



UNION
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Office of Disability Services

Policies and Procedures Manual

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This manual is intended to be a reference for current students, faculty, staff, prospective students, and parents of students about the processes and procedures of the Office of Disability Services at Union University. Information is presented in general; all accommodation requests are handled on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, this manual provides guidance on the operations of the Office of Disability Services (ODS).

For any questions about the information presented herein, please contact the Director for Disability Services or visit www.uu.edu/ods for further information.



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Table of Contents

Vision and Mission	1
Vision Statement.....	1
Mission Statement.....	1
Objectives	1
Definitions.....	2
University Responsibilities	4
Financial Responsibilities	5
Determination of Reasonable Accommodations	5
Implementation of Student Accommodations	6
Privacy of Information.....	7
Student Responsibilities.....	8
Note to Parents, Guardians, Spouses, and Other Family Members	10
Application Process	11
Documentation Guidelines.....	13
Will my IEP or 504 Plan Count as Documentation?	13
What if I am Working With my State Vocational Rehabilitation Program?	14
What if I Received Accommodations at a Previous Institution of Higher Education?	14
General Guidelines for Qualified Professionals	15
Accommodation Details.....	17
Introduction.....	17
Testing Accommodations	17
Note Taking Assistance Procedures	20

Recording Class Lectures	21
Alternative Format for Textbooks	22
Concussion/Return to Class Policy.....	23
Meal Plan Reductions	25
Assistance Animal Policy	27
Leniency on Attendance and Assignment Rescheduling.....	37
Campus Housing Accommodations.....	38
Sign Language Interpreters/CART Services.....	39
Early Registration	42
Course Substitutions	43
Course Load Reductions	43
Personal Care Attendant Policy	44
Services for Graduation	49
Other Accommodations	50
Medical Withdrawal Policy	51
Grievance and Appeals Policy	56
Student Informal Grievance Procedures	56
Student Formal Grievance Procedures	57
External Complaint Procedures	59
Faculty Appeal Procedure.....	60
Emergency Plans for Students with Disabilities.....	61
Seizure/Unresponsive Person Policy	61
Building Evacuation	62

Mental Health Crisis Policy and Protocol.....	66
Appendix A: Concussion Policy Research	67
Appendix B: Medical Withdrawal Policy.....	70

Vision and Mission

Vision Statement

Equal access across Union University

Mission Statement

The work of the Office of Disability Services is to provide equal access to all academic and social opportunities at Union University. In keeping with the teachings of the Christian faith (Genesis 1:27; Matthew 7:12; I Corinthians 12:4-6, 14, 18, 26), ODS recognizes the inherent worth of every person and works with any qualified person to make the Union experience accessible through reasonable accommodations.

Objectives

1. Provides students with disabilities, who qualify through the Office of Disability Services at Union University, equal access to academic and social opportunities through reasonable accommodations.
2. Creates an atmosphere where students with disabilities acquire the needed skills and confidence to self-disclose & self-advocate in an academic, social, or work environment.
3. Supports the work of the faculty by ensuring that reasonable accommodations are properly and effectively administered without compromising the academic integrity of Union University.
4. Provides programming and information to students, faculty, staff, and families that increase awareness of disability issues and the accommodation process.

Definitions

Assistance animal – Any animal that works, provides assistance, completes specific tasks, or provides emotional support to a person with a disability. Assistance animals are broken into three categories at Union University: service animals, emotional support animals, and therapy animals.

(a) **Service animals** – Service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA (United States Department of Justice, 2011).

(b) **Emotional support animal** – Emotional support animals are pets who provide emotional support by being present. By definition, they do not perform specific tasks in response to a disability. Emotional support animals are not limited to specific species or breeds of animals.

(c) **Therapy animal** – Therapy animals are any animal trained to provide affection and comfort in order to assist a licensed professional in performing counseling and/or medical duties.

Concussion – A concussion is defined as a neurological dysfunction resulting when the brain experiences an external trauma, which can be caused by direct contact to the head or from rapid acceleration/deceleration of the brain. A concussion may also be referred to as a mild-traumatic brain injury.

Disability – A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Fundamental Alteration Definition – A change that is so significant it alters the essential nature of a course or program of instruction.

- A major change in the nature of the program.
- Lowering an academic standard.
- Removing or waiving acquisition of a skill that is essential.
- Removing or waiving acquisition of a skill that is directly related to the health and safety of others.
- Removing or waiving requirements that are directly related to qualifying for that license.
- Possibly the implementation of an accommodation that would deny nondisabled students an otherwise reasonable expectation just to accommodate a student with a disability. (Converting a weeklong trip into the Grand Canyon into a didactic presentation in a Geology course).

Hidden disability – A disability that is not readily apparent upon casual interaction with a person.

Mascot – A bulldog owned by Union University and used for special events.

Pet – Any domesticated animal kept for use and companionship.

Qualified professional – A person who has been educated, trained, and licensed within a medical or helping profession (e.g. counseling, psychology, social work, etc.) and whose scope of practice allows him/her to diagnose disabilities in the state in which they are licensed.

Student with a disability (SWD) – A student at Union University who has been diagnosed with a disability, has a record of a disability, or is regarded as having a disability.

Substantially limits – This term means unable or significantly restricted in performing a major life activity that the average person in the general population can perform.

Temporary disability – A short-term acute illness or injury that impacts the student's ability to access the physical campus and/or the academic curriculum.

University Responsibilities

Union University is responsible for implementing reasonable accommodations for students, faculty, staff, and guests with disabilities in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990/ADA Amendments Act of 2008. ODS is primarily charged with providing accommodations for current students at all Union University campuses and online programs. Faculty and staff needing accommodations should contact Human Resources to discuss the appropriate procedures for making requests. Guests should contact the department providing the program or service to request accommodations. ODS welcomes

opportunities to consult with other departments on appropriate procedures and services for meeting guests' needs.

Financial Responsibilities

Union University will not charge persons with disabilities for the use or implementation of services or assistive technology to be used on a Union University campus. However, Union University is not responsible to pay for personal services while a person with a disability utilizes approved accommodations. This is discussed further in the [Student Responsibilities](#) section.

Financial responsibility for services and assistive technology for current students is incumbent on ODS. Human Resources is responsible for the financial costs associated with providing accommodations to faculty and staff members. Individual departments are responsible for financial obligations for any guests attending department programs or using departmental services. In places where there is overlap between student and guest needs, such as a graduation ceremony where both a student and the student's family need a sign language interpreter, ODS will pay for services. However, for instances where charges are incurred on a per-individual basis, ODS will split the cost with the department responsible for the event or service.

Determination of Reasonable Accommodations

While a prior history of accommodations is a beneficial piece of the documentation process, ODS is responsible for determining whether requested accommodations are reasonable for use at Union University. Accommodations can be deemed to be unreasonable even if they are recommended by a qualified professional or have been granted at a previous school, college, or university. Students should talk with the Director for ODS regarding any questions about the reasonableness of accommodations.

Faculty have the freedom to make academic adjustments and accommodations that would be given to any student in their classes. For example, if the professor would adjust due dates for an assignment because of a death in the family, a student with disabilities would not need to receive documentation from ODS to have an extension when someone in their family died. However, faculty should refer students with disabilities to ODS to receive accommodations specific to their disability needs, even if the faculty member is a qualified professional. This helps to ensure the accommodation processes are consistent across campus.

Implementation of Student Accommodations

Within classroom environments, faculty are initially responsible for implementing accommodations in their courses. For the accommodation of distraction-reduced testing environment, faculty may make use of an empty classroom, conference room, or nearby office. Alternatively, on the Jackson campus, they may utilize the Center for Academic Success's test proctoring services. With faculty having the freedom of implementing accommodations, they can work with students to find means that are mutually beneficial. If a faculty member is having difficulty with implementing a specific accommodation, he or she should contact ODS to consult about the best way to meet student needs.

For student program access, the campus department or organization hosting the event is responsible for implementing accommodations. As with faculty members, staff and organization leaders are encouraged to consult with ODS regarding any questions on how to best implement accommodations.

In other cases, ODS will take primary responsibility for arranging accommodations. For example, when a student needs alternative textbooks, ODS will follow the proper procedures to

obtain copies of textbooks for students. Please refer to the [Accommodation Details](#) section for information about specific procedures for common accommodations.

Privacy of Information

The privacy of medical documentation submitted to ODS is protected by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as educational record. As such, disability information cannot be shared with faculty, staff, or other representatives of Union University unless the student gives their consent or an educational need-to-know can be established. Medical information provided by a qualified professional to ODS loses its HIPAA protection and falls under the FERPA educational record rules. It is important to note that documentation sent to the Union University Health Services or Counseling Services offices is considered to be treatment records under FERPA and has stricter privacy protections. If a student requests Health Services or Counseling Services send documentation to ODS, the information loses this stricter privacy protection. It is the policy of ODS that the student's medical diagnosis will only be shared with the student's written consent, regardless of an educational need-to-know.

In addition, students who request ODS to share information from their disability educational records with an outside entity, such as another institution of higher education, must complete a release of information. ODS also cannot share information with parents, guardians, or spouses unless a FERPA declaration is on file with the Office of the Registrar or an ODS release of information has been submitted. Student privacy is important and ODS maintains a strict standard of confidentiality and privacy while abiding by all applicable laws and Union University policies.

Student Responsibilities

Unlike P-12 school systems, students hold a large amount of responsibility in regard to the identification, implementation, and utilization of accommodations. Most importantly, it is the responsibility of students to self-identify with ODS in order to receive services at Union University. To determine eligibility for services, students are responsible for completing the application for services, available on the ODS web site (www.uu.edu/ods), and providing ODS with documentation from a qualified professional diagnosing a disability. Any expenses incurred to obtain documentation are the sole responsibility of the student. In addition, email is the primary mode of communication from ODS to students. Students are therefore responsible for regularly checking email and responding to information sent from ODS.

Union University utilizes a self-advocacy model of service implementation. Students are responsible for requesting an updated letter of accommodations at the start of each semester and providing professors with a copy of the letter of accommodations. Students should also talk with professors in person about how the accommodations will be implemented in classes. If there is a disagreement between the student and professor about the provision of accommodations, the student should contact ODS to discuss how the disagreement can be resolved.

In the event that accommodations are not successfully addressing barriers the student experiences in the educational environment, students need to contact ODS to discuss how to adjust already approved accommodations or explore additional accommodations. ODS does not request grade reports and will not come to classrooms or residences to check-in with students, except in an emergency situation, so students need to alert ODS to any problems connected with disability services they are receiving.

If students require a personal service or item in order to make use of an approved accommodation, the student may be responsible for the financial costs associated with the personal service or item. For example, students who need assistive technology on a computer in a lab are not responsible for paying for the software but do need to work with ODS to identify in what locations software is needed. However, if the student wishes to install software on a personal computer, then the student is responsible for obtaining the software. Similarly, Union University is not responsible for providing an emotional support animal or paying for the expenses associated with caring for an ESA. In addition to initial costs of obtaining a personal service or item, students may also be financially liable for any damages caused by their use of an ESA or assistive technology. If a student has a question about financial responsibility, they are encouraged to talk with ODS for a better understanding.

Note to Parents, Guardians, Spouses, and Other Family Members

Family members play an important role in the life of Union University students. Oftentimes, you are the first one students talk to about the highlights and struggles they are experiencing as they make their way through this college journey. You've laughed with the student, cried with the student, and perhaps even fought for the student's rights. So we recognize the importance that you have in the student's life.

