



As part of its identity and mission, USEK is committed “to build a diverse and inclusive community where students, faculty, staff and alumni can develop a distinguished ability to adapt, work, learn and live in diverse environments. “Thus and based on USEK’s mission and strategic goal to become an inclusive university, we found it necessary to develop the disability topic resumed by how to provide equal opportunities for students with disabilities.

Defining Disability

The Centers for Diseases, Control and Prevention (CDC) defines a disability as any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions).

There are many types of disabilities, such as those that affect a person’s: vision, movement, thinking, remembering, learning, communicating, hearing, mental health, social interactions.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines disability as “an umbrella term, that covers impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions”. It has three dimensions:

1. **Impairment** in a person’s body structure or function, or mental functioning; examples of impairments include loss of a limb, loss of vision or memory loss.
2. **Activity limitation**, such as difficulty seeing, hearing, walking, or problem solving.
3. **Participation restrictions** in normal daily activities, such as working, engaging in social and recreational activities, and obtaining health care and preventive services.

Disability can be:

- Related to conditions that are present at birth and may affect functions later in life, including cognition (memory, learning, and understanding), mobility (moving around in the environment), vision, hearing, behavior, and other areas.
- Associated with developmental conditions that become apparent during childhood (e.g., Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder).
- Related to an injury (e.g., traumatic brain injury or spinal cord).
- Associated with a longstanding condition (e.g., diabetes), which can cause a disability such as vision loss, nerve damage, or limb loss.
- Progressive (e.g., muscular dystrophy), static (e.g., limb loss), or intermittent (e.g., some forms of multiple sclerosis).



Classifications of Disabilities

According to the *DIAGNOSTIC AND STATISTICAL MANUAL OF MENTAL DISORDERS (DSM-V)*, mental disorders include two main sections:

a) Neurodevelopmental disorders

- Intellectual Disabilities: Intellectual Developmental Disorder, Global Developmental Delay
- Communication Disorders: language disorder, speech and sound disorder, social and pragmatics, fluency/stuttering, etc.
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Specific Learning Disorder (e.g., impairment in reading, written expression, mathematics, etc.)
- Motor Disorders: Developmental Coordination Disorder, Stereotypic Movement Disorder, or Tic Disorders

b) Mental disorders

- Psychotic Disorders
- Bipolar and Related Disorders
- Depressive Disorders
- Anxiety Disorders
- Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders, etc.

In addition, the *World Health Organization (WHO)* specifies few additional types of disabilities:

- c) Medical/Functional disability:** problems in respiratory, immunological, neurological, circulatory, or digestive systems, cerebral vascular accident, tumor, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, etc.
- d) Sensory disability:** hearing and vision disability, etc.
- e) Mobility and physical disability:** Examples of mobility impairment: wheelchair use, cane, crutches, or walker. Examples of physical impairment: arthritis or rheumatism, back or spine problem, broken bone or fracture

Accommodation procedure

OVERVIEW

“**Reasonable accommodations**” are necessary adaptations done to avoid any discrimination due to a student’s disability during their educational experience. Nevertheless, accommodation **do not intend to modify the course’s learning outcomes and objectives** and **do not guarantee the student’s academic success**. It remains **the student’s responsibility for course time management, regular attendance, submission of assignments and completion of mid-terms and finals**.

The rationale for seeking information about a student’s condition is to support the higher education professional in



acknowledging the disability, understanding how the disability may affect a student, and making informed decisions about accommodation.

PROCEDURE

The following procedure will indicate the student's disability status and the kind of accommodation required which can be approved for, one semester, one academic year or on a temporary basis, depending on the need. In order to be eligible for accommodation services, a student with a disability must go through the following steps:

- 1- Identify himself/herself as a special need student:
 - a) During the initial online admission (in the case of new candidates)
 - b) Contact the ACCESS Office after registration (by email, phone or at the office) (in the case of enrolled students)
- 2- In both cases the student should complete and submit the confidential "Accommodation Request form" sent by mail or filled at the office.
- 3- While submitting the above-mentioned form, the student must submit supporting documentations (medical reports, tests, prescriptions and/or paramedical assessments and reports, etc.) from a relevant qualified professional as evidence of his disability/disorder or impairment. It should contain a clear statement of the recommendations for adjustments and accommodations (check the "guidelines for documentation" section).
- 4- After reviewing the filled form and the attached supportive documentation, and if found eligible for specific accommodation, the AO will inform the Admissions to provide the concerned students the necessary accommodation during their proficiency test.
- 5- After registering at USEK and becoming an active student, the AO will contact the special needs students for an interview.
- 6- If found eligible, the AO will release a personalized Accommodation Letter:
 - a) By mail, to inform the student's associate deans, deans, and head of departments, and consequently the student's instructors and the concerned student support officers and USEK employees about the required accommodations.
 - b) By hand, to the student in order to use it upon the need.
 - c) The AO can inform LTEC in cases when the student's disability requires the implementation of certain types of technologies/tools (software, devices, applications, etc.).
- 7- In case of insufficient or outdated documentation, the student is required to bring additional or up to date medical reports as requested and recommended by the AO.
- 8- The student must follow up with the instructors on how to apply the accommodations to each course.



