**Adtalem’s Office of Student Disability Services**

# Introduction

The Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS) is a division of the Office of Equity and Access (OEA). The OSDS serves undergraduate, graduate, professional and health sciences students across the globe.

**Mission:**

The mission of the OSDS is to support the achievement of superior student outcomes for all students. Our services are designed to provide students with the best academic experience and support removing boundaries and roadblocks to ensure full access and engagement in educational programs.

**Vision:**

The goal and ultimate vision of OSDS is barrier-free campuses where accessibility is embedded in the thread of our courses and culture and where we lead the example of student experience for all.

# Welcome

If you are looking to receive services through the Office of Student Disability Services, we want to support you during this time. To start the process, email the corresponding address in the following Contact Information section relevant to your institution and program. We will provide you with the information to begin the interactive process of accommodation and may then also request a phone call for questions and introduction.

If you need to speak over Teams, we will provide a link.

If you require other accessibility needs to experience the call, please indicate that in your email.

# Contact Information

American University of the Caribbean School of Medicine aucosds@adtalem.com

Chamberlain University chamberlainosds@adtalem.com

Medical Educational Readiness Program merposds@adtalem.com

Ross University School of Medicine rossmedosds@adtalem.com

Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine rossvetosds@adtalem.com

Walden University waldenosds@adtalem.com

OSDS Phone: 855.229.0848

OSDS Fax: 630.596.1651

# Rights and Responsibilities

Adtalem and its institutions and program are committed to providing equal access to educational opportunities for qualified students with disabilities in accordance with government, state, and local laws as applicable to the student’s program, institution, and location. All accommodations requested are reviewed on an individual basis to determine what is reasonable and appropriate. The student should understand the process is an interactive one that takes time.

**Timeframe:**

Students should apply as early as possible as there may be some situations where a request for accommodation is made at a point where appropriate arrangements cannot *practicably or reasonably* be made. Reviews may take a minimum of 10 *business* days once the file is determined *complete* and status updates are available in your email. Accommodations are not applied retroactively.

**Students Have the Right to:**

* An equitable experience to participate in their program
* An opportunity to learn and receive applicable accommodations, adjustments, aids, and services
* Confidentiality of records-except where required/permitted by law
* Information available in formats that are accessible for their needs

**Students Have the Responsibility for:**

* Meeting technical standards with or without accommodations
* Self-identifying when:

o An accommodation is needed

o When a concern arises with accommodation

* Providing documentation from a licensed physician or clinician in a field appropriate to opine on the disability in question. More specifically, the existence of a disability, how that disability limits a major life activity and how it affects participation in the program and the activity for which you are applying for accommodation.
* Following the OSDS published procedures for obtaining services and reasonable accommodations
* Respectfully interacting with colleagues in all exchanges

# Accommodation Request Process

1. Email the OSDS with your intent to apply for accommodation.
2. Indicate first and last name, institution, program, term and your preferred method of contact and any supports you require.
   1. Phone
   2. Email
   3. Teams
   4. Other-describe
3. Obtain and fill out the Student Accommodation Request Form
4. Gather the information from your physician or clinician appliable to the diagnoses for which you are applying. If there are multiple diagnoses, there may also be paperwork required from multiple specialists.
   * 1. The OSDS will determine if the request is applicable to the office and its services.
        1. If yes, OSDS will proceed with interactive process and review.
        2. If no, OSDS will refer the student to the appropriate supports and services available.
     2. Through an interactive process, the OSDS will work with the student to determine if they meet the criteria for accommodations, discuss potential accommodations to address barriers in the academic or clinical setting, and ensure that requested accommodations are reasonable and do not fundamentally alter the nature of the program or technical standard.
     3. During the interactive process, the student can expect to get updates on status, such as:
        1. In Review- the file is being reviewed by the Accommodation Coordinator
        2. Incomplete- the student has not provided enough information for the Accommodation Coordinator to make a determination or there are issues that need to be corrected on the request form. If the request is Incomplete, OSDS will request additional information and/or inform the student of missing items.
     4. Accommodation requests are concluded in one of the following ways:
        1. Approved - either as requested or with alternative accommodation. If the request is Approved, OSDS will send the student a notification letter.
        2. Denied - based on available information. If the request is Denied based on available information, OSDS will send the student a notification letter and will reach out to the student to setup a phone call for additional assistance.
        3. Closed - based on the requested accommodation being available to all matriculated students regardless of disability status. If the accommodation request is closed on this basis, OSDS will send the student information on how to access this resource.