ODS is happy to talk with parents and other family members regarding disability services at Union University. However, there can be restrictions on how much information ODS may disclose. The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects student educational records from disclosure without a release from the student. So in order to talk about specific details of a student's accommodations, a FERPA release must be on file with either ODS or the Union University Office of the Registrar. Students can fill out the Office of the Registrar release online through the Union Portal or complete the [release of information form](#) on the ODS website. If a FERPA release is not on file, the Director for Disability Services will still talk through policies and procedures of ODS but cannot disclose specific details regarding the student. Finally, even if a FERPA release is on file at Union University, all decision-making is the responsibility of the student. No accommodations or other decisions can be implemented without student approval.

Thank you for the important role you play in the life of our students. We look forward to working with you and your student to foster a successful and memorable experience at Union University.

Application Process

Step 1

Prospective and current students starting the request process for accommodations must submit the Application for Reasonable Accommodations and medical documentation diagnosing a disability by a qualified professional to the Union University Office of Disability Services (ODS). The Application for Reasonable Accommodations form is available online for those who have their Union username and password through the Union Portal. Those who do not yet have their login information can print and submit a copy of the application. Medical documentation verifying a disability must also be submitted, reviewed, and approved before accommodations can be finalized. For more information on what medical documents are required, please read through the Documentation Guidelines in the ODS Policies & Procedures manual. Students are encouraged to submit documentation for review as soon as possible to ensure the process can be completed in a timely manner.

Application and documentation materials can be submitted to the Director for Disability Services electronically at ods@uu.edu, faxed to (731) 661-5192, or mailed to:

Union University

Office of Disability Services

Attn: Director for Disability Services

Box: 1915

1050 Union University Dr.

Jackson, TN 38305-3697

Step 2

After the application and medical documentation have been submitted, ODS will review the information to ensure it complies with Union University guidelines and policies and to evaluate the reasonableness of each accommodation request. The student will be contacted if more information is needed.

Step 3

The Director will email the student an electronic version of the letter of accommodations. Once the student has the official accommodation letter, he or she is able to contact instructors via email with the letter of accommodations attached. The Office of Disability Services provides a template to assist students in writing instructors concerning their disability and can also assist in providing email address of instructors.

Step 4

At the beginning of every semester, students approved for reasonable accommodations will need to [request a current Letter of Accommodations](#) to deliver to instructors. Students will be emailed a reminder at the beginning of each semester. The accommodation letters should be emailed and/or printed by the student to give to each instructor. Students should also arrange to meet with each faculty member to discuss the implementation of approved accommodations in each specific class due to differences in class structure and assessment styles. Accommodations do not become effective until the instructor receives the accommodation letter and are not retroactive in nature. In addition, it may take up to a week for faculty to implement accommodations. Any requests presented to faculty with less than a week will be attempted by faculty but cannot be guaranteed.

Documentation Guidelines

These guidelines outline what information is necessary in order to obtain accommodations for documented disabilities at Union University. The Office of Disability Services at Union University strives to utilize the three tiered approach to documentation outlined by the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD): student self-report, observations and interactions, and information from external third parties (AHEAD, 2012). In determining eligibility for accommodations under Section 504 and the ADA, students, particularly those with hidden disabilities, may be asked for documentation from a qualified medical professional who has formally diagnosed a disability. These guidelines are provided to help the evaluating professional document his/her findings in a manner that meets Union University requirements and supports the request for accommodations.

It is the responsibility of the student to obtain his/her documentation and present a copy to the Office of Disability Services. 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.

Will my IEP or 504 Plan Count as Documentation?

For individuals who have been receiving accommodations from a secondary school system, you may have been provided with an IEP, 504 Plan, or Transition Plan. Please note, these documents may not necessarily be sufficient documentation for accommodation requests without supplemental documents from a qualified medical professional. A prior history of

accommodations, without demonstration of current need, does not in and of itself warrant the provision of accommodations. In particular, IEP and 504 documentation must show a clear diagnosis of a disability as well as the credentials of the professional making the diagnosis. However, even if the IEP or 504 plan does not clearly have these two pieces, it can be helpful in the determination process. Students are responsible for requesting this information from their high school or school system. Please review your high school documentation against the outlined documentation guidelines to ensure your application is complete.

What if I am Working With my State Vocational Rehabilitation Program?

For individuals who are receiving services from a state rehabilitation agency, much of the requested information will be contained in the documentation regarding your eligibility for services and vocational plan. You are encouraged to talk with your rehabilitation counselor and show them Union's Documentation Guidelines. You will need to obtain a copy to submit to ODS or fill out paperwork with your Voc Rehab counselor for them to send the documentation directly to Union.

What if I Received Accommodations at a Previous Institution of Higher Education?

Much like an IEP or 504 plan, documentation from another institution of higher education will be an important part of establishing accommodations at Union University but may not necessarily be sufficient in and of itself. However, since most institutions follow the same laws and procedures, this paperwork can be an important piece of a student's file at Union. The student should contact the previous institution's disability support office to arrange for paperwork to be sent to ODS.

General Guidelines for Qualified Professionals

When obtaining new documentation from a qualified professional, ODS recommends the following aspects be a part of the documentation. #1 and #6 are requirements. Other sections may be required depending upon the requested accommodations.

1. A diagnostic statement identifying the disability, date of the most current diagnostic evaluation, and the date of the original diagnosis.
 - a. We encourage the use of the current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association (DSM 5) or the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10).
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. We encourage (but are not limited to) the following assessments for specific disabilities:
 - a. Learning Disabilities:
 - i. Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale – Fourth Edition (WAIS-IV)
 - ii. Woodcock Johnson Test of Achievement – Fourth Edition (WJ-IV)
 - b. Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder:
 - i. Conners' Adult AD/HD Diagnostic Interview or Conners' Adult ADHD Rating Scales (CAARS)
 - ii. Brown's ADHD Checklist
 - iii. Test of Variables of Attention (T.O.V.A.)
 - c. Anxiety or Depression:
 - i. Depression Anxiety Stress Scales

- ii. Beck Depression Inventory
 - iii. Beck Anxiety Inventory
 - d. Hearing Impairment:
 - i. Audiogram (not more than five years old)
 - e. Visual Impairment:
 - i. Ocular Assessment (not more than five years old)
- 3. A description of the current substantial functional impact of the disability on a major life activity.
 - a. This section should include a specific statement from the examiner stating what factors of the student's disability impacts the academic or social functions of a college setting.
- 4. Treatments, medications, and/or assistive devices/services currently prescribed or in use.
- 5. A description of the expected progression over time, particularly the next five years. In other words, will the impact of the disability improve or worsen?
- 6. The credentials of the diagnosing professional if not clear from the letterhead or other forms.
- 7. Professional's recommendations for appropriate accommodations in a post-secondary environment.

Accommodation Details

Introduction

This section will address specific procedures regarding common accommodations. Two things are important to note. First, accommodations are determined and implemented in an individualized and deliberative manner. So while these are the established procedures, there may be times that extenuating circumstances or a student's needs necessitate a different plan of action.

Second, this section is not meant to be an exhaustive list of accommodations or a menu of accommodation selections. That is why there is no discussion about which diagnoses match each accommodation. Accommodation approvals are dependent upon the student's self-report of the limitations experienced, observations of Union University faculty and staff, and the medical documentation presented as a part of the application process. In addition, students are encouraged to discuss with ODS, both initially and throughout their Union University experience, any services they think may be beneficial and are directly connected to their disability. ODS will make a determination about the reasonableness of all requests.

Testing Accommodations

In order to ensure course exams are validly assessing student learning and are not skewed by a disability, ODS works with students to identify appropriate testing accommodations based upon the effects of a documented disability. While ODS makes the determination regarding the appropriateness of the accommodations, faculty and students are responsible for determining how best to implement the accommodations for each class.

Extended time

One common accommodation provided for testing is extended time. Generally, time and a half (50% extra time) is utilized. This means an hour long test would be an hour and a half for approved students. Students may request more extended time such as double time (100% extra time), but detailed documentation and supporting information from the student and professors may be requested by ODS before making a determination.

Extended time is applicable to all tests, quizzes, and in-class assignments with time limits, whether in person or online. Extended time does not affect the time window in which a student may take an assessment. For example, a professor might provide a test online through Canvas that must be completed between Monday and Sunday, and the student has 60 minutes to complete the test after starting it. Extended time would grant the student 90 minutes to complete the test in one sitting. However, it would not grant the student a second week to start the test. The extended time accommodation is also applicable to all final examinations and standardized tests performed by the faculty. Faculty members who have questions about best practices in administering exams with extended time are encouraged to contact ODS.

Extended time is available on tests provided by the School of Adult and Professional Studies (e.g. CLEP, Dantes, etc.) and the Residual ACT by the Admissions office. Students should contact the appropriate directors of these programs and ODS to arrange for accommodated testing. Prospective students will need to submit medical documentation and an application for services in the same manner as current students.

Distraction-reduced environment

Another common testing accommodation is providing students with a distraction-reduced environment. Students and faculty should discuss at the beginning of the semester what the

distraction-reduced environment will be. Some faculty members prefer to utilize an empty classroom, conference room, or office nearby so that the faculty member can answer student questions during the exam. If such a space is not available, the faculty member may choose to use testing proctoring services provided by the Center for Academic Success. Please contact the Center for Academic Success for more information about reserving a space for students to test (<http://www.uu.edu/studentlife/academic-success/test-proctoring/>).

Test reader and scribe

The final common testing accommodations are the test reading and scribing accommodations. When the functional limitations of a disability affect the student's ability to read or write an exam, the student can arrange with ODS for these services to be provided. Students approved for reading or scribing accommodations are responsible for notifying ODS at least three days before a test when the services will be needed.

ODS will arrange with the instructor to have a copy of the test available and to identify a suitable testing location. ODS will be responsible for returning the completed test to the instructor after it has been completed. The test reader and/or scribe is not able to answer questions in regards to the test and is not responsible for proofreading student responses. Students should carefully review what has been read or written for clarity's sake.

In instances where a person is not available to provide services, ODS may work with the student with technological substitutions, with faculty approval. For reading services, this may include an audio version of the test or the use of a computer and screen reader. For scribing services, this may include approving oral testing or utilizing a speech-to-text software, such as NaturallySpeaking, or text-to-speech software, such as NVDA, JAWS, or Dragon

Note Taking Assistance Procedures

Students who qualify for note taking assistance due to the effects of a documented disability should first clarify what type of note taking assistance they are requesting. Notes can only be granted for classes which a student attends, even if the absence is due to the student's disability, unless otherwise given permission by the instructor. In the case of copies of lecture presentation slides (e.g. Powerpoint) and professor lecture notes, each instructor will need to be contacted to discuss the format of the class and whether these options are available. If utilizing Glean audio notetaker and audio recording to help capture lectures, please refer to the [Recording Class Lectures](#) section.

If requesting a copy of peer notes, Union University utilizes a three-tiered approach to providing note taker accommodations. Students are responsible for advancing through each tier for each class and informing ODS when they need to explore the next option.

Known peer note taker

If a student already knows a peer whose notes they would like to copy, the student should tell the professor who the peer is so the professor knows the accommodation has been fulfilled. Students may arrange for a transfer of notes on their own or contact ODS to facilitate the copying of notes.

