

Washington University Office of Disability Resources Grievance Procedure

Washington University in St. Louis is committed to ensuring that students with disabilities have equal access and opportunity to participate in University programs, services, and activities. It is the goal of Wash U that all students requesting accommodations feel they are treated fairly, given full opportunity to describe the nature of their request, and receive an accommodation plan that addresses the functional impacts of their disability. Disability Resources (DR) is the program at the Danforth Campus that determines eligibility for academic and housing accommodations. DR works with students on a case-by-case basis to review the request for accommodations and identify accommodations that will facilitate equal access. Students on the Danforth Campus wishing to request an academic or housing accommodation are required to complete an online accommodation request form, which can be found on the DR website.¹ Information about requesting and using accommodations is available at www.disability.wustl.edu.

Students with disabilities who have participated in the interactive process of determining accommodation eligibility and believe that reasonable and appropriate accommodations have been denied may file a grievance in accordance with the procedures described herein. Additional information about Wash U policies regarding disability discrimination or harassment is included at the end of this information. Students may access any of the appeal or grievance processes described. It is the goal of Washington University in St. Louis that all disabled students requesting accommodations feel such requests are thoroughly reviewed and fairly decided.

I. Accommodation Grievances

A. Academic or Other Non-Housing Accommodation Grievance

1. Accommodation Denial –Accommodation Reconsideration Request

Students aggrieved by a decision to deny an academic or other non-housing accommodation, adjustment, or auxiliary aid (collectively “accommodation”) may submit a request for reconsideration in writing to Disability Resources (DR). Students are advised to provide sufficient information and documentation in support of their request. For example, if a request was denied due to documentation reasons, the student should provide information and documentation regarding the functional impact of their disability and how the functional impact

¹ Students in the Washington University School of Medicine affiliated programs are advised to discuss accommodation requests directly with their academic program.

directly relates to the requested accommodation. This will assist DR in the process of reconsidering the request. Requests for reconsideration submitted in writing will be addressed in a prompt and equitable manner. Requests for reconsideration can be submitted to DR by email at disabilityresources@wustl.edu or by bringing such written appeals to the DR office located on the ground floor of Gregg Residence Hall.

Requests for reconsideration are reviewed by the Director or Assistant Director of DR. Students can schedule an appointment with the Reviewer to discuss their reconsideration request. During such appointment, students can discuss their reasons for seeking reconsideration and share any additional information or documentation, as well as how the new information relates to the original request for a specified accommodation. Students may also provide contact information for their healthcare or treatment providers, who the Reviewer may consult with for information relevant to the reconsideration request. The Reviewer will contact the student either by email or by phone to coordinate a time for a meeting. At the conclusion of the review and investigation, the Reviewer shall provide the student with written notice of the reconsideration decision (the “Accommodation Reconsideration Decision”). This decision is subject to appeal as describe below under “Appeals.”

2. Grievance Regarding Implementation of Approved Accommodation – Informal Resolution and Disability Resources Intervention

Students can work with faculty, staff and Disability Resources to coordinate the use of their approved accommodations. Difficulties implementing accommodations are rare. When such difficulties do occur, they most commonly are the result of a misunderstanding or miscommunication. If a student experiences issues with the implementation of approved accommodations, the student may do one or both of the following:

1. If related to an academic course, contact the faculty member of the relevant course directly to discuss the matter. This is often the most effective way to resolve a concern. This may enable the student and instructor to clarify questions or concerns and resolve the issue.
2. Contact the Director of Disability Resources (DDR) in writing at disabilityresources@wustl.edu and outline the concerns. The DDR will work with the student to formulate an appropriate plan, which may include the student and/or DR communicating with the faculty or staff member, or Disability Resources convening a meeting with Disability Resources, the faculty or staff member, and the student to discuss the issue together. If DR determines that a student is not entitled to implementation of an

accommodation in a particular course or circumstance as requested by the student, DR will send the student written notice of this decision (the “Accommodation Implementation Decision”). The student may appeal such denial decision as described below under “Appeals.”

B. Housing Accommodation Grievance – Housing Accommodation Reconsideration Request

Students seeking reconsideration of a decision to deny a housing accommodation can submit a request for reconsideration of the housing accommodation in writing to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs- Dean of Students. Appeals of housing accommodation denials are typically time-sensitive, and students are encouraged to follow the process and deadlines outlined in their housing accommodation denial letter, if applicable. The student will receive written notice of the reconsideration decision (the “Housing Accommodation Reconsideration Decision”). This decision is subject to an appeal as described below under “Appeals.”

II. Appeals

If a student would like to appeal an Academic or a Housing Accommodation Reconsideration Decision or an Accommodation Implementation Decision, the student may file an appeal to the Appeal Officer designated to hear appeals of these disability accommodation decisions. In the event of the absence or disqualification of the current Appeal Officer, the appeal will be determined by the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs or their designee. The current Appeal Officer is the Associate Vice Chancellor Student Support & Wellness, who can be contacted as follows:

M. Kirk Dougher, PhD
Associate Vice Chancellor, Student Support & Wellness
k.dougher@wustl.edu

Appeals must be filed within fourteen (14) calendar days of the date of the written Reconsideration or Implementation Decision. An appeal is filed when electronically received by the Appellate Officer or bearing a United States Postal Service postmark or other documentary evidence of timely delivery to an independent delivery service. A copy of the appeal must also be electronically submitted to Disability Resources at disabilityresources@wustl.edu.

Appeals must be in writing and provide a clear description of why the student disagrees with the accommodation decision. The Appeal Officer will receive all documentation and information that

was submitted by the student for purposes of Reconsideration process. The Appeal Officer may, in their discretion, contact the student or the student's specified healthcare or treatment provider for further information, or accept new information from the student if that information is materially different than information previously submitted, or if that information was not available to the student during the Reconsideration process. The Appeal Officer will then complete a prompt, equitable, and impartial review of the Reconsideration Decision and all information submitted. The Appeal Officer will issue a written decision to the student. This decision shall be final.

Issues Involving Discrimination, Harassment or Bias

Washington University values a diverse and inclusive community and accordingly prohibits discrimination and harassment based on disability in matters of admissions, employment, housing or in the educational programs or activities the University operates. The Assistant Vice Chancellor for Human Resources has been designated as the Section 504 Coordinator and coordinates compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act and applicable federal and state regulations.

The University has policies that apply in situations where students feel that they have been the target of discrimination, harassment or bias.

1. Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Grievance Procedure: Washington University prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of disability and has a formal policy to address such conduct. A copy of the Discrimination and Harassment policy is available at the following link: <http://hr.wustl.edu/policies/Pages/DiscriminationAndHarassment.aspx>
2. Bias Reporting Procedure: Washington University values diversity, inclusion and human dignity, and strives to foster an environment in which all community members are respected and able to take part in academic, co-curricular and social activities. Because of these values, the university developed a system through which students, faculty, staff and community members who have experienced or witnessed incidents of bias, prejudice or discrimination involving a student can report their experiences to the university's Bias Report and Support System (BRSS) team. Information about this system is available at the following link: <https://diversityinclusion.wustl.edu/brss/brss-report-form/>.