Dartmouth
GEISEL SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Disability Accommodation Policy

Summary of Purpose

The Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth (Geisel) has established the following policies and procedures to:

- Encourage students with disabilities to identify themselves and seek reasonable accommodations when they believe such interventions would enable them to access Geisel's programs and activities.
- Publish the Geisel Office of Academic Advising and Accessibility (GOAAA) protocols to promote student awareness of the School's commitment and process to foster timely coordination and implementation of reasonable accommodations and modifications for students with documented disabilities,
- Promote and support students in self-advocacy, and
- Ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as Amended (Title III), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Geisel is committed to facilitating a supportive environment for students with disabilities by providing the opportunity for full participation in the academic resources of its medical school.

Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to applicants and enrolled Geisel students taking Geisel courses and/or participating in any other Geisel administered program or service.

Definitions

Accommodation: An alteration or modification of environment, instruction, curriculum format, equipment, assessment, or other element that may present a barrier, deemed necessary and reasonable, intended to provide equal access to an individual with a disability to Geisel programs and activities. Accommodations are designed and implemented in a manner that enables qualified students with disabilities to pursue a regular course of study. Importantly, for MD Program students, as stated in Geisel's "Technical Standards," accommodations are provided in order to remove/diminish barriers to enable qualified students to meet School standards, not circumvent or lower them. Because accommodations do not alter what is being taught nor any of Geisel's Technical Standards, instructors have the same expectations for students with disabilities as they do for students without disabilities.

Disability: A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, including, but not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing,

hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working; has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment. In most instances, only students with current disabling conditions are eligible for accommodations. Although many students with a temporary illness or injury do not qualify as disabled by law, GOAAA will work with the student and affected faculty to support the student's participation.

Disability Documentation: Confidential information from an appropriately certified professional who is knowledgeable about you and your condition sufficient to determine eligibility for disability services and provide a description of your functional limitations to enable GOAAA to help determine necessary and appropriate accommodations. Certified professionals include but are not limited to physicians, psychologists, therapists, mobility specialists, and rehabilitation counselors.

Educational Need to Know: An authorized official who Geisel has determined should have access to certain information when relevant to determine the presence of a disability, the need for and/or appropriateness of an accommodation, to properly implement an accommodation, to review an appeal or grievance, etc.

Technical Standards for Matriculation, Promotion, and Graduation: The baseline, non-academic abilities or attributes required to enter and participate in an MD program. Technical Standards are distinct from Core Competencies, which are the specific knowledge and skills a student must master within the program to successfully graduate and become competent physicians.

Reasonable Request for Accommodation: An accommodation that is determined necessary and which does not fundamentally alter the requirements of Geisel's Technical Standards for Matriculation, Promotion, or Graduation, Core Competencies, MPH Competencies, or any other aspect of Geisel's educational program or pose an undue burden.

Policy Statement

- Geisel adheres to all applicable federal and state laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations, including academic adjustments, as necessary to afford qualified students with disabilities equal opportunity and equal access to programs and activities.

- Applies to every facet of Geisel's operations, including but not limited to admissions, academic requirements, financial aid, Geisel administered housing, or any other school-administered program or service.

- Any form of discrimination/harassment on the basis of an individual's disability is strictly prohibited.

- All students have the right to request reasonable accommodations and have their request considered in a timely, interactive fashion.

- Any student requesting accommodations needs to engage with GOAAA and follow GOAAA procedures.

- GOAAA evaluates requests for accommodation on a case-by-case basis, which involves a review of the requested accommodation and the associated clinical documentation to determine the necessity and reasonableness of the accommodation request.

- In limited circumstances, GOAAA may grant provisional adjustments on a time-limited basis pending the receipt of required documentation or other materials or information needed to arrive at a final determination.

- Students need to provide relevant and current (typically within three years) documentation of disability through evaluation by an appropriate and qualified professional using the guidelines provided by GOAAA. Untimely submission of documentation may result in unavoidable delays in consideration of requested accommodations.

- Students are solely responsible for funding, arranging, and securing the appropriate evaluative information required for documentation of disability.

