

# Disability and Accessibility

## **Date**

10/23

## **Policy Statement**

The University of Southern Indiana ("University" or "USI") is firmly committed to fostering an inclusive environment that provides equal access and opportunity for individuals with disabilities in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Fair Housing Act (FHA) and applicable state and local laws.

Both the ADA and the ADAAA acknowledge that visible and invisible barriers, as well as exclusionary practices, may discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in both educational and employment settings. As the University moves towards achieving and maintaining universal accessibility in both the physical and virtual campus spaces, its policy is to make every effort to assist students, employees, employment candidates, volunteers, and visitors who request reasonable accommodations. It may be a violation of federal or state law, as well as University policy, to refuse such requests unless the proposed accommodations would pose an undue hardship or a direct threat to others.

## **Contact information:**

Chelsea Nall

ADA Coordinator, Human Resources

8600 University Boulevard

Evansville, Indiana 47712

Phone: 812-465-7101

Confidential Fax: 812-461-5284

[cmnall@usi.edu](mailto:cmnall@usi.edu)

## **Purpose and Scope**

To provide an effective means by which qualified employees, applicants, volunteers, students, participants, and visitors of the University of Southern Indiana may request reasonable accommodations or access to University programs and activities, in accordance with the ADA and Section 504.

Pursuant to the ADA, the University will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified employees with known disabilities that affect the performance of their essential job functions, except when doing so would result in undue hardship or direct threat to the organization or others

## **Scope**

All faculty, staff, student workers, students, volunteers, and visitors at the University of Southern Indiana.

Any questions regarding interpretation of the policy or procedures may be referred to the University ADA Coordinator.

## **Definitions**

- **Disability**
  - A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of an individual
- **Physical or mental impairment**
  - Any physiological disorder, condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the body's systems, or;
    - Any mental or psychological disorder, such as intellectual disability, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, or specific learning disability.
- **Substantially limits**
  - An impairment is a disability if it substantially limits an individual's ability to perform a major life activity as compared to most individuals in the general population. Determination of whether an impairment meets this threshold requires individualized assessment.
- **Major life activities**
  - Include but are not limited to: caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, sitting, reaching, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, interacting with others, working, or;
    - The operation of a bodily function, such as immune system functions, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions.
- **Reasonable accommodations**
  - A modification or provision to a position, the educational or work environment, a policy or practice, or a manner in which work is usually performed that enables a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of a position and enjoy equal employment and educational opportunity
- **Undue hardship**
  - A degree of hardship in providing a proposed accommodation that is unreasonable or poses a significant expense or difficulty.
- **Direct threat**
  - A significant risk to the health or safety of self or others that cannot be eliminated or reduced by reasonable accommodation.

## **Requesting a Reasonable Accommodation (Procedures)**

### **General**

- The procedure for accommodation requests allow for an interactive process to take place, during which the following should occur:
  - An accommodation request is made;
  - An interactive discussion takes place regarding accommodation needs;
  - Appropriate documentation is provided to support the disability and the accommodation requested; and
  - A reasonable accommodation is put in place, if appropriate.
- Employees (Faculty, staff, student workers)
  1. To request an accommodation under the ADA, the employee first must communicate an accommodation request to their immediate supervisor, who is expected to then notify the ADA Coordinator, or accommodation requests can be made directly to the ADA Coordinator via telephone, email, or in person.
  2. An employee returning from a disability-related leave of absence who requests accommodation due to ongoing restrictions or accommodation needs will also be referred to the ADA Coordinator's office by Human Resources for engagement in the ADA interactive process.
  3. The employee will be required to provide appropriate documentation to support their disability-related functional limitations and their need for reasonable accommodation. A form will be provided by the ADA Coordinator for the employee and their qualified licensed healthcare professional to complete. Documentation is expected to be returned within 15 days of issuance to employee.
  4. After reviewing the documentation provided, the University and the ADA Coordinator will determine if the employee is eligible for accommodations under the ADA.