Volunteer note taker

If the student does not identify a peer in the class to obtain notes from, they may submit a request form on the ODS web site for a Note Taker Announcement letter to give to instructors. This form outlines for professors how to recruit a current student to provide notes. The student

may choose to work directly with the note taker or remain confidential and have ODS facilitate the transfer of notes.

Paid note taker

If no volunteer note taker can be identified in the class, the student needs to contact ODS as soon as possible to arrange for a paid peer note taker. The note taker cannot be taking the course for credit. The note taker will submit notes to ODS as proof of the work performed and ODS will send the notes to the student with a disability electronically via email. If a paid note taker is not available, ODS will work with the student to identify other equivalent solutions.

Recording Class Lectures

Students who have been approved by ODS as having a documented disability that limits their ability to acquire and process course material may be granted permission to record class lectures for their personal study use only. One option currently available to Union University students is the use of the Glean audio note taker software. Please see <https://glean.co/> for more information.

Lectures recorded for this reason may not be shared with other people without the consent of the instructor. Information contained in the audio-recorded lecture is protected under federal copyright laws and may not be published without the consent of the instructor. Recordings should only occur during times when students would otherwise be taking notes. Outside of those times, it may be appropriate for the instructor to ask the student to stop recording, such as during small group discussions.

Students approved for this accommodation must present their letter of accommodation to their instructors and discuss what device they will use to record lectures. The instructors may ask

students to read and sign the Recorded Lecture Contract, available from ODS at faculty request. Faculty should scan the signed contract and email a copy to both the student and ODS.

Alternative Format for Textbooks

Receiving an additional copy of textbooks in an alternate format is an approved accommodation through ODS. Alternative formats may include audio files or digital files (i.e. PDF, ePub, etc.). This accommodation is only for students who qualify for assistance in effectively accessing and understanding regular text format. In order to receive this accommodation, a student must follow the procedures to register with the ODS, including providing relevant medical documentation from a qualified professional with a diagnosis verifying the need for such accommodation.

Once a student has been approved for the alternative format accommodation, the student must fill out the Alternative Format form online each semester (<http://www.uu.edu/studentlife/disability-services/forms/audio-book.cfm>). Complications obtaining an audio or digital file are possible, delaying access up to four to eight weeks. So students are highly encouraged to submit their request as soon as they know which books they will need for the next semester. Before the books are released to the student a proof of purchase must be supplied to ODS. Once the text has been acquired, the Director for Disability Services will contact the student with more information about transferring the alternative format text.

Audio files are most often obtained from [Bookshare](#). The Director for Disability Services will create an account for each student requesting audiobooks. There is no way to link previous accounts, so each student will have a unique Union University account. If Bookshare does not have a requested textbook, other options will be explored, including requesting Bookshare add the book to their collection. These requests generally take a couple of months to be processed. If a previous

edition of the book is available, this will be provided to the student. If the book is not available, ODS may work with the student to set up a screen reader and provide the student with an electronic copy of the book.

Electronic versions of books will be collected by ODS after requests are made. When all textbooks are collected, the student will be contacted to come to ODS and receive the digital files. Students must bring their own flash drives to receive the books. Students are also responsible for deleting the digital files after the current semester ends.

Concussion/Return to Class Policy

Union University is committed to supporting students who sustain mild-traumatic brain injuries by the granting of reasonable accommodations. The following policy and procedure was informed by the ADA and recent literature on brain rehabilitation and concussion management. ODS undertakes the responsibility of guiding students through these procedures, facilitating communication across departments, collecting required medical documentation, determining eligibility for accommodations, and coordinating approved accommodations. The Medical Director of Health Services oversees students' medical assessments and treatment after a concussion.

Procedures

1. Union University's Concussion Policy is initiated when the student, a parent or guardian of the student, or a Union University staff member informs ODS that the student has sustained a concussion.
2. Once ODS is notified of the injury, the Director for Disability Services will request medical documentation in accordance with the ODS Documentation Guidelines. An email from

Union athletic training staff or health center staff will serve as this documentation. After the medical documentation is received, assessed, and verified, the student may be approved for a set of automatic concussion accommodations. These include flexibility on class attendance, exam dates, and assignment deadlines (not to exceed five consecutive days). ODS will also determine if further accommodations are necessary, such as extended time on exams, testing in a distraction reduced environment, permission to record lectures, and assistance with note-taking.

3. The Director for ODS will notify the student's faculty, advisor, and athletic trainer (if applicable). The Union University Director for Residence Life, Director for Counseling Services, Director for Health Services, and Dean of Students will also be notified.
4. The Director for ODS will email and/or meet with the student as soon as possible to go over expectations and answer any questions.
5. Students that are approved for the automatic concussion accommodations will receive follow-up assessments through Union's Health Services, which will include free neurocognitive testing by Certified Athletic Trainers. Health Services staff will determine how frequently the neurocognitive test will take place to track recovery. Health Services staff will communicate with ODS so that faculty are notified of the student's anticipated return to the classroom.
6. The Director for ODS will ensure that the student understands that he or she is responsible for continued communication with faculty during the recovery period and for rescheduling any assignments/tests after the recovery period is over. ODS will assist in supporting the student during this time but is not responsible for rescheduling exams, assignments, or negotiating additional attendance flexibility.

7. If the concussion rest period needs to be extended past five days, the student is responsible for initiating this request from ODS. Union's Health Services or a qualified medical professional must support the request, and new documentation must be submitted before a dialogue with faculty is started. Since attendance is often an essential requirement of a course, any further flexibility must be approved by the student's faculty member. The student is not guaranteed flexibility on attendance, assignment deadlines, or test dates past the five initial days of the accommodations.
8. Any academic incompletes will be decided by the faculty member and the individual academic department. If a medical withdraw is necessary, the student should contact their faculty advisor. All medical withdraws must be approved by the Office of the Registrar and Registrar.

Meal Plan Reductions

All students living on the Union University campus are required to purchase a university meal plan. Occasionally, students have special needs based on documented health conditions, such as those resulting in certain dietary restrictions. These needs may necessitate a meal plan accommodation. Meal plan accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis, according to documented need and applicable standards for reasonable accommodations. Students must follow these procedures and provide all the required information in order to be considered for meal plan disability accommodations.

Union University Dining Services offers many dining options capable of accommodating different dietary needs, including student-specific meal preparation for allergies, in addition to a wide array of healthy eating choices. We encourage students to meet with Dining Service's staff first to inquire about all of the dining options before pursuing a meal plan accommodation.

Procedures

The following documentation is needed for a meal plan reduction request:

- Online Application for Reasonable Accommodation
- Disability Accommodations Request for Meal Plan Form (completed by student)
- Disability Documentation Form from Health Care Provider (completed by qualified professional)

The process for determining whether Union University's Dining Services can provide students with alternative meal options or whether a meal plan reduction is needed can be an in-depth process. Because of this, students are encouraged to complete all paperwork as completely as possible. Withholding information may result in being denied a reduction when it otherwise would be appropriate. Delivery of documentation may be made in person or by sending documents by mail, fax, or email attachment to the director. Incomplete applications or those without disability/medical documentation will not be considered.

Once a complete request has been submitted, it will be considered by the Meal Plan Accommodations Committee, which is comprised of staff from the offices of Disability Services, Dining Services, and other professional consultants, as needed. Students are informed of the status of their requests as soon as reasonably possible through their Union email account. Students granted a meal plan accommodation will be notified as to whether or not they will need to resubmit a request each year.

Deadlines for requesting a meal plan accommodation

Students are strongly encouraged to submit any requests for meal plan accommodations as soon as such a request is determined to be necessary. Students should allow adequate time for the application materials to be reviewed and accommodations considered. A meal plan

accommodation review may take two to four weeks to occur. Meal plan accommodations are NOT retroactive and financial refunds will not be granted for current or past semesters. Once the semester begins, all meal plan accommodation requests will be considered for future semesters. In order to ensure that your request is processed in a timely manner, all materials must be submitted to the Office of Disability Services by the following dates:

- July 15 for the Fall semester
- November 15 for the Winter and Spring semesters
- April 15 for the Summer semester

Assistance Animal Policy

As part of the mission of providing equal opportunity to access its programs, services, and activities, Union University recognizes that assistance animals may be an effective accommodation for certain qualified students. Assistance animals can include service animals, emotional support animals, and therapy animals, but they are not pets. Please see the [Definitions](#) section for clarification of the terms used in this section. The presence of animals may present health, safety, security, and other programmatic issues for all members of the university community. To preserve the mission of the university, to recognize the rights and obligations of all members of the Union community, and to ensure the health, safety, security, and educational needs of these members, the following criteria and requirements are adopted.

Service animals

Service animals will be permitted to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of Union University's facilities where students, members of the public, and other participants in services, programs or activities are allowed to go, including the residence complexes. Service

animals are limited to dogs, in some cases miniature horses, who provide work or perform a task related to a person's disability, as defined by the ADA. For more information, please see the [Definitions](#) section.

Union University does not require documentation that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal. Individuals accompanied by a service animal on campus, but who do not need any other disability-related accommodations, are not required to register with the Office of Disability Services; nor is such an individual required to submit a request for a reasonable accommodation to receive access for his or her service animal. Additionally, Union University cannot ask about the nature or extent of a person's disability to determine whether a person's animal qualifies as a service animal. However, when it is not readily apparent how the dog is working as a service animal, Union University staff may make two inquiries to determine whether the dog qualifies as a service animal, which are:

- (1) Is the dog required because of a disability?
- (2) What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

A service animal must be housebroken (i.e., trained so that it controls its waste elimination, absent illness or accident) and must be kept under control by a harness, leash, or other tether, unless the person is unable to hold those, or such use would interfere with the service animal's performance of work or tasks. In such instances, the service animal must be kept under control by voice, signals, or other effective means.

Tennessee state law allows animals that are being trained to be dog guides for the blind, hearing assistance dogs, or assistance animals for persons with physical impairments to access Union University facilities. Per Tenn. Code Ann. § 62- 7-112(a)(2), dog guide trainers may be asked to present credentials from an accredited school for training dog guides.

Union University will assess requests for the use of miniature horses by people with disabilities on a case-by-case basis. Requests should be submitted to the Office of Disability Services and, consistent with applicable laws, Union University may make modifications in its policies to permit their use if they meet certain criteria and have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of people with disabilities.

Emotional support animals

In accordance with the Fair Housing Act, Union University works with students to approve the use of emotional support animals on campus. Emotional support animals provide emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship to ameliorate the effects of a disability. Emotional support animals are restricted to their handler's apartment and the outdoor common spaces while at Union University. Emotional support animals are not allowed to accompany persons with disabilities in all public areas of Union University as a service animal is allowed to do. Unless otherwise agreed upon by the student, Residence Life, and ODS, the student is allowed one specific animal as an emotional support animal.

Before an emotional support animal can move into Residence Life with a person with a disability, a request must be submitted to Union University's Office of Disability Services and approval must be granted. Individuals requesting approval of an on-campus support animal must submit their request and all required paperwork by the following semester deadlines:

- July 15 for the Fall semester
- November 15 for the Winter and Spring semesters
- April 15 for the Summer semester

All requests are subject to review and require current documentation as outlined in this policy. While requests made after the designated deadline will be accepted and considered, there

is no guarantee that the institution will be able to meet late applicants' accommodation requests. All decisions must be made by the start of the semester.

