculum. Please contact us if you have questions about a temporary medical condition.

Additional Services at The University of Akron

Additional Tutoring Supports

Although the Office of Accessibility does not directly provide tutoring for students, law students should contact the School of Law's Office of Academic Success Programs for additional support.

Counseling Center/ Counseling Center- Testing Services

The OA frequently collaborates with the Counseling Center to provide wrap-around supports for students. The Counseling Center offers comprehensive psychological services to currently enrolled students for free. A culturally diverse staff of licensed psychologists and doctoral trainees provide psychological counseling for psychotherapy, career counseling, testing services, outreach and consultation to the university community.

The Counseling Center- Testing Services provides Learning Disorder/ADHD Assessments for students at a low price. Please speak to your Disability Specialist or call the Counseling Center at (330) 972-7082 to make an appointment if you are interested in services.

Recreation and Wellness Center

The University of Akron's Recreation and Wellness Center provides equipment that is accessible to students. Please visit the Recreation and Wellness Center or call (330) 972-2348 for more information.

Residence Life and Housing Accommodations

Residence Life and Housing is committed to providing accessible on-campus living arrangements for students with disabilities. Documentation for requests for accommodations related to residence life should be submitted directly to the Office of Accessibility, preferably at the time the Housing Contract is submitted to University Residence Life and Housing. The Office of Accessibility will determine specific accommodations after consultation with Residence Life and Housing. Please contact the Office of Accessibility for more information about this process.

Dispute Resolution Procedures

Dispute Resolution Procedures for Eligibility for Services

If a student wants to appeal a decision regarding eligibility for services based on the Disability Specialist's review of the documentation, the following procedure has been established.

1. Request an appointment to meet with the Disability Specialist who reviewed the documentation and made the original determination. If the concern cannot be resolved during this appointment, initiate Step 2.
2. Request an appointment to meet with the immediate supervisor of the Disability Specialist who reviewed the documentation originally. If after this meeting, the situation is not rectified to the student's satisfaction, initiate Step 3.
3. Request an appointment with the Associate Vice President for Student Success or her/his designee. The Associate Vice President for Student Success (or designee) may consult other relevant professionals as needed to make the decision. After this meeting if the situation is not rectified to the student's satisfaction, initiate Step 4.
4. Request an appointment to meet with the Provost. The decision of the Provost is final.

Dispute Resolution Procedures for Determination of Reasonable Accommodations

If a student wants to appeal a decision regarding the determination of reasonable accommodations for his/her documented disability, the following procedure has been established.

1. Request an appointment to meet with the Disability Specialist who reviewed the documentation and made the original determination. If the concern cannot be resolved during this appointment, initiate Step 2.
2. Request an appointment to meet with the immediate supervisor of the Disability Specialist. If, after this meeting the situation is not rectified to the student's satisfaction, initiate Step 3.
3. Request a review by the Accommodations Review Committee of the accommodations determined by the Disability Specialist and the accommodations requested by the student. The Committee consists of the following people:
 - Disability Specialist who recommended the original accommodation(s)
 - Director of Office of Accessibility
 - Associate Vice President for Student Success or his/her designee
 - Academic Department/School representative and/or appropriate faculty member(s)
 - Associate Dean of the appropriate academic unit (college) or designeeIf after this meeting, the situation is not rectified to the student's satisfaction, initiate Step 4.
4. Request an appointment to meet with the Provost. The decision of the Provost is final.