- Primary clinical documentation or other diagnostic information held by GOAAA is kept private in accordance with FERPA and is released to a third party only with the student's permission or as authorized by law.

- The student's disability file is maintained by GOAAA and held separately from the student's official academic record.

- Because medical school training includes performance in a variety of settings – classroom to clinical – accommodations granted for one setting may not be appropriate for all settings (e.g., performance-based assessments typically do not include extra time). At minimum, accommodation approvals will be reviewed with GOAAA at the start of each curriculum phase to check for possible adjustments of accommodations in new training settings (e.g., from pre-clerkship classrooms to clinical clerkships in hospital settings). However, as needed, GOAAA may review accommodations with the student for each class or setting as the student progresses through the medical school curriculum to avoid compromising or fundamentally altering the essential components of a particular course or program.

- Students are responsible for notifying GOAAA in a timely manner if there is a change in their disability status, if they require a modification to a previously approved accommodation, if they require a new accommodation or if they are dissatisfied with the implementation of an accommodation.

- Accommodations are not retroactive.

Procedure

Requesting Academic Accommodations or Modifications

Geisel students are expected to be actively responsible for all aspects of their enrollment. Students requesting accommodations must take the initiative to seek assistance, comply with deadlines and agreements, and participate in the following procedure:

1. **Complete a "Request for Disabilities Services/Accommodation" Form**
    a. Students should complete the Request for Disability Services Form prior to meeting with GOAAA.
2. **Schedule a Meeting with GOAAA**
    a. Students should Schedule a Meeting with the Assistant Director for Accessibility Services or designee. If possible, this contact should take place at least three weeks prior to the start of an academic block, course, or clinical clerkship or immediately following an injury or illness, in order to disclose a disability/illness/injury and to initiate accommodation(s). Accommodations may be sought at any time. However, if a request is not timely, accommodations may be delayed.
3. **Provide Required Documentation**
    a. Students must provide relevant and current (typically within three years) documentation of disability through evaluation by an appropriate and qualified professional. In general, documentation should be completed by a licensed or credentialed examiner (not a family member or individual who has a conflict of interest) and include the following components as appropriate:
        i. A description of the disability, including the diagnosis and history;
        ii. A description of the current impact on major life activities in daily living and in an educational setting in comparison with most people in the general population;
        iii. A description of the expected duration, frequency, severity, and progression of the condition; and,
        iv. A description of the past use of disability services.
    b. Examples of disability documentation include (but are not limited to):
    a. Educational, psychological, or medical records;
    b. Reports and assessments created by healthcare providers, psychologists, or an educational system;
    c. Documents that reflect education and accommodation history, such as audiology reports and vision assessments;
    d. Verification form of a disability provided by a prior or current educational institution;
    e. Statement from a health or other service professional; and,
    f. Vocational assessment.
    c. Certain disabilities, such as specific learning disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), visual impairments, hearing impairments, and/or psychiatric disorders, may require more detailed documentation. Please refer to the Guidelines for Documentation of Specific Disabilities for additional information.

1. **Evaluation of the Accommodation Request**
   GOAAA will evaluate the accommodation request with respect to the completeness and appropriateness of the clinical or other diagnostic documentation and the reasonableness of the request. In limited circumstances, GOAAA will request the student to authorize GOAAA to consult with the original evaluator for a variety of reasons, such as, when the documentation and/or necessity of a recommended accommodation is unclear, or when a recommended accommodation could conflict with Geisel's Technical Standards. A student may be asked to provide updated comprehensive information if the condition is potentially changeable and/or previous documentation does not include sufficient relevant information. Furthermore, in order to arrive at an appropriate decision regarding the accommodation request, GOAAA may consult the requestor's clinical providers, relevant faculty, and/or course coordinators with an educational need to know, or other external disability or accommodations officials.

2. **Issuance of Accommodation Request Decision**
   When all documentation is received and appropriate meetings/discussions held, GOAAA will evaluate the accommodations request and issue its decision for final review and approval by the requesting student. This approval may be verbally in an accommodation meeting or via email. If the student agrees with the accommodation decision, GOAAA will issue a "Geisel Disability Accommodation Notification Letter." A copy of the form will be provided to the student and placed in the student's confidential file in the GOAAA office. In cases where the student disagrees with GOAAA's accommodation decision, they will be instructed about the appeal process.

