



Helping Advisors Help Students Navigate Disability Resources & Services (DRS)

Presented by: Amy Arnold, MS, CRC
Chad Jurica, Ed.D.

DRS Overview

- Who we are
- What we do
- Who is disabled?
- Why we do it
- Best Practices
- Responsibilities
- Activities

Who we are

- Leigh Culley, MEd, Director
- Noreen Mazzocca, MEd, Disability Specialist
- Amy Arnold, MS, Disability Specialist
- Chad Jurica, EdD, Disability Specialist
- William Boyd, MS, CRC Disability Specialist
- Lydia Chmill, Office Administrator
- Hannah Logan, Receptionist

Why we do it

- Disability Law compliance
- Commitment to provide equal opportunities in higher education to qualified students, staff and faculty with disabilities.
- Students with disabilities are integrated as completely as possible into the University experience.
- Equal access

Defining a Disability

1. A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

- Major life activities include: performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working.
- Major Bodily Functions include: functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions.

Defining a Disability

2. Has a record of such impairment; or
3. Is regarded as having such an impairment

A disability is the only minority group that you can join at any stage of life.

Types of Disabilities

- Psychiatric Disabilities
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Chronic Illness
- Learning Disabilities
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Mobility Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Blind or Low Vision
- Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Evolution of Disability Law

1973
Section
504

1990
ADA

2008
ADAAA

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- Federal Civil Rights Law passed on July 26, 1990
- Is an extension of the Civil Rights Act of 1963 to individuals with disabilities
- To protect people with disabilities from discrimination

ADA Amendment Act of 2008

- To restore the intent and protections of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- Expands the definition of "major life activities"
- States that mitigating measures shall not be considered
- Clarifies that an impairment that is episodic or in remission *is a disability*

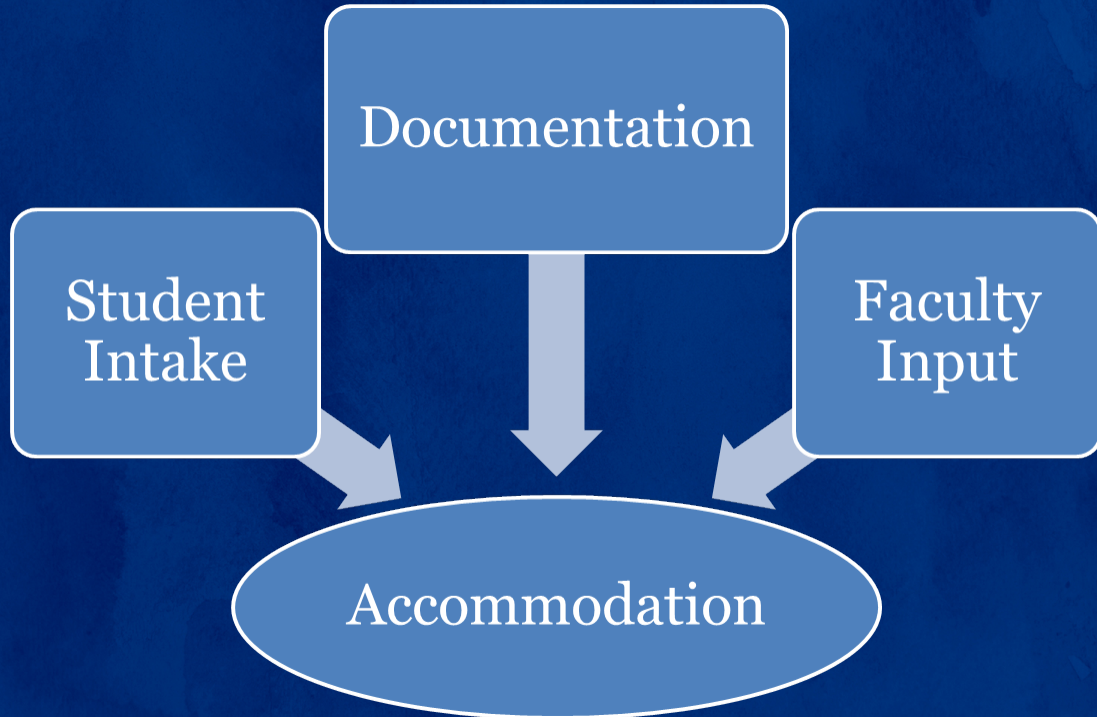
ADA at Pitt

- Make programs, services and facilities accessible to individuals with disabilities who are otherwise qualified in the most integrated setting possible
- No discrimination or harassment based on disability, record of disability or belief that individual is disabled
- Engage in the interactive process with individuals who request or obviously need an accommodation
- Provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities

What we do

- Determine eligibility for academic and housing accommodations
- Test Proctoring Service
 - University of Pittsburgh Testing Center
- Caseload management
 - Student meetings, Electronic correspondence
- Faculty interaction
- Coordinate Peer Note Taking service
- Coordinate ASL Interpreters
- Coordinate Disability Shuttle

