

Requests for Reasonable Accommodation in Field Placements

The University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) supports students with disabilities and encourages their full participation in all academic programs, including field placements of all kinds. “Field placements” for the purpose of this document include any practicum, field experience, clinical practice, internship, training, clinic or work experiences (or similar) conducted for academic credit. In accordance with Section II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, UNO’s Accessibility Services Center is the designated office to work with students with disabilities to provide reasonable accommodation so they may enjoy the same benefits, experiences, and opportunities as persons without disabilities.

As in all academic programs at UNO, programs that provide field placements must assess students on the basis of their abilities rather than on their status as individuals with disabilities. Students with disabilities who are assigned to field placements must be able to perform the “essential functions” or meet the essential eligibility requirements of the experiences with or without reasonable accommodation. Pre-placement inquiries as to whether a person has a disability are not permitted; however, a field placement program must determine the essential functions or essential eligibility requirements of its own training program so that students can request reasonable accommodation if needed.

Site Selection

The selection of a field site is a key factor in providing an optimal environment for academic and professional development. It is important to choose a field site with an environment that maximizes the strengths of each student with a disability and can provide reasonable accommodation. Students, in collaboration with the Accessibility Services Center, are responsible for identifying the most critical factor(s) in determining an optimal placement. For example, a student with traumatic brain injury may need a setting that allows more time to become familiar with the site and routine before being expected to interact at the site. In addition, a reasonable accommodation may include identifying a specific site which meets a student’s accommodation needs, such as accommodations related to mobility, transportation, time of day, etc.

Application/Interview Process (If Applicable)

If an application or interview process is required prior to acceptance into a field placement, students with disabilities may request accommodations during the application/interview process. Should a student need a reasonable accommodation to participate in the application/interview process (a sign language interpreter for any required interviews, for example), the student is responsible for making the accommodation request to the Accessibility Services Center as soon as reasonably practicable in order for arrangements to be made.

Request for Accommodation in Field Placements

Students with disabilities are not required to declare, nor may an institution inquire about, the presence of a disability unless they are seeking reasonable accommodation, as discussed below. In addition, students are not required to inform the field placement coordinator or other staff about their disabilities at any time before, during, or after the site selection process.

However, students with disabilities who will be requesting accommodation in field placements must be registered with the Accessibility Services Center. The Accessibility Services Center is responsible for managing an interactive process between the student and the University, including those who are directly involved in administratively facilitating the field placement (e.g., field placement coordinator, department faculty, or supervisors) and the field site (persons at the field site responsible for implementing reasonable accommodations). The process of providing reasonable accommodation should proceed in an individualized and systematic fashion.

Student Responsibilities

- First, make an appointment with the Accessibility Services Center, Phone (402) 554-2872, E-mail unodisability@unomaha.edu, MBSC 111, as soon as reasonably practicable after you know that you will be taking a course that includes a field placement in order to discuss your accommodations.
- Second, attend a meeting with the Accessibility Services Center and the faculty member and/or others familiar with the field placement site, as soon as reasonably practicable, to formulate a reasonable accommodation plan for that specific site.
- If you have an existing accommodation plan for accommodations in the classroom and you choose not to seek accommodations for field placements – that is your right to do. However, neither your grade nor performance in field placements can be reversed based on a late declaration of need for accommodation in field placements. You will be accommodated from the point in time that you request accommodation but no alterations will be made for performance before the request is made.

If a field placement site is unable or unwilling to make a requested reasonable accommodation or you do not believe your accommodation plan is adequate, contact the Accessibility Services Center immediately, Phone (402) 554-2872, E-mail unodisability@unomaha.edu, MBSC 111, to facilitate resolution to the issue. The Accessibility Services Center will provide an informal grievance process, if necessary. If a site is unable or unwilling to make accommodations, UNO will work with you to provide alternatives for your field placement.

Accessibility Services Center Staff Responsibilities

- Meet with the student to discuss possible accommodations for the student's field placement.
- Coordinate a meeting with the student and the faculty member and/or others familiar with the field placement site, as soon as reasonably practicable, to formulate a reasonable accommodation plan for that specific site.
- Be available to accompany the faculty member and the student to visit the assigned site if requested by the student or the faculty member.
- Provide consultation services to the faculty, site personnel, and student during the field placement when adjustments to the accommodation plan may be required or questions arise concerning what is reasonable accommodation.

University Field Placement Staff and Faculty Responsibilities

- Add the following to any syllabus with field placements: "If you have a disability and use accommodations in the classroom, please make an appointment with the Accessibility Services

Center, Phone (402) 554-2872, E-mail unodisability@unomaha.edu, MBSC 126, as soon as reasonably practicable prior to the first day of your placement in the field to ensure that reasonable accommodations can be made for your field placement.”

- Add the disability nondiscrimination statement to field placement agreements (if applicable).
- Ensure that all students that receive accommodations in the classroom are informed that they are eligible for accommodations in their field placements and that those accommodations may be very different than their classroom accommodations.
- Participate with the Accessibility Services Center in considering the specific needs of the student and the essential functions or essential eligibility requirements of the placement to determine what reasonable accommodation can be made and assist in developing an accommodation plan in consultation with the student and Disability Services.
- Provide the details of reasonable accommodation only to those who need to know, including those at the field site, in order to facilitate the accommodation request, while also respecting the confidentiality rights of the student with a disability. Even if a student has disclosed information about his/her disability or medical condition, that information cannot be shared with others. It is appropriate to discuss only the accommodations that are necessary to help the student succeed in the field placement. Classroom accommodations ordinarily should not be shared with a site unless they relate to field accommodations. Remember that there are ramifications to the improper disclosure of a student’s disability information, including the potential to impact future employment with the site.
- Monitor student progress and contact the Accessibility Services Center as necessary for advice in adjusting existing accommodations or providing new accommodation strategies.
- Discuss accommodation with the cooperating field site supervisors. If a supervisor seems unwilling or unable to respond to the University’s legally mandated requirements, remember that ultimately UNO has the responsibility to accommodate the student, which may require an alternative placement for the student.
- If the student has any discrimination concerns, please advise the student to contact UNO’s ADA/504 Compliance Officer, Charlotte Russell, Phone (402) 554-3490, Email crussell@unomaha.edu, 207B Eppley Administration Building, and/or provide the student information about the ADA/504 Grievance Policy, available at <http://www.unomaha.edu/diversity/>.