9- The AO will do regular follow-ups with the students and their concerned faculties to insure the application of the accommodations.

10- At the end of each semester, an evaluation must be filled by all the students registered in the AO.

GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTATION

The provision of all reasonable accommodations and services is based upon an assessment of the impact of the student's disabilities on his/her academic performance at a given time in the student's life. Therefore, it is in the student's best interest to provide recent and appropriate documentation relevant to the student's learning environment.

In determining eligibility for accommodations, students are asked for documentation from a qualified medical professional who has formally diagnosed the disability. Submitting medical documentation from a relevant qualified professional is essential because it will serve as evidence to the needs of the student. It will also contain a clear statement of the recommendations for adjustments and accommodations.

It is the responsibility of the student to obtain his/her documentation and present a copy to the AO. It is the student's responsibility to obtain additional information or testing when requested at the student's expense. The application process and documentation review will result in the determination of reasonable accommodations based on potential effectiveness, preferences of the requester, maximum level of integration, and with the essential elements of the course or academic program in mind.

Documentation must meet the following criteria:

- Generated by a licensed professional in the specific area of disability.
- Sufficiently comprehensive, ideally, identifying the testing mechanisms, procedures and findings, and the recommended accommodations.
- Sufficiently recent to provide an accurate representation of the current disability and its impact on academic endeavors.

When obtaining new documentation from a qualified professional, AO recommends the following aspects to be a part of the documentation.

1. A **diagnostic statement** identifying the disability, date of the most current diagnostic evaluation, and the date of the original diagnosis (We recommend the use of the latest edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association* (DSM -5-TR) released in March 2022)
2. A description of the **diagnostic instrument**, methods, and/or criteria used. The assessment tool must meet best practices for the specific medical profession and specifically address the disability being diagnosed.
 - a. For students who are Hard of Hearing or Deaf, documentation must include an audiogram, and recommendations signed by a professional licensed in the field.



- b. For Visual Impairments or students that are blind, a vision test is required with a statement describing functional limitations, deficits and recommendation signed by the professional licensed in the field.
 - c. For Autism Spectrum Disorders, a psychiatric report is required and a specific evaluation such as the Vineland adaptive behavior scale; or/and IQ test.
 - d. For Specific Learning Disabilities a psychiatric report or at least a recent full assessment in speech and language pathology, in addition to a report summarizing the years and objectives of intervention.
 - e. For Communications Disorders (e.g., Language Disorder, Social and Pragmatics, Fluency/Stuttering, etc.), a full updated assessment from a speech and language pathologist listing the assessment tools that have been used.
 - f. For the Attention Deficit/Hyperactive Disorders, a psychiatric report and if available one of the tests listed below:
 - Conners' Adult AD/HD Diagnostic Interview or Conners' Adult ADHDRating Scales (CAARS)
 - Test of Variables of Attention (T.O.V.A.)
 - g. For the Mental Health Disorders (Psychotic, Bipolar, Depressive, Anxiety and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders, etc.), a licensed psychiatric report, the medication prescriptions and the list of recommendations listed by the related physician and/or the concerned psychologist/psychotherapist.
 - h. For Medical/Functional Disorders, an updated medical report from a specialized physician (e.g., cancer diagnosis by an oncologist, epileptic diagnosis by a neurologist, etc.), in addition to all the medical tests or imaging already done.
 - i. For the Mobility/Physical Disabilities, a detailed medical report in addition to a physiotherapy or occupational therapy report if available.
3. Treatments, medications, and/or assistive devices/services currently prescribed or in use.
 4. The credentials of the diagnosing professional (if not clear from the letterhead or other forms).
 5. Professional's recommendations for appropriate accommodations in a post-secondary environment.
 6. If accommodations are not clearly identified in a diagnostic report, the AO should seek clarification and, if necessary, more information.



ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITY TYPES

The table below lists some examples of the Accommodation that may be provided at USEK according to each disability type:

Disability Type	Accommodation Example
Communication Disorders: language disorder, social and pragmatics, fluency/stuttering, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alternative assignments for oral presentations (e.g., written assignments, one-to-one presentation). - Flexibility with in-class discussions (e.g., consider online discussion boards).
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing students with access to lecture notes, ppt, or notes from a classmate. - Permission audio recording of the lecture on the student device (<i>This accommodation is only granted upon professor approval. Student agrees that these recordings will not be shared with anyone.</i>) - Extended time on exams and assignments. - Alternative testing arrangements (distraction reduced environment) or locations (separate room). - Assistance in case of extra explanation regarding the instructions.
Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frequent breaks during class to maintain the level of concentration. - Ensuring a Preferential Seating. - Alternative testing arrangements (distraction reduced environment) or locations (separate room). - Extended time on exams and assignments. - Possibility of highlighting the essential ideas/slides, etc. If needed. - Summarizing each course session. - Providing additional explanation and examples - Breaks during long exams - Digital Recorders: Students with ADHD can find themselves distracted in class. The use of digital recorders, allows them to record lectures or classroom instruction and listen to it later in a space where they can concentrate.
Specific Learning Disorder: impairment in reading, written expression, mathematics, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modify individual course instruction (whether adjusting content, the presentation of content, or the learning environment, individual course instruction identifies specific needs of a learner and tailors' information to make it more accessible while still presenting the same core content). - Extended time on exams and assignments. - Alternative testing arrangements (distraction reduced environment) or locations (separate room). - Alternative formats for coursework completion, presentations delivery and exams. - Use of assistive devices*



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If heavy notetaking is required, providing students with access to lecture notes, ppt, or notes from a classmate or possibility to use laptop for note taking. - Permission audio recording of the lecture on the student device <i>(This accommodation is only granted upon professor approval. Student agrees that these recordings will not be shared with anyone.)</i> <p><i>* refer to LTEC section for knowing about the most common devices used in case of specific learning disorders</i></p>
<p>Psychological disorders such as: Psychotic, Bipolar, Depressive, Anxiety, and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extended time on exams and assignments. - Alternative testing arrangements (distraction reduced environment) or locations (separate room). - Assistance in case of extra explanation regarding the instructions - Sharing notes of the courses or highlighting the essential ideas/slides.
<p>Medical/functional disability: Problems in vital systems, cerebral vascular accident, tumor, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notetakers - Flexible attendance requirements - Extended time on exams and assignments, and allowances for breaks - Assignments made available in electronic format - Use of email to facilitate communication
<p>Sensory disability: Hearing disability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modify course instruction (preferential seating, incorporating visual aids, providing captioning, transcript of the information and written notices, repeating all questions/comments made by other students). - Use alternative formats for coursework completion, presentations delivery and exams. - Use of assistive devices*. - Extended time on exams and assignments. <p><i>* refer to the LTEC section for the most common devices used by deaf and hard of hearing students</i></p>
<p>Sensory disability: Vision disability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modify course instruction (availability of auditory software, large-font presentations and/or Braille materials) * - Use alternative formats for coursework completion, presentations delivery and exams. - Appoint individuals who can assist these students as note-takers, readers, scribes or other essential roles. - Extended time on exams and assignments, as well as getting to class. - Provide Frequent breaks during class - Ensure online course recording - Share notes of the course with the student or delegate a volunteer from the class - Ensure preferential seating in the front of the classroom to gain full access to the course



	<i>* for reading about the most common forms of adaptive technology for students who are blind or visually impaired please refer to the LTEC section.</i>
Mobility and physical disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Notetaker, scribes, lab partners- Accessible classroom locations- Computer with speech input, voice output and alternative keyboard- Wheelchair-friendly furniture and room arrangement (e.g., adjustable tables, space for a wheelchair, lab equipment located within reach)- Use of ramps and raised platforms for student’s access- Class materials available in electronic format- Extended time for completion of activities and attending courses and exams

Campus and Buildings Accessibility

STUDENTS USING WHEELCHAIRS:

- can use the gates [A, B, C] to access the campus.
- can use the elevators in buildings A, B, C, D and H.
- can access Zouki from the entrance 2nd entrance (building E side).
- can access the amphitheater John Paul II, using the elevator or from the 2nd floor.
- can access bathrooms in buildings A, D.
- can request special accommodation for the commencement ceremony.

STUDENTS WITH MOBILITY AND PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENTS:

- can access staff parking B instead of student parking.