# Documentation Expectations

**OSDS Request Form:**

* The request form contains 1) a self-report form and 2) a physician/clinician form
* The physician/clinician form must be completed by a licensed physician or clinician who has expertise applicable to the student’s diagnosis and is familiar with the student’s personal diagnosis and history. The physician/clinician form includes information about:
* Diagnostic codes
  + Physician/Clinician license numbers and credentials
  + Explanation of how the student’s disability affects a major life activity and is relevant to the student’s need in an academic setting
  + Specific recommendations for accommodation

**Supporting Documentation:**

Along with the request form, students should submit supporting documentation from their physician/clinician, dated within the last five years, which at a minimum, verifies: 1) the presence of the diagnosed medical condition and 2) the current impact of the diagnosed medical condition. However, if the documents listed below are unavailable to the student, OSDS encourages students to submit documentation available to them along with the request form to help facilitate the process.

If a student does not have supporting documentation or is having difficulty obtaining the supporting documentation from their physician/clinician, or a student is unsure what type of supporting documentation to provide with the request form, OSDS encourages and welcomes the student to schedule an appointment with an OSDS Accommodation Coordinator to further discuss.

Examples of supporting documentation that may be requested include but are not limited to:

* Audiology Report
* Ocular Assessment
* Formal Diagnostic Interviews
* A Formal Assessment to include:

o Intellectual functioning

o Academic achievement

o Information processing

* Neuropsychological Assessment
* A signed and dated clinical summary on letterhead

Note: Some requested accommodations may require more detailed documentation to illustrate a connection between the impact of the disability on a major life activity, the described barrier in the academic or clinical setting, and the requested accommodation.

# Services Not Covered by OSDS\*

* English as a second language
* Personal Care Attendants
* Medical devices personal to the student (glasses, hearing aids etc.)
* Personal Transportation
* Services for students who do not have a temporary or long-term disability
  + See FAQ for more information and examples.
* Pregnancy accommodations unrelated to disability
  + For assistance with pregnancy and parenting, contact equity@adtalem.com.
* Personal Tutoring
* Religion
  + For assistance, please contact [equity@adtalem.com](mailto:equity@adtalem.com).

\*If you would like information for what is available in your community regarding these services, you may reach out to OSDS. However, please know OSDS does not recommend and is not affiliated with any of these services which may be available in the community, and any responsibility would lie with the third party directly.

# Student Frequently Asked Questions

* **Will my high school or previous college documents be sufficient?**

Accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis, however, generally speaking, OSDS will require documents relevant to your current program of study and institution.

* **What if I disagree with my Accommodation Coordinator’s decision?** 
  + Students will need to file an appeal- see Accommodation Decision Appeal and retrieve form from OSDS

* **Why won’t you tell me what I can get for accommodations without the process or give me a list of accommodations I can apply for?** 
  + OSDS reviews requests on an individual basis to customize support for students’ needs.

* **What happens if I don’t feel I have received my approved accommodations?** 
  + Contact OSDS immediately to have a case opened for review

* **How are accommodations implemented?** 
  + Students who are approved to receive accommodations are given a notification letter of approval. To utilize the accommodations, students are required to provide notification of the accommodations to the appropriate professor/instructor/department prior to their intended use. There will also be a minimum required time period for notice in order to implement the approved accommodations. For details, refer to the specifications on the letter provided.

* **Does OSDS review requests for professional testing such as NCLEX, USMLE Step 1, USMLE Step 2 CK, and USMLE Step 3, NAVLE, etc.** 
  + No, those examinations are out of OSDS jurisdiction; however, we are happy to work with the student through basic questions and potentially provide supporting documents, as appropriate.
  + Knowing the process, timelines, and requirements to make accommodation requests for those exams is imperative. Start reviewing

as soon as you begin your program to understand the process including their requirements and calendar. Here are websites for more information:

* + - [**NCLEX**](https://www.ncsbn.org/nclex.htm)
    - [**NAVLE**](https://www.icva.net/navle/)
    - [**USMLE**](https://www.usmle.org/)
    - [**NBME**](https://www.nbme.org/)
  + Additional Support document available by contacting OSDS

* **What if I have a service animal or emotional support animal? What should I know?** 
  + Each of Adtalem’s institutions has its own customized policy taking into account location (to include local laws and ordinances). Please refer to your institution’s student handbook for the policy and specifics. Reach out to OSDS any time with questions.
    - If you are attending an institution on the islands, please know that there are restrictions on what types of animals you can bring. More information is available upon request.

* **What if my needs changed or my accommodations are not working for me? How do I request additional or alternate accommodations to what I currently have?** 
  + Any student requesting new or additional accommodations should follow this process. Please complete an updated Accommodation Request

Form.

