

Frequently Asked Questions – Accessibility Accommodations

We've attempted to answer some frequently asked questions about Accessibility Accommodations and the process for obtaining accommodations at The Chicago School here but encourage you to reach out to your ADA Liaison to discuss your unique needs. At The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, we coordinate support services for students with disabilities and/or qualifying medical conditions through the Accommodations Department, which is housed under Student Support Services. You can reach your ADA Liaison in the Accommodations Department by emailing accommodations@thechicagoschool.edu.

Campus	ADA Liaison
Chicago/XULA	Natasha Russi
Dallas	Jennifer Hostutler
Anaheim	Alyssa Hill
Los Angeles	Alyssa Hill
Online	Brittany Solinski
San Diego	Alyssa Hill
Washington, D.C.	Kara Rice

1. What are accessibility accommodations?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability and require that reasonable accommodations be provided to all qualified students with disabilities in all programs and activities within the control of the institution, provided such accommodations would not impose an undue burden on the school and/or fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program or activity provided. We encourage you to familiarize yourself with the rights and responsibilities of students in postsecondary education under Section 504 and under ADA. [This link to the Department of Education](#) is a good starting point for understanding higher education's obligations under Section 504 and Title II of the ADA.

2. Do I have to inform The Chicago School that I have a disability and/or medical condition?

No. Disclosing a disability/medical condition is always voluntary and you are not required to disclose details of the nature of your disability or condition to TCSP faculty, staff, or students. However, if you require an accommodation or disability services, you must identify yourself to TCSP as having a disability by requesting formal accommodations. Likewise, you should inform your ADA Liaison about your disability or condition if you want to ensure that you are assigned to accessible facilities and provided appropriate services.

Even though you are never required to disclose the details of your disability or medical condition, having a formal Accommodations Letter allows us to apply any adjustments you need consistently and in a timely fashion. Your Accommodations Letter is also a useful starting point for conversations with faculty and staff that specifies your needs without specifying the details of your condition. To maintain confidentiality, your Accommodations Letter will not include any details about the reasons for your accommodations.

3. What accommodations are available at The Chicago School?

We encourage you to talk to your doctors/treating professionals about what accommodations would allow you to be most successful. Please note: a doctor's recommendation doesn't guarantee that we can implement an accommodation, but we can use it as a starting point for dialogue. If you have additional questions about how accommodations would be applied at TCSP, we also encourage you to talk with your ADA Liaison.

More generally, appropriate accommodations are determined based on the nature of each individual's documented disability or condition. In providing an accommodation, The Chicago School will not lower or effect substantial modifications to essential curricular requirements. For example, extended testing time might be an agreed upon accommodation, but The Chicago School will not change the substantive content of the test. In addition, The Chicago School does not make modifications that would fundamentally alter the nature of a service, program, or activity or that would result in an undue financial or administrative burden. Finally, The Chicago School does not provide personal attendants, individually prescribed devices, readers for personal use or study, or other devices or services of a personal nature, such as tutoring and typing.

4. If I want an accommodation, what should I do?

Your first step is to complete an [Accommodations Request Form](#), including any supporting documentation, and email it to your ADA Liaison at accommodations@thechicagoschool.edu. If you have difficulty with the form or need to submit your documentation another way, please reach out to your ADA Liaison.

5. When should I request an accommodation?

You may request accommodations at any time. With that said, we encourage you to submit your accommodations request a few weeks before the semester/term start in case we need additional time to process and implement your accommodations. Please note that in some instances it may take us longer than two weeks to implement accommodations. Accommodations cannot be applied retroactively, so planning ahead will also help ensure that your accommodations are in place at the start of the term.

6. What documentation must I provide?

In order to issue a Confirmation of Accommodations Letter, we need official documentation from a treating professional (e.g. doctor, psychologist) that provides enough information for you and TCSP to decide what accommodations are appropriate. Documentation needs to be complete and current in order for reasonable accommodations to be established at the postsecondary level of education. If you are seeking accommodations for a long-term, chronic condition, documentation should be dated within the last 5 years. If you are seeking accommodations for a short-term condition, the documentation should note the timeframe that the condition is expected to last.