While emotional support animals are generally not allowed indoors on Union University's campus other than in Residence Life, people with disabilities may request approval from the Office of Disability Services to have the emotional support animal accompany them to other campus areas. Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis consistent with applicable laws.

Process for requesting permission to house an emotional support animal

Outlined here are the procedures for gaining approval to bring an emotional support animal to campus and house it within the residence facilities. This process may take up to six weeks to fully complete. Animals are not permitted to be in residential spaces until the final approval is granted. Additionally, Union University is not responsible for any financial obligations students may incur while the approval is being processed.

- 1) Submit an Application for Services (available through the ODS website, www.uu.edu/ods) and medical documentation from a qualified professional. In addition, students must identify what species and breed of animal they intend to bring to campus. The medical documentation must address:
 - a. The individual's diagnosis that qualifies them as a person with a disability (i.e., has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities); and
 - b. How the emotional support animal is necessary to afford the person with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy Residence Life (i.e. how the animal would provide emotional support or other assistance that would ameliorate one or more symptoms or effects of the disability).

- 2) ODS will review documentation to ensure it meets the above criteria. If it does, ODS will contact Residence Life.
- 3) Residence Life will process the request by confirming the housing assignment will be adequate for the requested animal and talking with all roommates regarding the presence of an animal in the residence space.
- 4) Once Residence Life has confirmed with ODS that the residence is ready for the animal, ODS will schedule a final meeting with the student. At this meeting, the Director for ODS will discuss all of the rights and responsibilities in depth. The Director and student will sign the Assistance Animal Agreement. After the agreement has been signed, the animal will be allowed to live in the student's residence.

Therapy animals

Because therapy animals are used in the provision of psychotherapeutic services, the Office for Counseling Services is responsible for setting all procedures and permissions for utilizing therapy animals at Union University. Please consult with the Director for Counseling Services for more information.

Pets

A “pet” is any animal kept for ordinary use and companionship (service and support animals are not considered pets). Pets are allowed on the grounds of Union University; however, they are prohibited from entering any campus building. This applies to students, staff, faculty, and visitors. The exceptions to this are the Union University live mascot, Buster; animals kept as part of academic programs, such as the Biology department's aviary and aquariums; and pets allowed in student residences according to Residence Life policies. The Office of Student Life is responsible for policies and procedures regarding the school mascot. Please consult with the Vice

President for Student Life for more information. Individual academic departments are responsible for the policies and procedures regarding animals kept in their spaces for academic purposes.

Responsibilities of people with disabilities using assistance animals

Union University is not responsible for the care or supervision of assistance animals. People with disabilities are responsible for the cost, care, and supervision of their assistance animals, including:

- Compliance with any laws pertaining to animal licensing, vaccination, and owner identification. It is the handler's responsibility to know and understand these laws and ordinances;
- Keeping the animal under control (i.e. leashed, harnessed, or verbal commands) or taking effective action when it is out of control;
- Ensuring the animal is well cared for at all times. Any evidence of mistreatment, neglect, abuse, or leaving the animal unattended for unreasonably long periods of time may result in immediate removal of the assistance animal for its own sake. Feeding, walking the animal, and disposing of its waste are the responsibility of the owner and not of Union University staff or the owner's roommates;
- Preventing any harm caused by the assistance animal to other students, faculty, staff, or campus visitors;
- In accordance with Madison County leash laws, the assistance animal must be on a leash any time it is outside of the student's residence hall room;

- Ensuring that the animal relieves itself in appropriate areas, specified by the Office of Disability Services or Residence Life, and the waste is properly discarded of (e.g. using bags, etc.) in garbage receptacles;
- Restricting the animal from any buildings other than the handler's specific apartment (for ESAs); except in cases where roommates permit the animal to have access to the common space, the animal must be kept in the bedroom.
- Assistance animals may not be left overnight in University Housing to be cared for by any individual other than the handler. If the handler is to be absent from his/her residence hall overnight or longer, the animal must accompany the handler. The handler is responsible for ensuring that the assistance animal is contained, as appropriate, when the handler is not present during the day, (i.e. while attending classes or other activities);
- The animal must not obstruct or disturb any space or activity of the academic program including but not limited to: residence halls, recreational areas, roads, walkways, and passages on any part of campus, legitimate campus activities and any other university programs, spaces, or activities;
- The animal must not disrupt the educational environment by engaging in behaviors or noises that are disruptive to others including but not limited to: excessive barking, excessive whining, excessive growling, excessive grooming, excessively sniffing people, or intrusion into the personal belonging of others;
- The student is financially responsible for the actions of the animal and for all claims involving bodily injury or property damage. This includes, but is not limited to, any replacement of furniture, carpet, window or wall covering as well as cleaning costs considered above the normal cleaning provided for rooms;

- The student must notify Residence Life and the Office of Disability Services in writing if the animal is no longer needed as an emotional support animal or is no longer in residence. To replace one animal with a different animal, the student must file a new request with the Office of Disability Services;

For specific campus areas designated by Union University for toileting assistance animals, contact the ODS or Residence Life. Waste disposal via university plumbing is prohibited in university residences, but the Office of Disability Services or Residence Life can provide guidance on where to appropriately dispose of animal waste.

Union University will not require any surcharges or fees for assistance animals. However, a person with a disability may be charged for damage caused by an assistance animal to the same extent that Union University would normally charge a person for the damage they cause.

People with disabilities who are accompanied by assistance animals must comply with the same university rules regarding noise, safety, disruption, and cleanliness as people without disabilities. The owner's living accommodations may also be inspected for fleas, ticks or other pests as part of the University's standard or routine inspections. If fleas, ticks, or other pests are detected through inspection, the owner will be billed for the expense of any pest treatment above and beyond standard pest management in the residence halls.

Exceptions and exclusions

Union University may impose restrictions on, and may even exclude, an assistance animal in certain circumstances. Any student who wishes to bring or use an assistance animal on Union University property must meet all requirements of this policy. This obligation is on-going and failure to meet all requirements may result in removal or exclusion of the animal. As noted above, emotional support animals are generally not allowed indoors on Union University's campus other

than in Residence Life. Persons with disabilities may request approval from the Office of Disability Services to have the emotional support animal accompany them to other campus areas as a reasonable accommodation. Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis consistent with applicable laws. Any animal may be excluded from an area in which it was previously authorized to be if:

- The size of the animal is too large for available assigned housing space;
- It poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others (e.g. serious allergies) that cannot be mitigated by reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures, or the provision of auxiliary aids or services;
- The animal's presence otherwise violates individuals' right to peace and quiet enjoyment;
- It is not housebroken (or in the case of an emotional support animal that deposits waste in a designated cage or litter box, the owner fails to clean such cage or box such that the cleanliness of the room is not maintained);
- The animal's vaccinations are not up-to-date;
- The animal is not being treated for active illnesses or parasites;
- The animal poses or has posed in the past a direct threat to the individual or others such as aggressive behavior towards or injuring the individual or others;
- The animal causes or has caused excessive damage to housing beyond reasonable wear and tear;
- The animal's presence results in a fundamental alteration of a University program;
- The handler does not comply with the responsibilities set forth in the previous section.

In considering whether an assistance animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, Union University will make an individualized assessment, based on reasonable judgment, current medical knowledge, or the best available objective evidence, to determine:

- The nature, duration, and severity of the risk;
- The probability that the potential injury will actually occur;
- Whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, procedures, or the provision of auxiliary aids or services, will mitigate the risk.

The University President shall name a designee who shall provide a written statement of explanation to any person with a disability if a determination is made that the presence of that person's assistance animal would fundamentally alter the nature of a program, service, or activity.

In the event that restriction or removal of an assistance animal is determined to be necessary, the person with a disability will still be given the opportunity to participate in the service, program, or activity without having the specified assistance animal present.

The above provisions on restrictions and exclusions are not intended to cover modifications to reasonable accommodations. The reasonable accommodation process and modifications to reasonable accommodations are covered under Union University's policy on reasonable accommodations.

Guidelines for members of the Union University community

To ensure equal access and nondiscrimination of people with disabilities, members of the Union University community must abide by the following practices:

- Allow assistance animals to accompany people with disabilities on campus;
- Do not ask for details about a person's disabilities;

- Do not pet an assistance animal, as it distracts the animal from its work;
- Do not feed an assistance animal;
- Do not deliberately startle, tease, or taunt an assistance animal;
- Do not separate or attempt to separate a person from his/her assistance animal;
- Union University personnel are not required to provide care or food for any assistance animal including, but not limited to, removing the animal during emergency evacuation for events such as a fire or tornado. Emergency personnel will determine how to remove the animal. Union University may not be held responsible for the care, damage to, or loss of the animal due to emergency situations.

If you have a disability that may be affected by the presence of animals, please contact the Office of Disability Services. Union University is committed to ensuring that the needs of all people with disabilities are met and will determine how to resolve any conflicts or problems as expeditiously as possible.

Leniency on Attendance and Assignment Rescheduling

There may be times in which a student's disability sporadically and unpredictably impacts their ability to attend class. They may arrive at class late, have to unexpectedly leave class, or miss class altogether. In those situations, the Office of Disability Services will work with faculty to assess their attendance and retake policies to determine what flexibility would be possible for a student. Class attendance is important and faculty are asked to make a good faith effort in considering any adjustments due to the student's needs.

When a student has experienced an episode related to their disability that removes them from the classroom outside of the limits listed in the courses' attendance policy, the student should

contact ODS as soon as possible for ODS to discuss the situation with the professor. ODS will work with the professor to determine whether in-person attendance is an essential element of the course and to what degree. If it is, alternative means of engagement will also be explored. While the use of an Incomplete may be explored, it cannot be mandated as a disability accommodation and is left to the discretion of the professor. ODS will present the student with a plan for maintaining a presence in the course after the discussion with the faculty member.

Should the student reach the limit of what can be accommodated for a particular course, or if the attendance is an essential element that has no room for flexibility, ODS will work with the student and their academic advisor to determine whether dropping individual courses, seeking a medical withdrawal, or other options are appropriate for the student at the time.

Campus Housing Accommodations

There are several options for students who need accommodations in Residence Life due to a disability. It is recommended that students talk with the Director for Residence Life and the Director for Disability Services to know which services and processes are most appropriate to meet student needs. Students should also visit <https://www.uu.edu/studentlife/residence-life/> and <https://www.uu.edu/ods> to familiarize themselves with any applicable forms and procedures, such as the ODS Application for Services.

Accessible rooms are available in most complexes across campus. There is a question on the housing form for students to indicate a need for an accessible room or first floor apartment. Residence Life staff will contact the student to discuss the process for approving requests. When students fill out the housing form annually, they should mark the request again to ensure it is continued. All housing accommodations are granted on a first come, first serve basis. Please see

the section about [Assistance Animals](#) for more information about having a service animal or emotional support animal in campus housing.

In instances where a student's disability necessitates a waiver of the housing requirement outside of the normal exceptions, students must complete and submit an Off-Campus Application. Please see <https://www.uu.edu/studentlife/residence-life/resources/housing-policy.cfm> for more information about this process.

Sign Language Interpreters/CART Services

In providing sign language or captioning services for classes, students are encouraged to meet with their faculty advisors to participate in early course registration. This helps to ensure that services can be arranged as soon as possible. ODS will schedule interpreters to start on the first day of classes, but late requests for interpreting services may result in a failure to find a qualified interpreter. Students may also be asked to reschedule your courses for times that interpreters can be acquired. To avoid this, please request services in a timely manner (at least four weeks before the start of the semester).

