

Policy 915 Disabilities & Reasonable Accommodations

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Scope

This Policy on Disabilities & Reasonable Accommodations applies to faculty, staff, predoctoral researchers, summer scholars and applicants ("Covered Individuals") of The Graduate School of the Stowers Institute for Medical Research ("School").

Purpose

The School does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its admission, recruitment, academics, research, counseling, employment assistance, and/or any other service, facility, or privilege available to predoctoral researchers, summer scholars, or applicants. It is the School's policy to provide individuals with qualified disabilities full and equal enjoyment of the services, facilities, and privileges of the School.

Policy

The School is committed to providing equal access to programs, services and activities in accordance with Section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADA) of 2008. Under these laws, a person has a disability if they:

- have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities (such as walking, standing, seeing, speaking, hearing, sitting, breathing, reading, learning, performing manual tasks, caring for oneself);
- have a record or history of such impairment; or
- are regarded as having such impairment.

The degree to which a disability imposes a functional limitation on the ability to perform a major life activity is a significant determining factor in establishing the need for accommodations. The School promotes an environment of respect and support for individuals with disabilities, and will make reasonable accommodations for such individuals pursuant to applicable law.

I. Accommodation of Disabilities

Predocctoral researchers, summer scholars, or applicants with disabilities as defined by applicable law have the right to request reasonable accommodations from the School. Where applicable, the School will make reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

Reasonable accommodations under this Policy may include reasonable modifications to the School's policies, practices, and procedures where necessary for individuals with disabilities, unless doing so would alter requirements that are essential to the instruction and learning being

pursued or to licensing requirements. When applicable, the School will also provide necessary and reasonable auxiliary aids and services for individuals with disabilities. The School strives to remove barriers for individuals with disabilities and to provide services, facilities, and privileges to achieve equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities. Examples of some areas in which reasonable accommodations may be available include, but are not limited to: classroom and/or testing situations, academic support, access to facilities, assistive technology (enlarged print, text-to-speech programs, etc.), registration, extracurricular school activities including dining and parking.

In setting forth this Policy, however, it is important to note that some professions for which the School's degree program prepares predoctoral researchers may have certain cognitive, sensory, affective, and/or psychomotor functional requirements that are essential functional requirements for the profession. Thus, individuals must be able to meet those functional requirements, with or without reasonable accommodation, in order to participate in the School's program. For information on such functional abilities essential to these professions, individuals should consult with the Dean for Academic Affairs, 1000 East 50th Street, Kansas City, MO 64119, 816-926-4400, education@stowers.org.

II. Requesting Accommodation

Predocctoral researchers and summer scholars bear the responsibility for disclosure of a disability and the request for reasonable accommodations. The School's Dean for Academic Affairs, in consultation with the individual, thesis advisor, or, for summer scholars the Principal Investigator and/or appropriate senior lab members, staff, and other departments as necessary, focus on assessing each individual's situation to identify needs and appropriate, reasonable accommodations. Both supportive documentation (as relevant) and a confidential interview with the individual help to provide needed information. To seek information regarding disability accommodation and/or request a reasonable accommodation contact the Dean for Academic Affairs, 1000 East 50th Street, Kansas City, MO 64119, 816-926-4400, education@stowers.org.

Any individual with a disability seeking accommodation should submit the following materials to the Dean for Academic Affairs, and account for the following:

1. *Application.* Completed application for accommodation, which may be obtained through the Dean for Academic Affairs, asks individuals who request accommodations to provide a description of the condition(s) for which they are seeking accommodation, past accommodations sought and/or provided, and the individual's explanation of the condition's likely impact on educational experiences at the School, in addition to other pertinent information. Written explanations are helpful and encouraged when possible, though they may also be received or supplemented by interview or other means.
2. *Supporting Documentation.* Documentation is an important tool for determining qualification for accommodation, reasonable accommodations, and developing a

plan for providing such accommodations. Appropriate documentation will vary depending on the nature of the condition being considered; for example, certain long-term, observable physical conditions may have limited documentation requirements for accommodation determinations.

Relevant documentation includes, but is not limited to the individual's description of their needs in the application; records of past accommodations and services from another educational institution or environment; formal psychological or medical evaluations or testing, and letters from health, education, or service providers; school records; and/or other documentation as necessary and appropriate, including by the School's request.

If an individual does not have copies of this type of information, they are welcome to meet with the Dean for Academic Affairs to discuss obtaining such information and/or other materials that may assist in establishing the existence of a disability requiring accommodation, demonstrating the impact of a disability on the educational experience, and/or evaluating available reasonable accommodations.

When submitting materials, the individual should consider the following questions: (a) How does my condition(s) affect, or how may it affect, my educational experience or participation at the School? (b) What tools or strategies facilitate my access at the School, and what has been successful or unsuccessful in the past? and, (c) What barriers can I anticipate to my educational experience or participation at the School based on my condition(s)?