3. **Implementation of Accommodations in Courses and Clerkships and Student's Responsibilities**
   GOAAA will provide a copy of the accommodation form to whomever has an educational need to know in order to implement the accommodation. However, in some cases, students will be required to personally deliver copies of the accommodation form to certain parties for implementation purposes, particularly during the clinical phase of their schooling. Students will be notified if and when they must deliver the accommodation form themselves and will be responsible for delivering the form in a timely manner. If any problem arises in the receipt of the accommodation form, the student must contact GOAAA as soon as possible to ensure that the necessary steps are taken to guarantee the accommodation is in place.

Accommodation Appeals and/or Grievances

A student may initiate the accommodation and appeal and/or grievance procedure in response to any of the following situations:

- Disagreement with any action, inaction, or decision made by GOAAA;
- Discrimination resulting from a failure to implement an agreed upon accommodation, the quality of the accommodation provided, the timeliness of the receipt of the accommodation, or any other accommodation-based claim;
- Other discriminatory actions or inactions, including a failure to remove accessibility barriers; and,

- Discrimination in the form of disability-based harassment.

Steps in the Appeal and/or Grievance Process

1. Students are encouraged to promptly contact GOAAA to determine if the issue can be quickly and adequately resolved. In many instances, issues can be quickly resolved through informal discussions.

2. If the student is not satisfied with these efforts or wishes to engage in a formal appeal or grievance of a decision or action made by Geisel or GOAAA without first seeking an informal resolution, the student should follow the "Dartmouth College ADA/504 Appeal Process," available by contacting the Dartmouth Office of Equal Opportunity, Accessibility, and Title IX (EOATIX).

LCME Standard

Standard 10.5 – Technical Standards

A medical school develops and publishes technical standards for the admission, retention, and graduation of applicants or medical students in accordance with legal requirements. A medical school requires student attestation to meeting the technical standards with or without reasonable accommodation as they progress through the years or phases of the curriculum.

Related Information: Documents, Policies, Links, Etc.

- Dartmouth College ADA/504 Appeal Process
- Geisel Request for Disability Services/Accommodation Form
- Geisel School of Medicine Technical Standards for Matriculation, Promotion, and Graduation
- Geisel Disability Accommodation Notification Letter
- Geisel Guidelines for Documentation of Specific Disabilities
- Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973 https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasam/centers-offices/civil-rights-center/statutes/section-504-rehabilitation-act-of-1973
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as Amended https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/adaaa.cfm
- Geisel School of Medicine Office of Academic Advising and Accessibility https://geiselmed.dartmouth.edu/goaaa/
- Dartmouth Office of Equal Opportunity, Accessibility and Title IX https://eoatix.dartmouth.edu/

Policy Administration

Policy Number	UME-GSAS-0001		
Reviewed By	Assistant Director for Accessibility Services	**Effective**	August 20, 2025
Approved By	Associate Dean for Student Life	**Last Date Approved**	August 20, 2025

Policy Contact Information

Geisel Student Accessibility Services
Geisel.Student.Accessibility.Services@dartmouth.edu

History

Date	History
March 26, 2019	Policy was created and sent to Dartmouth General Counsel for Review.
April 26, 2019	Policy was revised to include suggestions by General Counsel.
May 15, 2019	Policy was reviewed.
May 30, 2019	Policy was approved by the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education.
April 11, 2025	Updated to new policy template.
August 20, 2025	Updated language to reflect changes to office name and “Technical” Standards as well as expansion of services to MPH and MS Programs. Updated Procedures with new streamlined accommodation process.

Background

The Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth is committed to making its educational environment accessible to qualified individuals with disabilities in accordance with its obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as Amended and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Consistent with Dartmouth College's inclusive mission, Geisel continues to explore new technologies and other reasonable and appropriate adjustments to promote equal access to qualified students with disabilities; a commitment Geisel believes enhances the experience of students, faculty, staff, and those patients we are committed to serving.