For non-class lecture activities, such as Student Life programming, the student is responsible for requesting an interpreter two weeks prior to the event (or as soon as you are aware of the need), but no less than five business days before the event. You can request an interpreter using the online request form on the ODS website (<http://www.uu.edu/studentservices/disabilityservices/forms/InterpreterRequest.cfm>).

Eligible programs and services

Union University will provide interpreting services for all university programs and services. This list is defined as follows:

Welcome Week programing: the defined time of orientation that begins with new student move-in day and concludes at 11:00pm the night before courses begin.

Academic courses: all times set by the faculty that are required for full class participation. These include extra-credit events outside of the classroom.

Academic support programs: all Union sponsored programming through the Center for Academic Success, the Writing Center, and the Library (e.g., tutoring, writing lab, research coach).

Academic advising: all meetings provided through the Office of Disability Services to arrange and manage accommodations. Furthermore, advising meetings with faculty and degree audits through the Registrar's office are included in this definition.

Faculty office hours: times in which the student must meet with course faculty one-on-one to seek academic support and guidance.

Union funded student programing: all Student Life programing and services that receive financial support from the university (e.g., chapel programing, Residence Life programing, Student Government programing, Student Activity Council programming). This also includes all support services offered by the university (e.g., Business Services, Student Financial Planning, Counseling Services, Health Services, Disability Services, Career Services, and Safety & Security).

Non-eligible activities

Union University is not obligated to pay for interpreting for events or programs that are not funded by the university or that are considered personal in nature. These include voluntary study groups, social interactions outside of university-funded programming, private events off-campus, personal church attendance, and Interfraternity/Panhellenic student organizations that are not directly funded by Union University.

Attendance expectations

Late to class: Students who are more than 20 minutes late will be considered a “no-show” and the interpreter will leave.

Last minute absences (for illness): If you find, at the last minute, that you will not be able to attend a class or classes, you should contact ODS as early as possible. Please email or call the Director for ODS.

Absences: If you know you will miss a class (e.g., doctor appointment, etc.), you must inform ODS at least 48 hours in advance of the absence. Notifying only the interpreter is not sufficient. You must also notify ODS of any cancellation. When canceling services, the following information must be provided:

- Your full name and telephone number
- Names of the classes that you will miss (ART-210-1, etc.)
- Time, day and date of the class that you will miss (e.g., 8:00-8:50 a.m. Monday, Sept. 27)

Excessive no-shows: No-shows occur when an interpreter is scheduled to provide in-class services and you do not attend class and have not notified ODS. Missing classes without notifying the ODS results in a financial burden to Union University. Failure to notify the ODS about absences more than three times in one semester without reasonable cause could result in the termination of interpreting services for that semester.

Conflicts: If you experience a problem with your interpreter, you should share your concerns with the director of ODS via email.

Course schedule changes: It is your responsibility to inform ODS if there are any changes to your course schedule. Failure to do so could result in an absent interpreter.

Tips for working with an interpreter in class:

- Introduce yourself and your interpreter to the instructor on the first day of class. Also, give the instructor your letter of accommodations.
- Establish a system of communication with your interpreter so that you can discuss any problems, changes, possible absences or other issues in a timely manner (e.g., text message, email).
- Provide your interpreter with course terms, PowerPoints, and handouts in advance (when possible) so that they can prepare to provide the best possible interpreting.

Early Registration

All freshman and sophomore students registered with ODS are eligible for early registration. Early registration allows the student to register at the same time as the junior class. No further action is needed to qualify for this accommodation. Students must first meet with their

academic advisor, and be sure there are no holds on their account, before being able to register. Students who experience difficulty registering early should contact the Director.

Course Substitutions

Students who request a course substitution for their program of study must first talk to their academic advisor. The advisor will help guide the student in identifying which classes would be eligible for substitution and in working with the appropriate academic departments to approve the substitution. The student may request information housed in ODS, or a summary letter, be provided to departments to aid in the substitution process. ODS is also available to consult with advisors or departments about course requirements, student limitations, and acceptable alternatives. All decisions regarding course substitutions are determined by the appropriate academic department.

Course Load Reductions

There are times when a student's disability may impact the number of classes a student is able to take in a semester. In these circumstances, a student may need to request a course load reduction for continued eligibility of Union services; for example, a student requesting to live in Residence Life with a less than full-time course load. In these circumstances, the Director of ODS will work with the department in question to identify the applicable policies and determine whether an accommodation may be provided to the student.

It is important to note that approval for a course load reduction will often affect a student's financial aid. Federal financial aid cannot be granted at a fulltime basis unless the student is enrolled in the standard definition of fulltime courses. Because of this, students should talk with Student Financial Planning before any decisions are made about course load reductions to be sure they understand all of the impacts on their financial standing with the university.

Personal Care Attendant Policy

ODS recognizes that a student with a documented disability may need the use of a Personal Care Attendant (PCA). ODS approves PCA accommodations for students with proper medical documentation. Only after the formal approval process can a PCA access the university's classrooms, residence halls, and student facilities. The purpose of this policy is to clarify and describe the key concepts and responsibilities involved in a request for a PCA accommodation.

A PCA is an individual who has been hired to support a student with a disability in his or her daily life activities by performing personal care duties or services. A PCA works directly for the student with a disability. In order for a PCA to be approved by Union University, he or she must have a clear criminal record, must not be a current Union student, or be a family member or romantic partner of the student requesting the accommodation. If living with the student, the PCA must also be the same gender as the student with a disability. The PCA performs a variety of tasks that often include, but are not limited to:

- Providing help with activities of daily living, such as: bathing, dressing, toileting, grooming.
- Meal preparation and/or assistance with eating.
- Positioning or transferring to and from a wheelchair.
- Monitoring any medical condition by observing vital signs.
- Reminding the student to take prescribed medications.
- Transporting and/or escorting the student.
- Assisting with maintenance of the housing environment, including light cleaning and laundry.

- Turning pages, retrieving books, and other actions to facilitate the completion of homework.

Responsibilities of Union University

Union University does not provide PCA services and is not responsible or liable for any consequences resulting from a student's association with a PCA. The University accommodates the student's need for special services by permitting the PCA entry to the campus facilities, residence halls, and classrooms. In the event that the student qualifies for PCA accommodations, ODS is responsible for communicating to Residence Life and the student's instructors concerning the presence of a PCA. ODS will coordinate all classroom accommodations. The PCA should not provide tutoring, note-taking services, or test proctoring services.

Responsibilities of student using a Personal Care Attendant

A PCA works directly for the student with a disability. A student needing a PCA is encouraged to seek appropriate personal care independently. Students who use a PCA are responsible for securing, training, supervising and/or paying their PCA. Students can make arrangements through agencies or private contacts. Any student who wishes to utilize a personal care attendant (PCA) on campus must:

- Register with the Office of Disability Services as a student with a disability.
- Qualify as an individual with a disability.
- Qualify for an accommodation of a PCA, as determined by ODS.
- Secure, hire, manage, and pay the PCA.
- Have the selected PCA/PCA's register with the Office of Disability Services (at the student's expense).

- Notify the Office of Disability Services of any need to have a PCA in the classroom or the residence hall.
- Pay for the PCA's room charge and meal plan, as needed.
- Accept responsibility for any charges due to PCA's room damage.
- Communicate with roommates the presence of a PCA.
- Accept responsibility for the safety, health, behavior and actions of the PCA while on campus.
- Realize that the terms and conditions of the Union University Student Handbook apply fully to both the student and the PCA.

Responsibilities of the personal care attendant

PCAs are expected to follow all applicable university policies, regulations, rules, and procedures. If a PCA fails to abide by such policies, regulations, rules, and procedures and/or causes a fundamental alteration in services, programs, or activities, then ODS may make a determination that the PCA will not be allowed to accompany the student with a disability in the classroom and/or other sites. If a PCA who resides in university housing fails to abide by the policies, regulations, rules, and procedures relating to university housing, Residence Life may make a determination that the PCA will not be allowed to live with the student in University housing. It is the student's responsibility to secure the services of another PCA in the event a PCA becomes unable to perform his or her duties for a student. All registered PCA(s) are also required to carry an ID Card. In addition, each PCA will be required to obtain and display a Union University ID card that will allow them to be identified by Safety and Security.

PCAs, at the cost of the student, may assist in the physical mechanics of accomplishing homework, but may not provide intellectual content or tutoring in any form. The student who

accepts the intellectual or academic assistance of the PCA may be accused of academic dishonesty and receive sanctions when appropriate. Furthermore, the PCA is not to take initiative in negotiations or to advocate on behalf of the student with the disability. PCAs who attend classes with the student are not to participate in or disrupt classes in any way. Unless documentation supports the need for the PCA to be in the classroom with the student, the PCA should remain outside of the classroom.

The PCA does not need to subscribe to a meal plan as long as he or she does not eat food while in dining hall. If the PCA would prefer, he or she may obtain a student meal plan at the same rate as a Union student. A PCA who will regularly have a vehicle on or near campus must obtain a parking permit and follow all parking regulations unless explicit, advance exceptions are made by Campus Safety and Security.

Responsibilities of Residence Life

Students who seek to live in Union University residential facilities and require the service of a PCA to assist with activities of daily living must initiate contact with ODS at least six weeks in advance of needing PCA accommodations. Once the student has been approved for and secured a PCA, the Director for Residence Life will meet with both parties to establish expectations.

Responsibilities of instructors

Students who seek to utilize the services of a PCA inside a classroom setting must initiate contact with ODS at least six weeks in advance of needing PCA accommodations. Once the student has been approved for and secured a PCA, the student will establish contact with each instructor to notify them of the approved PCA accommodation. The Director of ODS can facilitate this conversation, as needed.

Procedures for arranging a PCA accommodation

Students seeking PCA accommodations from Union University on the basis of a diagnosed disability are required to complete the regular accommodation process. The student must first apply for reasonable accommodations by visiting www.uu.edu/ods. The student must then submit medical documentation verifying the existence of a disability and the need for a PCA. No accommodations can be given until the application for accommodations and medical documentation has been received and approved by ODS. Please refer to the [Documentation Guidelines](#) section of this manual for more information.

Once a student has been approved for the PCA accommodation through ODS, he or she must register each PCA with the University. The Office of Disability Services must receive a copy of the contractual agreement between the student and the PCA or the PCA's agency. This documentation could cover a specific person or an agency providing services by more than one person. The contract must stipulate that the services required by the student will in fact be provided by the PCA.

The student must also submit a copy of the PCA's criminal background check to ODS. If the student is contracting with an individual PCA, then the student must ensure that the PCA submits a current criminal background check. If the student is working with a PCA contracting agency, the student may obtain and provide a copy of the agency criminal background check for the PCA. The student is responsible for notifying ODS if the PCA is charged with any crime of violence (including stalking or communicating threats), theft, drug possession, assault or arson, or any other crime that would create a concern of safety by a reasonable person. If the PCA has not submitted a criminal background check to the student, or if there is any question or concern about

the PCA's criminal history, the Office of Disability Services will conduct a criminal background check of the PCA at the student's expense.

Once the PCA's contractual agreement and criminal background check have been submitted to the Office of Disability Services, the Director will meet with both parties. This meeting will cover all expectations as espoused in the Union University Student Handbook. The Director for ODS will assist in the PCA(s) acquiring a campus ID and parking permit through Campus Safety and Security.

