



## Students with Disabilities: Accommodation Policy and Guidelines

Pacific School of Religion strives for consistent and equitable student access to educational opportunities. In particular, the Accommodations Policy and Process address a student's ability to fulfill academic degree and certificate program requirements.

- The policy covers student advising, classroom activities and requirements, program exams, and program milestone requirements such as the MAST e-portfolio, MA thesis, MTS synthesis paper, MDiv Senior Integrative Seminar, and DMin dissertation.
- The policy does not address extracurricular events sponsored by PSR, by GTU member institutions, access to student housing, or administrative activities (e.g., registration, access to facilities, etc.).

Accommodations are not implemented to give students with disabilities an unfair advantage but to remove barriers that prevent students from learning and from demonstrating what they have learned in the context of their formal degree or certificate program. Course instructors use program, course, and assignment rubrics—always identified in the course syllabus—to determine successful demonstration of learning.

Registrar Staff in the Office of Academic Affairs serve as the Student Accessibility Services (SAS).

### **Student Request for Accommodations:**

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The student is responsible for fully participating in the process and exercising due diligence to ensure that the provision of accommodations is successfully accomplished.

The [PSR Student Resources web page](#) provides access to all PSR administrative systems, program information, and process forms. The student requests accommodations for their academic work by submitting the online [Accommodations Request](#) form.

The student needs to include official written documentation from a professional who has the credentials and expertise to diagnose the student's condition and to recommend appropriate accommodations as part of the request. The student is responsible for incurring any cost associated with this supporting documentation.

## Timing of a Student Request:

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The student must request accommodations before the start of classes or early in the semester, well in advance of when the accommodations are needed. When the initial request is submitted, the student should factor in the amount of the time required to secure written documentation from an appropriate professional. The student is advised to work with their service provider to identify specific accommodations that would be most helpful to them in an adult learning environment. It can take time for the review process and verification of recommended accommodations. Students eligible for academic accommodations will normally have their request reviewed and, if appropriate, approved within two weeks after submitting the request.

## Decision:

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SAS will finalize accommodation options in the context of institutional resources and culture and assure consistency and equity. An accommodation is not “reasonable” if it will necessitate modifications to the essential nature of a program, course, or assignment, or would place undue financial or administrative burdens on the institution.

SAS reviews and confirms the necessary accommodations as supported by disability documentation with the student. SAS will then ask the student to complete an online [Accommodations Permission for Faculty Notification](#) form, allowing SAS to send notification messages to their course instructors. This form includes courses at other GTU schools and courses taught by Adjunct Faculty.

Note: The communications sent to each instructor only identifies the accommodations that have been verified by SAS. The student’s disability is confidential and is never revealed to any instructor by SAS.

The student **is** required to meet with each instructor to determine **how** the identified accommodations can be best met in relation to the course syllabus and assignment rubrics.

## Implementation:

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Several weeks before the start of each semester, SAS will send a reminder to students on our accommodations list to submit an [Accommodations Permission for Faculty Notification](#) online form, identifying the courses they have registered for. This includes courses at other GTU schools and courses taught by Adjunct Faculty. This permission form needs to be submitted each semester in which accommodations are needed, even if the student is taking a new course with the same instructor notified from a prior course.

## Changes to Accommodations:

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If new accommodations are needed, new or updated documentation is required from a professional care provider, as for the initial request for accommodations. No new documentation is needed if the student no longer wishes to request accommodations, either permanently, for a semester, or for a particular course. The prior accommodations can be reinstated via the student's submission of the Permissions form.

## Appeal:

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The student and/or instructor involved with the student may not agree with the SAS decision for accommodations. If an instructor disagrees with and/or refuses to provide the recommended accommodations, the student should contact SAS. SAS and an institutional contact will work with the instructor to resolve their concerns. If a resolution is impossible, the student can seek remedy from the instructor's school's academic grievance policy.

If a student disagrees with the SAS decision and/or recommended accommodations, they can appeal the decision through their own school's academic grievance policy. Again, SAS and an institutional contact should work with the student first to find ways to resolve concerns.

## Example Accommodations:

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The student referenced above requires accommodations for their coursework and in-class testing. The student has identified these specific accommodations of:

- Staggered deadlines and extra time (suggested, @1.5) on exams, assignments, quizzes, and papers (specifics arranged between student and professor,)
- A distraction-free testing environment (when/if in-person,)
- Permission to record lectures and class sessions as appropriate, using personal equipment or *Zoom record to computer file* function (requires meeting host setting.)

The student referenced above requires accommodations for their coursework and in-class testing. The student has identified these specific accommodations of:

- Permission to self-regulate in response to osteoarthritic distress. This includes the need to turn off Zoom video and/or audio and, occasionally, the need to remove themselves from the course session altogether. The student will collaborate with the instructor to catch up on class lectures and exercises for interrupted sessions.
- Staggered deadlines and extra time (suggested, @1.5) on exams, assignments, quizzes, and papers as needed (specifics arranged between student and professor.)
- Permission to adjust posture as needed, with attention to minimizing interruption to class activity and discussions.