Medical information provided by an individual pursuant to this Policy will be kept confidential to the extent possible, except that information may be shared as necessary to implement accommodations, and any Covered Individual who improperly uses or discloses such information will be subject to disciplinary action, including removal from the program/premises, or termination.

3. *Timeframe for Submission.* Documentation must be submitted within a reasonable time frame. Determination of eligibility for accommodations, development of plans for providing reasonable accommodations, and implementing reasonable accommodations for many conditions may require ample notice. To obtain accommodations by the start of an academic term, the individual should contact the Dean for Academic Affairs as soon as possible and preferably at least six weeks before the first day of the term. Such notice allows individuals and the School a reasonable period of time to engage in the process set forth in this Policy. The Dean for Academic Affairs should be consulted for more information regarding documentation and the timeframe for submission.

III. Procedure Following Request for Accommodation

Following the process outlined in Part II above, the Dean for Academic Affairs will review the materials submitted by the individual, and as necessary with the assistance of an outside medical professional via completion of the Physician's Assessment Form (which can be obtained from the Dean for Academic Affairs), and conduct a confidential interview/meeting with the individual if needed. Reasonable accommodations are determined through the collaboration of the Dean for Academic Affairs, the individual, the thesis advisor, or, for summer scholars, the Principal Investigator, individual departments, and outside professionals (as warranted), with consideration for essential standards of research assignments, programs, services and activities, or status of facilities.

When a reasonable accommodation is deemed necessary, the Dean for Academic Affairs will develop a plan identifying the individual and condition(s) requiring accommodation, the circumstances under which accommodations are needed, and the reasonable accommodations recommended by the Dean for Academic Affairs in the collaborative process described above. The School will involve the individual, as well as the collaborators (as appropriate), in developing the plan. The individual's participation in developing the plan is strongly encouraged to ensure mutual understanding and accomplishment of the plan's goals.

Information in the plan developed by the Dean for Academic Affairs will be distributed to those who need to know to that information to put any accommodation in place. Additionally, the Dean for Academic Affairs will contact the individual's thesis advisor or, for summer scholars the Principal Investigator and/or appropriate senior lab members to discuss, as necessary, the recommended accommodations and the process for implementation. The thesis advisor or Principal Investigator are expected to assist with provision of accommodations when reasonable and necessary without compromise to essential elements of the research or evaluation standards. If agreed upon accommodations are not implemented in an effective or timely manner, the individual is encouraged to contact the Dean for Academic Affairs.

If an accommodation is provided, then the accommodation applies on a prospective basis. For example, an accommodation provided does not apply to activities completed before the request for and implementation of the accommodation provided. The Dean for Academic Affairs arranges for the accommodation(s). However, it is the individual's responsibility to establish and maintain communication with the thesis advisor or, for summer scholars, the Principal Investigator and/or appropriate senior lab members, and for the individual to keep up with their responsibilities.

IV. Temporary Accommodations

The School recognizes that the disability accommodation process under this Policy may take time. As a result, it is important that an individual requesting an accommodation provide promptly all information required under this Policy to allow the Dean for Academic Affairs to complete the process.

In some cases, however, the process cannot be completed before an accommodation must be implemented. As a result, on a case by case basis and when reasonable, a temporary accommodation may be implemented pending completion of the disability accommodation process under this Policy. Such a temporary accommodation is implemented solely based on the need for additional time to complete the disability accommodation process, and shall be in place only until the disability accommodation process is completed. The provision of a temporary accommodation should not be construed in any way as a reflection of eligibility for accommodation or a determination as to the reasonableness of the accommodation provided. The provision of a temporary accommodation does not in any way change the requirements of this Policy, nor is an individual relieved of meeting those requirements.

V. Maintaining Contact with the School

Each individual requesting and/or receiving a reasonable accommodation under this Policy is encouraged to maintain close contact with the Dean for Academic Affairs and thesis advisor, or for summer scholars the Principal Investigator(s) and/or senior lab members as appropriate. Additionally, the individual is encouraged to provide feedback as to the effectiveness of accommodations provided.

VI. Concerns and Complaints

Any individual who has concerns about accommodations provided or not provided or who wishes to submit a complaint about discrimination or harassment based on disability should contact the Dean for Academic Affairs or the Human Resources Officer who will serve as a liaison for the individual as they follow the process outlined in Policy 912 Issue or Complaint Resolution (concerns related to a disability). The School endeavors to provide prompt and equitable resolution to individual's concerns.

This Policy was approved by the GSSIMR Board of Directors on September 5, 2018.

This Policy was reviewed and amended by the GSSIMR Board of Directors on September 15, 2020.

This Policy will be reviewed by the GSSIMR Board of Directors in 2022.