Lastly (if applicable), the student and the PCA must meet with the Director for Residence Life as soon as possible. During this meeting, the Director will explain all expectations and policies concerning Union's residential community.

Services for Graduation

Students requesting disability accommodations for themselves or a guest for a graduation service need to indicate the need on the graduation application provided by the Union University Office of the Registrar. The Office of the Registrar will send a list of requests to ODS approximately a few weeks before graduation. ODS will contact the student to determine whether the request is reasonable and how to best implement services.

If students miss the opportunity to request a need on the graduation application, they should contact ODS as soon as possible to discuss arranging for services. ODS will work on a case-by-case basis as quickly as possible but cannot make guarantees about services requested outside of the graduation application.

Only service animals that have been registered with the Union University Office of Disability Services will be allowed in the graduation service. Emotional support animals are not permitted at graduation.

Other Accommodations

While the accommodations outlined here are the most commonly requested accommodations at Union University, they should not be viewed as an exhaustive list. Students are encouraged to talk with the Director about any other accommodations, techniques, strategies, etc. that they have utilized in the past or have heard about in order to meet their needs.

Medical Withdrawal Policy

A medical withdrawal request may be made in extraordinary cases in which an emergency illness or injury prevents a student from continuing his or her classes, and incompletes, other arrangements with instructors, or accommodations through ODS are not possible. The medical withdrawal policy covers both physical health and mental health emergencies. For the purposes of this policy, Union University uses the following definition of an emergency, from the Tennessee code:

Medical emergency – A medical condition, acute or chronic that has increased in severity, that manifests itself by symptoms of sufficient severity, including severe pain, that a prudent layperson, who possesses an average knowledge of health and medicine, could reasonably expect the absence of immediate medical attention to potentially result in:

- (A) Placing the person's health in serious jeopardy;
- (B) Serious impairment to bodily functions; or
- (C) Serious dysfunction of any bodily organ or part.

The purpose of a medical withdrawal is to back-date the withdrawal request to the start of the emergency event in cases when it would affect the refund level or ability to submit a withdrawal. Documentation from a qualified professional regarding the emergency event is required to process the request. The student must submit the Licensed Provider Recommendation for Medical Withdrawal and Student Request for Medical Withdrawal forms, which are available on the ODS web site (www.uu.edu/ods). All other aspects of a medical withdrawal will remain consistent with the standard withdrawal policy. In cases where a medical emergency has not occurred, the student should follow the standard withdrawal procedures as outlined by the Office of the Registrar (<https://www.uu.edu/academics/advising/faq.cfm#withdrawal>).

As with a standard withdrawal, medical withdrawals apply to all courses in which a student is enrolled. Applications for partial withdrawals will be considered only in rare situations with substantial documentation justifying the circumstances for a partial withdrawal and limited to medical conditions in which the health issue prevents participation in specific courses. Decisions regarding partial withdrawals will be made in conjunction with the Office of the Registrar. When completing the Student Request for Medical Withdrawal form, it is recommended that the student contact a member of Student Financial Planning to discuss the impact of withdrawing on the student's current and future financial aid packages. The student should also consult his or her Student Handbook regarding readmission standards for withdrawing from all courses. If the student is an international student, he or she must also meet with the International Student Officer to discuss the serious immigration consequences that may result from the withdrawal. In addition, student athletes should speak with their coach and the NCAA compliance officer regarding the impact to eligibility and other athletic-related concerns.

If the student is incapacitated or otherwise unable to complete the medical withdrawal process, the student's parent, guardian, or spouse, should contact ODS for further guidance. In the event of competing interests between these parties, the Vice President for Student Life will make the determination on the best course of action.

A medical emergency does not necessitate a withdrawal from classes, and a student may attempt to return to class and complete the current semester. Documentation for a medical withdrawal may be submitted to ODS up to 14 calendar days after the conclusion of the medical emergency. However, if the student wishes to withdraw beyond the 14th day of the conclusion of the emergency, he or she will need to complete the standard withdrawal process. Any requests

received after the last day to withdraw from classes (as published in the academic calendar) will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for exceptional circumstances.

If a medical withdrawal is not deemed reasonable or appropriate, the student may appeal the decision in accordance with the ODS Grievance and Appeals policy.

Procedure

- 1) It is recommended that the student talk to each of his or her professors and academic advisor to determine if withdrawal is the best course of action.
- 2) If the student decides to request a medical withdrawal, he or she must obtain copies of the Licensed Provider Recommendation for Medical Withdrawal and Student Request for Medical Withdrawal forms. Copies are available electronically on the ODS web site (www.uu.edu/ods) and in paper form at Union Station and the Office of Student Life.
- 3) The licensed medical professional must complete the Licensed Provider Recommendation for Medical Withdrawal form and return it to ODS by fax, mail, or email.
- 4) The student must complete all areas of the Student Request for Medical Withdrawal form.
- 5) Student should contact Student Financial Planning if they have any questions related to financial aid ramifications for withdrawing from classes through the Medical Withdrawal process. Additionally, Student Financial Planning will send information via email to the student's Union email address regarding general implications of a Medical Withdrawal related to their financial aid once the Medical Withdrawal process is completed.
- 6) Students who withdraw for medical reasons prior to the 25th day of classes will follow the normal tuition refund schedule. However, students who withdraw after the 25th day of classes for medical reasons will be refunded according to the pro-rated schedule detailed below:

- a. No tuition refund will be issued for the completed portion of the semester.
- b. A 50% tuition refund will be issued for the remaining portion of the semester.

Example: Using a calendar of 105 days, if a student withdraws on day 35, the refund will be calculated as follows:

Days 1-35: No refund for the 33% of the semester completed.

Days 36-105: 50% refund for the remaining 67% of the semester. Therefore, if tuition for one semester was \$16,325, a student would receive a refund of \$5,468 ($(\$16,325 \times .67)/2$). Students who have questions related to the tuition refund process should contact Student Accounts in the Union Business Office.

- 7) The aforementioned refund schedule will be applied to shorter terms (e.g. 3,4,5,6 and 8-week terms) at the same ratios identified above.
- 8) Refunds on housing charges will be prorated to the end of the week in which the student withdraws. Similarly, Refunds on meal plans will be prorated to the end of the week in which the student withdraws. General Student Fee, lab fees, and all other fees are not refundable.
- 9) 7) Student must submit the Student Request for Medical Withdrawal to ODS within 14 calendar days of the conclusion of the medical emergency and before the final withdrawal date of the current semester. Any requests received after the last day to withdraw from classes (as published in the academic calendar) will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for exceptional circumstances.
- 10) 8) Once ODS has received both forms and evaluated them for completeness and accuracy, a decision will be made as to whether or not the medical withdrawal is approved. If approved, ODS will contact the Office of the Registrar to withdraw the student from classes

on the date of the start of the medical emergency. If denied, ODS will discuss other considerations available to the student.

Grievance and Appeals Policy

Union University has adopted an internal grievance procedure providing for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging discrimination based on disability. Students have the right to follow informal procedures or formal procedures as outlined. While it is not mandatory, students are encouraged to utilize informal grievance procedures before initiating the formal grievance procedures.

Faculty may also follow appeal procedures if they believe approved accommodations will fundamentally alter the core aspects of a course. These procedures are included in this section after the student informal and formal procedures.

Student Informal Grievance Procedures

Denial of use of accommodation in classroom by faculty

In situations where students believe faculty are not adequately providing approved accommodations, students are encouraged to first schedule a time to talk with the faculty member. If the situation remains unresolved, students should contact the Director for Disability Services as soon as possible with details, including any available written correspondence. The Director will contact faculty to address the situation and work collaboratively on a resolution suitable for all involved. Email correspondence will be utilized to send resolution agreements to faculty and students.

Other university department policy appeals

There are times in which a student may appeal policies from other departments on campus based on the impact of a disability. For example, a student may seek a course substitution that must be approved by an academic department. In these cases, students may contact the Office of

Disability Services to release information to the other department regarding the student's disability.

If the student's appeal is denied, it is recommended that the student request the rationale for the denial. In addition, the student may contact the Director for Disability Services to further discuss the process and share the rationale for the denial. Depending upon the circumstances, the Director may contact the faculty or staff in charge of the appeal to consult about the university's legal obligations and discuss how approving the appeal would constitute a fundamental alteration of core aspects of the program or service. Discussion may also involve resolutions to meet the student's needs while maintaining the core aspects of the program. Faculty and staff are the content experts of their field and deference will be given to their expertise.

Student Formal Grievance Procedures

If after following the informal procedures a situation remains unresolved, the complaint is against the Office of Disability Services, or if the offense is of such a serious nature that the complaint wishes to forgo the informal procedures, a formal grievance hearing can be convened by the Disability Grievance Committee and should be addressed to the Committee Chair:

Bryan L. Carrier, Ed.D.
Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students
1050 Union University Dr.
Jackson, TN 38305-3697
Fax: 731-661-5017

The following requirements and process will be used for a formal grievance sent to the Disability Grievance Committee:

1. A complaint must be submitted in writing and contain the name and address of the complainant and a description of the allegations of discrimination. The complainant must explain the specific facts in support of the allegation(s).
2. A complaint must be filed within 60 days of the denial of accommodations or instance of discrimination.
3. An investigation, as may be appropriate, shall be conducted by the Disability Grievance Committee, following receipt of the complaint. This committee is chaired by the V.P. for Student Life and includes a representative from Student Life, a representative from the Office of the Provost, a content expert impartial to the situation in question, and a student representative appointed by the Student Government Association and approved by the Office of Student Leadership and Engagement. This procedure affords the complainant and the person(s) against whom the allegation(s) of discrimination have been made, and their respective representatives, if any, an opportunity to submit information and documentation regarding the complaint allegations.
4. The investigation will be completed, with written results of the investigation issued and a copy forwarded to the complainant, within 45 workdays of the receipt of the complaint.
5. Although the University will make every effort to comply with these timelines, circumstances such as school breaks, may justify an extension of time.

6. Any appeals to the committee's decision must be presented to the Office of the Provost of Union University within 10 working days of the student's notification of the decision. The decision rendered by the Provost is final.

Retaliation against any person who files a complaint of alleged discrimination, participates in an investigation, or opposes a discriminatory education practice or policy based on a disability is prohibited under University policy, as well as state and federal law.

External Complaint Procedures

Students also retain the right to file a complaint with the Department of Education or Department of Justice Office for Civil Rights. Students are encouraged to read all pertinent material about filing a complaint before doing so.

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/howto.html>

Atlanta Office
Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Education
61 Forsyth St. S.W., Suite 19T10
Atlanta, GA 30303-8927
Telephone: 404-974-9406
FAX: 404-974-9471; TDD: 800-877-8339
Email: OCR.Atlanta@ed.gov

or

US Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Civil Rights Division
Disability Rights Section 1425 NYAV
Washington, D.C. 20530
Fax: (202) 307-1197
<http://www.ada.gov/complaint/>

Faculty Appeal Procedure

There may be times when a faculty member believes the accommodations recommended by ODS are unduly burdensome or fundamentally alter the nature of the course. In those cases, ODS requests the faculty member contact the Director for Disability Services as soon as possible to communicate those concerns and recommend alternative accommodations. After this discussion with ODS occurs, if the faculty member believes that a dispute over reasonable accommodation will not be easily resolved, they are encouraged to consult with their Department Chair and/or Program Director to seek further guidance.

