

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

Frequently Asked Faculty Questions

Q: Who is a person with a disability?

A: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act define a person with a disability as someone who: a) has a physical and/or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity; b) has a record of such an impairment; or c) is regarded as having such an impairment. Major life activities include, but are not limited to: performing manual tasks, caring for oneself, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, and learning. A person may have a visible disability (e.g.: a person who is blind, deaf, or a wheelchair-user) or a hidden disability (e.g.: a person who has a learning disorder, psychological disorder, or some type of chronic health impairment, such as epilepsy, diabetes, arthritis, cancer, cardiac problems, or HIV/AIDS).

Q: Am I legally required to honor a student's request for accommodations if s/he presents official paperwork to me from the DRS office?

A: The ADA and the Rehabilitation Act protect UTC students with disabilities from discrimination at the post-secondary level. These laws function together to guarantee both physical and programmatic access to UTC classes and events. The University is required to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals. The accommodations outlined in the accommodation letter have been negotiated between the student and the DRC staff. If you believe the requested accommodations are unreasonable for your class, please contact the DRC Director or Assistant Director to discuss your concerns.

Q: I have a student in a class who claims to have a disability and has requested accommodations. I have not received official paperwork documenting that s/he is registered with DRC. Do I need to accommodate?

A: Without an official notice from the DRC office, you are not required legally to accommodate the student. First, ask the student if s/he has registered with DRC. If the student has not done so, refer the student to DRC to follow the appropriate procedures. Even if the student claims to already be registered with DRC, s/he must present you with the appropriate notification. Until you receive this notification, it is not appropriate to provide the requested accommodations.

Q: What is my role in accommodating students who request note takers?

A: UTC recruits fellow classmates as note takers. The request for note takers is included in the accommodation letter from DRC. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to make the class aware of the opportunity and to refer them to DRC. The letter includes a general announcement that you may read to the class, send via e-mail, or post on Blackboard to alert the class to the opportunity. There are also copies of application instructions for interested students. These can also be sent via e-mail or posted online. If there are no students who apply in a timely manner, someone from the DRC staff will contact you to remind the class of the opportunity again.

Q: I have a student who has requested an accommodation for exams (extra time, separate location, etc.). How do I arrange for these accommodations?

A: Students who request testing accommodations for exams are instructed to maintain good communication with each professor. Extra time may entail the student beginning the exam before class, finishing the exam after class, or completing the exam at a different time altogether. This is to be negotiated between the student and the professor. The student must make the request in a timely manner (generally at least three days in advance). Students understand that next-day or same-day requests may or may not be honored.

UTC does have a designated testing center on campus for students with disabilities.

If a student needs a scribe for an exam, DRC can assist with these arrangements. If you are having difficulty making alternate testing arrangements, please contact the OSD Student Services Coordinator at 423-425-4300.

Q: Should I evaluate students with disabilities any differently than I do the rest of the class?

A: All students, including those with disabilities, should be evaluated at the same level. The requested accommodations are not in place to give the student an extra advantage or to raise or lower academic expectations. Accommodations are designed to “level the playing field” and compensate for any deficits to the educational environment experienced by the student. Accommodations may present an alternative manner in which a student participates in your class or gains access to information.

Q: Does UTC offer on-campus testing to diagnose learning disorders, Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD), or psychological disorders?

A: No. UTC does not offer diagnostic testing. However, DRC has a list of off-campus diagnosticians to whom we frequently refer students for professional assessment.

Q: How does UTC accommodate students with temporary impairments (broken legs, hands, etc.)?

A: Temporary conditions are not legally covered under the federal laws. However, DRC will work with students to ensure that the campus is accessible as possible. The Department of Campus Safety and DRC are not equipped to transport students to and from class. Students with temporary writing difficulties may work with DRC and their professors to ensure that they still receive class notes and are able to complete tests and quizzes. Students can register at any time with DRC. They will need to bring appropriate documentation and will have the opportunity to discuss with a staff member of DRC the difficulties they are having in class. A DRC staff member will discuss with the student their options.