

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) – MIDWEST INSTITUTE

Midwest Institute Student Disability Services is committed to helping students become engaged, self-advocating, independent learners. We seek to promote accessible learning environments where students with disabilities experience equal access and full participation. Midwest Institute, in accordance with the American Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, will provide eligible students with a documented disability reasonable accommodation in order to ensure equal access to college programs and activities.

What is ADA?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became law in 1990. The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. <https://adata.org/learn-about-ada>

What is Section 504?

Section 504 is part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: a Federal law that protects individuals from discrimination based on disability. Under this law, individuals with disabilities may not be excluded from or denied the opportunity to receive benefits and services from certain programs. Section 504 applies to entities that receive financial assistance from any Federal department or agency, including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Who Qualifies as an Individual With a Disability?

Section 504 defines an individual with a disability as a person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Major life activities include caring for one's self, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, performing manual tasks and learning.

What are Considered “Reasonable Accommodations”?

Reasonable accommodations must be provided to eligible students with disabilities in order for them to access essential course content and essential learning activities. Types of academic coursework to which students with disabilities need access include lectures, written assignments, field or lab work, exams, class discussions, Internet research, and/or participation in class activities. Some examples of reasonable accommodations in postsecondary settings include sign language interpreters, preferential seating, additional time on assessments, tape recorders, flexible attendance requirements, and classes in accessible locations. Some students with disabilities require the same accommodations for all courses. Other students may need a range of accommodations for various lecture, lab, discussion, and fieldwork activities. Flexibility and effective communication between students, disabled student services staff, and instructors are key to implementing successful accommodations.

Application Process for Accommodations Here are the recommended next steps for a student with a disability who would like to apply for accommodations:

- Contact the Midwest Institute Student Disability Services Coordinator (Director of Education) by email at apandolfo@midwestinstitute.com or by calling (314) 344-4440. The Disability Services Coordinator can help explain the process and what kind of supporting documentation will be need to be submitted with your application. The application will be provided by the Disability Services Coordinator. If you have any questions about the application, please call or email the Disability Services Coordinator directly.
- Once the student's application is complete, the Disability Services Coordinator will schedule a meeting with the student either face to face, through email or by phone as part of the application process. This step is essential to identifying the best accommodation plan for the student, and possible resources (assistive technology, strategies, etc.).
- The Accommodation Plan will be sent to the student for approval. Once it has been signed and approved, the student receives a Faculty Notification Letter which they have the option to share with

faculty. It is always the student's choice whether or not they will utilize their accommodations in the classroom. It is strongly recommended that students requesting accommodations in a course contact the faculty well before the start of term to review how best to implement those accommodations in the course. The Disability Services Coordinator can assist in obtaining the faculty's contact information.

Students should contact the Disability Services Coordinator if they experience any challenges in setting up accommodations. We will work with both the student and faculty to find the best solution.