In cases where there is a continuing dispute between a faculty member and ODS about a proposed accommodation, the faculty member and ODS should work collaboratively with the Department Chair or Program Director to agree on the accommodations that will be offered, with an agreement to be reached within 10 business days of the faculty member contacting the Department Chair or Program Director. The Department Chair or Program Director, or ODS, may request the additional involvement of the relevant Academic Dean(s), a representative of the Office of the Provost, and/or the Legal Counsel to facilitate a timely agreement. When an agreement cannot be reached within 10 business days, ODS and the faculty member shall promptly inform the Provost in writing regarding the nature of the dispute. Within five business days of receiving written notice in such a case, the Provost shall make a determination of the reasonable accommodations to be made. The Provost's decision is final and cannot be appealed.

Emergency Plans for Students with Disabilities

Seizure/Unresponsive Person Policy

In the event that a seizure occurs or an individual is found unresponsive in a classroom, residence hall, or anywhere else on campus, someone should be instructed to immediately:

- 1) Call 911 to request an ambulance,
- 2) Call Campus Safety and Security at 731-394-2922 to advise them to expect an ambulance and to report the location where help is needed. Safety and Security will then notify Health Services.

If it is clear that the student is having a seizure, calmly inform any bystanders that the student is having a seizure and ask for assistance in clearing the area of any objects that may injure the student. If the student is not already on the ground, and Safety and Security/Health Services have not yet arrived, assist the student to the ground and place them on their side. Make certain the student's mouth is clear of obstructions and place a soft object under the student's head. Do not attempt to restrain the student's movement or insert any objects in to the student's mouth.

Emergency personnel will assess whether the medical condition warrants transport to an emergency facility. If transport to an emergency facility is not warranted but the student is fatigued, then the student will be escorted to another location for rest and monitoring by Health Services staff.

Building Evacuation

Due to the wide variety of buildings and situations that can occur, not every situation can be outlined within this manual. That said, here are general guidelines for people with disabilities on campus and any who are assisting them during a building evacuation.

Student and visitor guidelines

Students are encouraged to proactively plan for emergency situations. To discuss specific plans, please talk with the Director for Disability Services. Some steps to take include:

- Make your environment (e.g. apartment) fire safe & make sure your exit route is clear.
- Keep sufficient emergency supplies to last three days (include food, water, prescription medicines and any other supplies you might need).
- Become familiar with alternate routes and learn the safe areas in buildings you use frequently.

Develop strategies for your protection. For example, if you use a wheelchair and cannot duck and cover under a table:

- Protect your head as much as possible.
- Move away from windows, filing cabinets, bookcases, light fixtures and heavy objects that could shatter, fall or tip over.
- Engage the electronic brake or wheel locks on your wheelchair.

Consider various disaster scenarios and decide ahead of time what you would do in different emergencies. For example, people with power wheelchairs should consider the following:

- In evacuations, it is standard practice to evacuate disabled people without their wheelchairs. Where should you be located while waiting for your wheelchair?

- Are there certain medications or support systems you need?
- Do you have access to another wheelchair if yours cannot be evacuated?

Know your limitations and be aware of your needs in different emergencies. If you need assistance, ask for it. People may not be aware of your circumstances or know how they can help. Consider how people will give you emergency information and how you will communicate your needs if you have impaired speaking, hearing, or sight.

Consider arranging a buddy system with friends or colleagues so someone will check with you, alert you as necessary, and see whether you need assistance. If you need to be evacuated, help yourself and rescuers by providing them with information about your needs and the best ways to assist you.

Persons with special needs and/or disabilities have four basic evacuation options:

- **Horizontal evacuation:** using building exits to the outside ground level or going into unaffected wings of multi-building complexes.
- **Stairway evacuation:** using steps to reach ground level exits from the building.
- **Stay in place:** unless danger is imminent, remaining in a room with an exterior window, a telephone and a solid or fire resistant door. If an individual requiring special evacuation assistance remains in place, they should dial 911 immediately and report their location to emergency services, who will in turn relay that information to on-site emergency personnel. If phone lines fail, the individual can signal from the window by waving a cloth or other visible object. If you remain in the room:
 - Notify others (if possible) that you are doing so.
 - Close the door to prevent smoke and fire entry.

- If necessary, pack under the door with towels, blankets or other appropriate material.
- Call 911 and report your location so that on-site emergency personnel can be informed and respond.
- Move to the window with a brightly colored cloth to wave so that emergency personnel can see where you are. DO NOT break the window unless absolutely necessary, since doing so could injure you or others and allow smoke to enter the room.

The Stay in Place approach may be more appropriate for sprinkler protected buildings or buildings where an area of refuge is not nearby or available. It may also be more appropriate for an occupant who is alone when the alarm sounds.

- **Area of refuge:** An area of refuge is an area that can be used as part of the required means of egress for persons that are disabled. Disabled persons can use these areas, located on floors above or below the buildings' exits, until rescue can be facilitated by the Fire Department. The Office for Safety and Security or the Office of Disability Services can assist in identifying these locations. Areas of refuge can be pressurized stair enclosures in high-rise buildings, open-air exit balconies, or 5 fire rated corridors or vestibules adjacent to exit stairs and pressurized elevator lobbies. Many campus buildings feature fire rated corridor construction that may offer safe refuge. Taking a position in a rated corridor next to the stair is a good alternative to a small stair landing crowded with the other building occupants using the stairway.

With an evacuation assistant, go to an area of refuge away from obvious danger. The evacuation assistant should then go to the building evacuation assembly point and notify

the on-site emergency personnel of the location of the person with a disability. Emergency personnel will determine if further evacuation is necessary.

Exception: Persons with disabilities, as outlined below, may not need to evacuate if they are:

- Mobility impaired and:
 - Located above or below the level of building exit
 - Located in a building that does not have an area of refuge or horizontal evacuation to another building.
- Visually impaired and:
 - Located above or below the level of building exit
 - Located in a building that does not have an area of refuge, horizontal evacuation to another building or elevators that cannot be used by anyone as a means of evacuation.

NOTE: Elevators in most buildings are pre-set (as required) to return automatically to the bottom floor. If the buttons are heat sensitive, they could be called to the fire floor. When the doors open, you may be exposed to the fire. Elevators are like chimneys. Smoke on any floor can be drawn up through the elevator, exposing people to high levels of all fire gases including carbon monoxide, hydrogen, and cyanide.

Union University staff

While emergency evacuation is best left to first responders, there may be times in which Union faculty or staff determine the threat to the person with a disability necessitates immediate action. In such cases here are general guidelines about assisting in an evacuation:

- Always ask disabled people how you can help BEFORE attempting any rescue technique or giving assistance. Ask how they can best be assisted or moved, and if there are any special considerations or items that need to come with them.
- Occupants should be invited to volunteer ahead of time to assist disabled people in an emergency. If volunteers are not available, designate someone to assist who is willing to accept the responsibility.
- Two or more volunteers, if available, should conduct the evacuation.
- Do not evacuate disabled people in their wheelchairs. This is standard practice to ensure the safety of disabled people and volunteers. Wheelchairs will be evacuated later if possible.
- Before attempting an evacuation, volunteers and the people being assisted should discuss how any lifting will be done and where they are going.
- Proper lifting techniques (e.g. bending the knees, keeping the back straight, holding the person close before lifting and using leg muscles to lift) should be used to avoid injury to rescuer's backs. Ask permission of the evacuee if an evacuation chair or similar device is being considered as an aid in an evacuation. When using such devices, make sure the person is secured properly. Be careful on stairs and rest at landings if necessary.
- Certain lifts may need to be modified depending on the disabilities of the people.

Mental Health Crisis Policy and Protocol

The Office for Counseling Services and Office for Safety and Security are responsible for setting all procedures for students experiencing a mental health crisis while at Union University. Please consult with the Director for Counseling Services for more information.

Appendix A: Concussion Policy Research

Subject: A “Return to Academics” policy for students that sustain mild-traumatic brain injuries (concussions).

- 1. National Prevalence:** National attention has focused on concussions in the United States over the past three years, with most of this attention following sports related injuries. The policies and practices that surround concussions have been heavily discussed within the collegiate sports community due to the impact these injuries have on students’ ability to participate in both the sport and the academic environment. In 2011, the NCAA reported that the concussion rates for student athletes have remained stable at 1.9 per every 1,000 sports related exposures¹. Another report observed college athletic programs in 2006 and generalized that concussions represented approximately 6% of all collegiate athletic injuries². Student athletes are not the only individuals on a college campus susceptible to concussions; non-student athletes are exposed to many of the same risks for brain injury. In fact, only 20% of all concussions occur during sports or athletic activities³. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that during a 4-year span, approximately 300,000 individuals in the U.S. between 15 and 24 years of age visited the Emergency Department for a concussion⁴. The majority of these injuries occurred during motor vehicle accidents, falling, or colliding with another object⁴. Furthermore, some research suggests that 60% of high school athletes will have sustained some form of concussion before graduating, putting them at greater risk of acquiring a second concussion⁵.
- 2. Union Prevalence:** At a college or university, concussions occur with both student athletes and non-athletes. Dr. Chris Nasin (M.D.), from the American College Health Association and medical doctor at the University of Rhode Island, stated that concussions are equally as prevalent on college campuses for non-athletes and athletes⁶. Evaluating the prevalence of concussions at Union, one finds that more concussions are reported among collegiate athletes than with non-athletes. In April 2013, Union’s Athletic Department reported that approximately 10 student-athlete concussions occur each year, which meets the national benchmark for schools the size of Union University⁷. The Office of Disability Services and Health Services report approximately 5 concussions per year for non-student athletes at Union University. This number may represent a smaller total because some students do not report concussion symptoms or are not aware they suffered a concussion. Regardless of how these two distinct groups compare, it is clear that approximately 15 students each year are impacted by a concussion at Union.

¹ Brian Hendrickson, “Concussion Rate Remains Steady,” *NCAA*, September 21, 2012, accessed July 2, 2013, <http://www.ncaa.org/wps/wcm/connect/public/ncaa/resources/latest+news/2012/september/concussion+rate+remains+steady>

² Luke Gessell et al., “Concussions Among United States High School and Collegiate Athletes,” *Journal of Athletic Training* 42(4) (2007): 495

³ Susan Davies, “Concussions,” *Principle Leadership* 11(8)(2011):12

⁴ “Traumatic brain injury in the United States,” *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, accessed July 2, 2013, http://www.cdc.gov/traumaticbraininjury/pdf/blue_book.pdf

⁵ Caroline Faure, “Creating Concussion Management Policy,” *American Secondary Education*, 39(1)(2010):5

⁶ Chris Nasin, interview by Jon Abernathy, Jackson, TN, July 2, 2013.

⁷ Neal McGrath, “Supporting the Student Athlete’s Return to the Classroom After a Sports Related Concussion,” *Journal of Athletic Training*, 45(5)(2010):492

3. Symptoms and Prognosis: A concussion is defined as a form of a mild-traumatic brain injury (TBI)⁸. Concussions occur when the brain experiences an external trauma resulting in a neurological or neuropsychological impairment, which can be caused by direct contact to the head or from rapid acceleration/deceleration of the brain⁹. Furthermore, a concussion is not always easily detected; 90% of concussions do not result in a full loss of consciousness¹⁰. Some students that sustain very minor concussions may never be aware that the symptoms they experience are due to a brain injury. However, most concussion victims will notice immediate neurological symptoms. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention describes four categories of concussion symptoms¹¹:

1. **Thinking and Remembering:** Difficulty in thinking, remembering, or concentrating
2. **Physical:** Headaches, blurred vision, nausea or vomiting, dizziness, sensitivity to noise or light, balance problems, or fatigue
3. **Emotion and mood:** Irritability, sadness, heightened emotion, or nervousness or anxiety
4. **Sleep:** Sleeping more than usual, sleeping less than usual, or having trouble falling asleep

These symptoms depend on the severity of the concussion, with the majority of students recovering within a 10-day period⁸. However, approximately 10% of students experience symptoms that persist beyond two weeks⁸. With a severe concussion, the student may require 6 months to fully recover from cognitive deficits and some individuals acquire permanent learning challenges¹⁰.