Interactive Process for Determining Accommodations



DRS Facts

- Hidden disabilities may affect attention, speed of processing, and social skills
- How many students registered with DRS have hidden disabilities?
 - 93% of student registered with DRS have hidden disabilities
- There are several student groups on campus to promote disability awareness and advocacy. What are some of those groups?
 - Eye to Eye, Student Disability Advocacy, Active Minds

Student Responsibilities

- Apply for services with DRS and request accommodations academic adjustments or auxiliary aids and services
- Provide appropriate documentation of a disability including the functional limitation(s) of the disability
- Request Disability Notification letters each term and communicate with their Instructors
- Maintain institutional standards for academic performance and conduct

Instructor Responsibilities

- Include recommended disability syllabus statement
- Review Disability Notification letters for each student
- Work with students and DRS to ensure accommodations are provided
- Contact DRS should there be a concern regarding an accommodation
- Maintain confidentiality of student information.

Advisor Responsibilities

- Refer to DRS and other campus resources
- Maintain confidentiality
 - Be mindful of Responsible Employee requirements
- Be aware of DRS process and student responsibilities
 - Refer to website to forms (www.drs.pitt.edu)
 - Review website

Best Practices...

- Use “person first” language.
- Universal Design
- Use a normal speaking voice, tone, and style. If someone needs you to speak in a different way they can ask.
- Treat everyone with respect
- Be aware that people can react in an unconventional manner that may be related to a disability
- If you are uncertain what to do, ASK!
 - Most people would rather answer a question about protocol than be in an uncomfortable situation.

Best Practices...

- Don't ask if the individual has a disability/diagnosis
 - If the student discloses the disability to you, provide campus resources (DRS – wink wink).
- Don't assume that someone has a disability
- Avoid generalizations
 - “Depressed people can just shake it off.”
- Avoid patronizing statements or expressing pity
 - “You're brave”
- Never pet, feed, or distract a service animal without asking the owner first

Advising Tips:

- Speak slowly and clearly
 - Pause between ideas and concepts
- Ask questions to check understanding
 - If you noticed the student zoned out, ask them to repeat the concept
- Have the student teach you
 - Allow the student to hear their own explanations of the concepts
- Highlight key points and concepts
- Break down larger concepts into smaller chunks

Advising Tips

- Use multi-sensory material/aids
 - Combine verbal instructions with written directions, keep them simple
 - Use mnemonic devices
 - Consider explaining the information in different terms
- Try to connect material with prior knowledge
- Recap main topics, concepts, or ideas
- If possible, conduct your tutoring session in a quiet location with minimal distraction

Scenario Questions

Let's apply your knowledge!

Scenario 1

Hannah is a student that reports to you she has anxiety and had extra time on tests in high school.

Hannah doesn't want accommodations at Pitt because she says she doesn't need them anymore.

Unfortunately, she is not doing well academically.

Scenario 1

- What information do you give to Hannah?
 - The student disclosed – DRS!
 - The Study Lab
 - Academic Tutoring
 - DRS Mentoring Program

Scenario 2:

You are teaching a First Year Seminar course. You have invited a speaker to discuss Library Services on campus.

Danielle is a student sitting in the front row of the seminar with her laptop open.

Danielle is using her laptop to access live captioning because, she has a hearing impairment. This is an accommodation.

The speaker begins to gesture to Danielle to close the laptop and pay attention.

Scenario 2 continued

- If you were Danielle, how would you handle the situation?
 - Notify speaker in the beginning of the lecture of the accommodation
- If you were a main instructor of the course, how would you respond?
 - Notify of accommodation before lecture
 - Respect confidentiality of student
 - Intervene the actions of speaker

Scenario 3:

You are a professor of Physics.

One of the students in your class, approaches you and says, “Hi, Professor. I’m Peter, and I have ADHD. My other professors have all given me extended time on tests, and I would really appreciate it if you would do the same”.

You ask if he is registered with DRS and he is not!

Student says, “It’s just a little extra time. All of my other professors have done this for me in the past”.

While you want to be helpful, you have an uncertain feeling about the request.

Scenario 3 continued

- What do you do?
 - Refer to campus resources
 - Discuss and refer DRS process
 - Discuss importance of equal access
 - Have long conversation with student about disability law

Scenario 4

Your advisee, Thomas, comes in for their scheduling appointment for the upcoming term.

Thomas reported he was in a car accident over the summer and since that time has had difficulty with his memory and concentration.

What do you do?

Scenario 4 continued

- What do you do?
 - Provide campus resources
 - Does Thomas have a disability?



Questions?

Thank you for attending our presentation!

Contact Information

Disability Resources & Services

140 William Pitt Union

(412) 648-7890

www.drs.pitt.edu