5. If the employee is eligible for accommodations, the ADA Coordinator will then continue with the interactive process to evaluate if the accommodation request is reasonable, which may include, but not be limited to:
  - Determining the necessary documentation to support the employee's accommodation request;
  - Clarifying the responsibilities of the University and the employee throughout the interactive process;
  - Identifying the essential functions of the position;
  - Discussing the employee's specific physical or mental abilities or limitations as they relate to the essential functions of the position, along with potential accommodations;
  - Identifying the accommodation that will best serve the needs of both the employee and the University; and
  - Notifying the employee and their direct supervisor of the established accommodation while maintaining confidentiality of protected employee health information.
6. The accommodation and any related documentation will be maintained by the ADA Coordinator's office within USI Human Resources department.
7. Confidentiality of information related to any reasonable accommodation request will be respected and maintained and may only be shared with those having official need-to-know.
8. The employee is responsible for contacting the ADA Coordinator if reasonable accommodations are not implemented in a timely and effective manner.
9. The ADA Coordinator office will work with the employee and their department in order to clarify and resolve any disagreements regarding the nature or implementation of the approved accommodation.
10. Reviewing employee accommodations is a common practice and is supported by law.
  - Accommodations are subject to a 90-day review to assess effectiveness and ongoing need or modification.
  - Accommodations may be set up with a trial period to assess effectiveness.
  - Accommodations may become unnecessary and can be withdrawn
  - If ongoing accommodations are not effective, the interactive process will continue, wherein the employee and the employer will explore alternatives.

### **Students**

Student academic accommodation requests must be referred to and evaluated by USI's Disability Resources office in the Pott College Science Center, Room 2206. Student will follow the University employee accommodation process detailed above.

Disability Resources  
Phone: 812-464-1961  
TTY/TDD: 812-465-7072  
Text: 812-470-8266  
Confidential fax: 812-464-1935  
Email: [usi1disres@usi.edu](mailto:usi1disres@usi.edu)

### **Volunteers and Visitors for Campus Programs and Events**

The University will employ its best effort to make appropriate campus programs and events accessible to individuals with disabilities. Any individual, including visitors to campus, who require an accommodation should contact the event planner at least one week in advance of the event. If it is unclear whom to contact regarding access to a University program or event, contact Special Events

University Special Events  
University Center West  
Phone: 812-464-1930  
Email: [usispecialevents@usi.edu](mailto:usispecialevents@usi.edu)

### **Reporting Concerns**

Employees, students, or community members who believe that the University has not met its obligations under the ADA should contact the University's ADA Coordinator, who is responsible for coordinating the University's efforts to comply with the ADA and all relevant disability-related federal, state, and local laws. The ADA Coordinator will refer complaints to the appropriate University office for investigation.

In addition, the Institutional Equity Office works with the USI community in implementing and upholding policies and practices that are consistent with federal and state mandates as well as existing University policies regarding equal access, equal employment, and educational opportunity for all persons, without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, disability, or veteran status.

Office of Institutional Equity  
Affirmative Action Officer / Title IX Coordinator  
Forum Wing, Wright Administration Building, 171A  
Phone: 812-464-1703  
Email: [USI.equity@usi.edu](mailto:USI.equity@usi.edu)

### **Digital Accessibility**

University Web and Digital Content functions as the central web team of the University and manages the public web presence at [usi.edu](http://usi.edu). The department provides technical expertise and knowledge of web trends and development standards and how they relate to section 508 web accessibility standards. University websites are required to meet the accessibility standards set forth by the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA

For further information regarding USI Web Accessibility, please contact:

Director of University Web and Digital Content  
Forum Wing, Wright Administration Building, 135A  
Phone: 812-464-1999  
Email: [webserv@usi.edu](mailto:webserv@usi.edu)

### **Service Animals**

For questions regarding service animal accommodation requests please refer to [policy F. 33 Animals on University Property](#).

### **Additional Contacts**

University of Southern Indiana Human Resources  
  
Forum Wing, Wright Administration Building, FA 166  
Phone: 812-464-1815  
Fax: 812-465-1185  
Confidential Fax: 812-461-5284

Email: [humanres@usi.edu](mailto:humanres@usi.edu)