4. University Support: A concussion impacts students physically, cognitively, and emotionally. Since the student is impacted in several life domains, it is important that the University provides layered support and avoids creating silos of critical information. For this reason, concussion specialists recommend that educators provide pathways for students to receive support from faculty, disability services, counseling services, health services, and any other pertinent departments¹⁰. Furthermore, it is important that the University create channels of communication between departments to ensure that warning signs are not missed in the event of a medical, emotional, or academic crisis. Faculty and staff should pay close attention to a concussion victim's emotional wellbeing, since faculty tend to interact most often with these students. After a concussion, students may have great difficulty accomplishing academic tasks, connecting socially with peers, engaging in physical activity, and resting at night. These side effects, combined with the neurological damage done to the brain, can produce a high risk for depression, anxiety, and overall mood-disturbances¹². Research suggests that students have up to a 77% chance of experiencing depressive disorders, depending on the severity of the injury¹³.

⁸ John Leddy et al., "Rehabilitation of Concussion and Post-Concussion Syndrome," *Journal of Sports Health*, 4(2)(2012):146

⁹ Page Buck, "Mild Traumatic Brain Injury: A Silent Epidemic in Our Practices," *Health and Social Work* 36(4)(2011):299

¹⁰ Neal McGrath, "Supporting the Student Athlete's Return to the Classroom After a Sports Related Concussion," *Journal of Athletic Training*, 45(5)(2010):492

¹¹ "Injury prevention and control: Traumatic brain injury," *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, accessed July 2, 2013, www.cdc.gov/concussion/signs_symptoms.html

¹² William Meehan, "Medical Therapies for Concussions," *Clinical Sports Medicine* 30 (2012): 115, accessed July 2, 2013, doi:10.1016/j.csm.2010.08.003.

¹³ Lynda Mainwaring et al., "Emotional Response to Sport Concussions Compared to ACL Injury," *Journal of Brain Injury* 24(4)(2010): 589

- 5. Assessment Tools:** While many individuals receive medical imaging immediately after a concussion, these imaging tools are not necessarily used to diagnose a concussion. Often they are used by a medical professional to rule out any other significant injuries, such as a brain hemorrhage. Very rarely will medical imaging, such as Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), show the damage of a mild-traumatic brain injury¹⁴. Instead, the majority of colleges and universities require that a concussion be validated using a combination of neurocognitive testing and medical interviews with a medical professional (e.g., Certified Athletic Trainer, Nurse Practitioner, Licensed Medical Doctor).
- 6. Federal Disability Law:** Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act both include language that defines a concussion as a disability. The Association of Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD), which is the guiding organization for disability offices in higher education, has classified mild-traumatic brain injuries as a temporary disability that yields short-term accommodations¹⁵. For this reason, colleges and universities provide reasonable accommodations during the initial recovery of a concussion.
- 7. Cognitive Rest Research:** Currently the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that concussed individuals rest, both physically and cognitively¹⁶. The CDC encourages individuals to avoid activities that require extensive concentration because of the risk of exacerbating the symptoms of the mild brain injury¹⁷. This includes sustained computer usage, video games, and text messaging¹⁷. The logic supporting this medical intervention is the science of the pathophysiologic cascade that occurs after a concussion. This post-concussion reaction includes disruptions in the neuro-metabolic equilibrium in the brain. A concussion interrupts the brain's natural homeostasis and requires extra energy to be devoted to neural repair and chemical rebalancing¹⁷. During this recovery, the student experiences increased fatigue and his/her threshold of energy is lowered¹⁸. Most post-concussion protocols require that the individual is symptom free for 24 hours before returning to regular activities. When the individual is symptom free, a graded resumption of activities is considered best practice¹⁹.
- 8. Proposal of Policy:** The growing body of research, in combination with awareness of concussion prevalence, compels Union University to seriously consider a holistic policy to address students' cognitive wellbeing after a mild-traumatic brain injury. Furthermore, with implementation of any concussion protocol, the university must be willing to train the necessary faculty and staff to ensure quality control.

¹⁴ KJ Jantzen, "Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging of Mild Traumatic Brain Injury," *Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation*, (25)(4)(2010):256

¹⁵ "Supporting Accommodation Requests," AHEAD, accessed July 2, 2013, http://www.ahead.org/resources/documentation_guidance

¹⁶ "Facts about concussion and brain injury," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, accessed July 2, 2013, http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Facts_about_Concussion_TBI-a.pdf.

¹⁷ Christopher Giza and David Hovda, "The Neurometabolic Cascade of Concussion," *Journal of Athletic Training*, 36(3)(2001):228

¹⁸ KJ Jantzen, "Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging of Mild Traumatic Brain Injury," *Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation*, (25)(4)(2010):256

¹⁹ Noah Silverberg and Grant Iverson, "Is Rest After Concussion 'The Best Medicine'," *Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation*, (25)(2010):256, accessed on July 2, 2013, DOI: 10.1097/HTR.0b013e31825ad658

Appendix B: Medical Withdrawal Policy

A medical withdrawal request may be made in extraordinary cases in which an emergency illness or injury prevents a student from continuing his or her classes, and incompletes, other arrangements with instructors, or accommodations through ODS are not possible. The medical withdrawal policy covers both physical health and mental health emergencies. For the purposes of this policy, Union University uses the following definition of an emergency, from the Tennessee code:

Medical emergency – A medical condition, acute or chronic that has increased in severity, that manifests itself by symptoms of sufficient severity, including severe pain, that a prudent layperson, who possesses an average knowledge of health and medicine, could reasonably expect the absence of immediate medical attention to potentially result in:

- A. Placing the person's health in serious jeopardy;
- B. Serious impairment to bodily functions; or
- C. Serious dysfunction of any bodily organ or part.

The purpose of a medical withdrawal is to back-date the withdrawal request to the start of the emergency event in cases when it would affect the refund level or ability to submit a withdrawal. Documentation from a qualified professional regarding the emergency event is required to process the request. The student must submit the Licensed Provider Recommendation for Medical Withdrawal and Student Request for Medical Withdrawal forms, which are available on the ODS web site (www.uu.edu/ods). All other aspects of a medical withdrawal will remain consistent with the standard withdrawal policy. In cases where a medical emergency has not occurred, the student should follow the standard withdrawal procedures as outlined by the Office of the Registrar (<https://www.uu.edu/academics/advising/faq.cfm#withdrawal>).

As with a standard withdrawal, medical withdrawals apply to all courses in which a student is enrolled. Applications for partial withdrawals will be considered only in rare situations with substantial documentation justifying the circumstances for a partial withdrawal and limited to medical conditions in which the health issue prevents participation in specific courses. Decisions regarding partial withdrawals will be made in conjunction with the Office of the Registrar. In order to complete the Student Request for Medical Withdrawal form, the student must meet with a representative from Student Financial Planning to discuss the impact of withdrawing on the student's current and future financial aid packages. The representative will sign the appropriate space on the form at the conclusion of the meeting. In the event that the student is unable to physically meet with the representative, the representative may arrange a phone or electronic meeting and email confirmation of the meeting to ODS. The student should also consult his or her Student Handbook regarding readmission standards for withdrawing from all courses. If the student is an international student, he or she must also meet with the International Student Officer to discuss the serious immigration consequences that may result from the withdrawal. In addition, student athletes should speak with their coach and the NCAA compliance officer regarding the impact to eligibility and other athletic-related concerns.

If the student is incapacitated or otherwise unable to complete the medical withdrawal process, the student's parent, guardian, or spouse, should contact ODS for further guidance. In the event of

competing interests between these parties, the Vice President for Student Life will make the determination on the best course of action.

A medical emergency does not necessitate a withdrawal from classes, and a student may attempt to return to class and complete the current semester. Documentation for a medical withdrawal may be submitted to ODS up to 14 calendar days after the conclusion of the medical emergency. However, if the student wishes to withdraw beyond the 14th day of the conclusion of the emergency, he or she will need to complete the standard withdrawal process. Any requests received after the last day to withdraw from classes (as published in the academic calendar) will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for exceptional circumstances.

If a medical withdrawal is not deemed reasonable or appropriate, the student may appeal the decision in accordance with the ODS Grievance and Appeals policy.

Procedure

1. It is recommended that the student talk to each of his or her professors and academic advisor to determine if withdrawal is the best course of action.
2. If the student decides to request a medical withdrawal, he or she must obtain copies of the Licensed Provider Recommendation for Medical Withdrawal and Student Request for Medical Withdrawal forms. Copies are available electronically on the ODS web site (www.uu.edu/ods) and in paper form at Union Station and the Office of Student Life.
3. The licensed medical professional must complete the Licensed Provider Recommendation for Medical Withdrawal form and return it to ODS by fax, mail, or email.
4. The student must complete all areas of the Student Request for Medical Withdrawal form except the Student Financial Planning section.
5. Student must contact Student Financial Planning to arrange for a meeting to discuss any financial ramifications of withdrawing from classes. The Student Financial Planning representative will sign the appropriate section of the form and return the form to the student.
6. Students who withdraw for medical reasons prior to the 25th day of classes will follow the normal tuition refund schedule. However, students who withdraw after the 25th day of classes for medical reasons will be refunded according to the pro-rated schedule detailed below:
 - a. No tuition refund will be issued for the completed portion of the semester.
 - b. A 50% tuition refund will be issued for the remaining portion of the semester.

Example: Using a calendar of 105 days, if a student withdraws on day 35, the refund will be calculated as follows:

Days 1-35: No refund for the 33% of the semester completed.

Days 36-105: 50% refund for the remaining 67% of the semester. Therefore, if tuition for one semester was \$16,325, a student would receive a refund of \$5,468 ($(\$16,325 \times .67)/2$).

7. The aforementioned refund schedule will be applied to shorter terms (e.g. 3,4,5,6 and 8 week terms) at the same ratios identified above.
8. Refunds on housing charges will be prorated to the end of the week in which the student withdraws. Similarly, institutional financial aid will be prorated to the end of the week in which the student withdraws. External financial aid refunds can vary based upon multiple factors. Students should discuss the implications of withdrawing with Student Financial Planning. Any unused portions of a student's meal plan will be refunded in full. General Student Fee, lab fees, and all other fees are not refundable.
9. Student must submit the Student Request for Medical Withdrawal to ODS within 14 calendar days of the conclusion of the medical emergency and before the final withdrawal date of the current semester. Any requests received after the last day to withdraw from classes (as published in the academic calendar) will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for exceptional circumstances.
10. Once ODS has received both forms and evaluated them for completeness and accuracy, a decision will be made as to whether or not the medical withdrawal is approved. If approved, ODS will contact the Office of the Registrar to withdraw the student from classes on the date of the start of the medical emergency. If denied, ODS will discuss other considerations available to the student.