Along with your Accommodations Request Form, please submit an official letter from your treating professional describing the nature of your condition and their recommendations for accommodation as related to your disability or medical condition. Note that this letter should include:

- A diagnostic statement by a professional whose license or credentials are appropriate to describe or diagnose the disability, provided on professional letterhead. This statement should include the date of their most current diagnostic evaluation.
- Recommended reasonable accommodations. We recommend that you have a conversation with your treating professional about what accommodations may be most beneficial for you.
- The credentials and signature of the treating professional if not clear from the letterhead or other forms.

Please contact your ADA Liaison at accommodations@thechicagoschool.edu if you have any questions about submitting your documentation.

7. Once the school has received the necessary documentation from me, what should I expect?

We will review your request considering the essential requirements for your program to determine which accommodations are reasonable. It is important to remember that the school is not required to lower or waive essential program or course requirements. If you have requested a specific accommodation, the school may offer that accommodation or an alternative one, if the alternative would also be effective. Your ADA Liaison will contact you to discuss your request. Identifying an appropriate accommodation is an interactive process that may require multiple conversations and could include other school administrators or faculty members. Once your request has been approved, you will receive a Confirmation of Accommodations letter outlining your approved academic accommodations. You must show this letter to your instructors in a timely fashion in order to receive accommodations. It is your responsibility to communicate with your instructors each semester/term about your accommodations by providing them a copy of your Confirmation of Accommodations letter.

8. What about confidentiality?

The Chicago School keeps your records and the status of your disability in the strictest of confidence. Release of any information regarding the reasoning and nature of your accommodations or the services you receive will only occur through written permission or in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), which may compel the school to release information to school officials on a need-to-know basis. It is your choice if you wish to disclose the details of your disability or medical condition to your instructors, even if you have accommodations in place. To protect your privacy, your Confirmation of Accommodations letter will not include information about the nature of your disability or condition.

9. What if the accommodation is not working?

Let your ADA Liaison know as soon as you become aware that the results are not what you expected. It may be too late to correct the problem if you wait until a course or activity is completed. Your ADA Liaison will work with you to resolve the problem, where possible. We may need additional documentation to adjust your accommodations.

10. What can I do if I believe someone at the school is discriminating against me?

If you believe that any school personnel have discriminated against you because of a disability or medical condition, you have the right to seek a review of such concerns. You have the option of pursuing either an informal complaint or a formal complaint. If you opt to pursue an informal complaint, you may later pursue a formal complaint if not satisfied with the resolution of the informal process. If you believe you have a valid basis for complaint regarding a requested academic accommodation, you should first attempt to resolve the issue with the staff or faculty member involved. If this effort proves unsuccessful, you should discuss the concern with your ADA Liaison who will investigate the complaint and attempt to resolve the disagreement in a timely manner. If a resolution is not achieved, you may then initiate a formal procedure, which is defined in the Student Handbook under the [Student Complaint Procedure, linked here.](#)

Commented [PK1]: What is our formal process for investigating accommodations issues?

11. Are accommodations retroactive?

No, accommodations are not retroactive. Accommodations do not take effect until you have self-identified to your ADA Liaison, provided appropriate documentation, completed an Accommodations Request form, been approved for eligible accommodations, and received a Confirmation of Accommodations letter. If you feel you are struggling with your courses due to your disability or condition, we encourage you to contact the Accommodations Department at accommodations@thechicagoschool.edu prior to the start of the semester/term to provide yourself the best possible opportunity for success.

12. Do I need to renew my accommodations?

Yes, you must renew your accommodations annually by reaching out to your ADA Liaison and letting them know that you would like to renew. We consider medical documents current for renewal purposes for 5 years for ongoing conditions. You may also update or adjust your accommodations at any point by reaching out to your ADA Liaison with additional documentation from your treating professional that includes their updated recommendations for accommodations.