* The form should state:
  + - Your current diagnosis
    - How the diagnosis affects your studies
    - Specific recommended changes or additions to your current accommodations
    - How those requested additional or altered accommodations will further support or address your specific needs in relation to your studies

* + Once you have all of the paperwork, please send one completed file to the Office of Student Disability Services. Documentation can be scanned in a .pdf file and emailed.

* + Any additional/alternative accommodations that may be provided will take effect once we have and review your paperwork and work with you to determine what accommodations are reasonable and appropriate. Your previously approved accommodations will remain in place while this review is being conducted.

* **What if my institution has housing and I need accommodations related to my disability there?**
  + On campus housing accommodations under the university’s jurisdiction are reviewed by OSDS in collaboration with housing.
    - The first step is for OSDS to determine eligibility
    - All students must follow the housing deadlines and accommodations will not be applied to the term when assignments have been distributed.
    - Housing requests are constrained by space and type of housing available
    - Requests may take 2-4 weeks to process and implement after a file is complete
    - Requests will be determined for a semester or academic year and will be indicated on the notification letter
    - OSDS will not determine roommates or room locations
    - OSDS does not regulate stipends which are only available in and applicable to on campus housing.

* **What if something on the institution website is not accessible?** 
  + Please report the concern to the Accessibility Specialist by emailing equity@adtalem.com with the information.

* **If I am dismissed or withdrawn from my program, can I apply for accommodation?** 
  + A student must be in active student status to have an accommodation request reviewed.

* **If I had accommodations and went on leave, or was withdrawn, moved locations, or changed programs are my accommodations still active?** 
  + You will need to contact the Office of Student Disability Services to determine if you need to update your request or if your accommodations are still applicable.

* **What can OSDS do to support my application to USMLE?** 
  + Fill out the form verifying accommodations used
  + Provide the Institution’s Letter
  + Provide a letter of support upon request

* **What do I do if I have a food allergy?** 
  + Contact the OSDS for accommodations, information on signage and support such as food availability on campus.

# Accommodation Decision Appeal Process

Students who wish to formally appeal an accommodation decision made by the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS) must submit the required form and any necessary documentation within 10 calendar days after receiving their accommodation decision. Please fill out the form completely and accurately, as information missing from this form may delay the appeal process. Documentation must be submitted in one file to the OSDS. To appeal a decision, your appeal must meet one of the three grounds for appeal as notated in Part C of the request form 1-Procedural error by OSDS during the process that significantly impacted the outcome of the decision. 2-There is new information available that did not exist at the time of the initial request that has the potential to alter the outcome of the decision 3-There is Evidence of bias on the part of the OSDS Accommodation Coordinator that rendered the decision making it impossible to be objective.

\*Please know the interactive process is still available to you, for new or alternate requests and does not apply to this process.

If it is determined that the documentation satisfies the appeal process grounds stated previously, the Manager of the OSDS or Designee will review the appeal. Please note that the review of an appeal does not guarantee a reversal of the original decision. If the appeal documentation does not satisfy the process criteria, or the student does not appeal within 10 calendar days, the appeal will be determined to be insufficient for review and the student will forfeit the right to an appeal.

Please note the decision by the Manager of the OSDS or Designee is final and not subject to further review.

# Temporary Injury/Illness

Certain life events can adversely affect a student’s ability to participate. Some of the ways we see these temporary circumstances or injuries are broken limbs, strep throat, car accidents, flu, mono, bronchitis. While there may be supports available, the contact for this type of concern would start with faculty and potentially include areas as the institution such as wellness center, Dean, counseling center, etc. Academics may be able to go over leave or incompletes etc. If the concern/impairment in question is not a temporary or permanent disability, OSDS will refer you to the institutional departments.

If you believe you need assistance for a temporary disability that may be severe and pervasive, contact the OSDS with questions. Temporary disability requests will be reviewed on an individual basis but generally are for a period of 6 months or greater. Minimally students would be affected for more than one term of their academic study.

# Grievance

Students who believe they have been discriminated against due to a disability should contact Adtalem’s Office of Equity and Access at Equity@adtalem.com for assistance or to file a complaint.

# Additional Resources

[National Organization of Nurses with Disabilities](https://nond.org/)

[Vets4Vets](https://vinfoundation.org/resources/vets4vets/)

[MedicalProfessionalsWithHearingLoss](https://www.amphl.org/)

[HeathScienceCoalition](https://www.hsmcoalition.org/)

[PhysicianswithDisabilities](https://www.physicianswithdisabilities.org/)