

<b>Policy:</b> <b>Disability Accommodation</b>	<b>Issued:</b> 5/6/97	<b>Revised:</b> 11/27/07 (re-titled)	<b>Page 1 of 6</b>
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The School of Pharmacy and Health Professions, hereafter referred to as "the School," recognizes its duty to provide student applicants with equal opportunity to admission into the professional programs of the School. There must be no discrimination to admission based on gender, race, age, creed, national origin, marital status, or disabling condition. It is the responsibility of the Assistant/Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the Assistant/Associate Dean for Student Affairs, and the Special Needs and Assistance Committee (SNAC) to assist newly-admitted students with disabilities in achieving equal access to the educational experiences available to all students. The composition of this committee shall be either the Assistant/Associate Dean for Academic Affairs or the Assistant/Associate Dean for Student Affairs (who shall serve as Chair), and one faculty member from each department. University employees who are responsible for student support services and affirmative action, students from each program within the School and other individuals shall be invited as deemed necessary.

To achieve equal access to the educational experience, some reasonable accommodations may be necessary to ensure adequate preparation of students for professional practice or other career alternatives for which he or she may be qualified. This policy is in harmony with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title I, 42 U.S.C., Section 12101, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and with the Creighton University Policy Applying to Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability (1992). The School elects to implement the terminology and ideation established by the federal government and the University in the admission and retention of students living with physical and/or emotional challenges.

Within the pool of applicants for each professional program, there may be a limited number that will have disabilities. The disabled may include those with "sensory (primarily hearing and visual deficits), emotional, learning (perceptual and cognitive), physical, and chronic medical problems" (Bowman, D.J., Marzouk, D.K., 1992, p. 526, *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, May 1992).

Regarding program admission procedures, the following tenets may assist admissions committees and members of SNAC in making discretionary decisions in their selection procedures:

1. The mission of the School is to educate competent, value-centered professionals who can serve others through the application of knowledge in their respective fields of study.
2. Only qualified persons are admitted to the School or University, including those who have disabilities.
3. All students, disabled and non-disabled, are entitled to equal access to educational offerings in the most integrated setting.
4. Students with disabilities may achieve professional competency through a variety of traditional and innovative educational approaches.

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Disability is defined in functional terms as, "a physical or mental impairment which substantially interferes with a major life activity" (ADA, Title I). Under the ADA (see page 1, paragraph 2), students with disabilities may not necessarily have a specific diagnosis to qualify as disabled, but rather, may be disabled in functional performance. Students with a record of drug or alcohol abuse may qualify for accommodations under the ADA.

Persons with disabilities may or may not identify themselves upon admission. If special activities and/or performance testing are a part of the admission process, all applicants must be informed of this in advance. The student with a self-disclosed disability will be provided with necessary accommodations prior to testing to allow equal participation if possible. Once admitted, student requests for additional accommodations will require verification of disability by a qualified professional such as a physician or psychologist. A written verification of disability will allow the SNAC and the student to determine if adjustments in the educational program are necessary. Recommendations regarding possible modifications to the course of study will be made by the SNAC members in collaboration with the student and appropriate faculty and administrators.

In order to ensure provision of accommodations in a timely manner, students with disabilities are encouraged to request assistance as soon as possible after notification of admission. Each semester thereafter students are expected to confirm or decline allowed accommodations through the office of the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities. The University is responsible for making reasonable accommodations and for providing equal access to resources as determined and agreed upon by the student and the SNAC.

### **Admissions Procedures**

1. The Admissions Office of the School shall provide applicants to the professional programs with an opportunity to self-disclose their disability status at the time of acceptance. Application forms for the School of Pharmacy and Health should include the following statement: "According to Federal law, the provision of information regarding disabilities, handicaps, or other special needs must be voluntary. However, if there is no voluntary disclosure and documentation of special needs, Creighton University will not be able to provide accommodations. If provided, this information will be kept in strict confidence and will not be used to discriminate against you in any manner."
2. The Admissions Office of the School shall provide all accepted students with the Creighton University Student Support Services resource sheet entitled "Services for Students with Disabilities" to inform them of available resources and assistance.
3. The Chair of the SNAC and a faculty member from the program in which the student has been accepted shall offer to meet with the student once s/he has been notified of admission to inform her or him of career opportunities and the demands of various career options within the profession.

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### Accommodations

1. The syllabus of every course offered by the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions will contain a visible statement confirming the School's commitment to assisting students with disabilities in accomplishing the academic mission of the School's programs and identifying persons to contact for further information or to disclose.
2. Diagnosis of a disability does not necessarily imply the need for reasonable accommodations. However, if a student seeks accommodations for classroom or clinical coursework either prior to enrollment or once enrolled, a written verification of the disability by a qualified professional will be required and should be submitted to the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to finance evaluations for the verification of disability. Limited evaluation services may be obtained through the Creighton University Counseling Center and Student Health.
  - Once formal documentation of the disability has been received, the student will complete a Needs Assessment at the Student Support Services office, sign a release of information form, and formalize allowed accommodations. The student's signature on the release of information form permits notification of the appropriate coordinator of experiential education unless the student explicitly requests otherwise in writing. The disclosure of disability and the student's request for accommodations should be submitted to the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible, but no later than ten weeks prior to the beginning of course work.
  - Pending the receipt of documentation and a signed release of information form regarding disability, the SNAC, in consultation with the student, may choose to advocate for special considerations with faculty. Agreements for special considerations will be formalized in a letter signed by the Chair of the SNAC and the student and distributed to SNAC members, the student, and appropriate faculty.
3. If the student with a disability seeks accommodation during the clinical experience, the SNAC must assure that the respective program's coordinator of experiential education has access to any statement verifying the disability. It shall be the responsibility of the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities to obtain a signed release of information form from the student. The signed release will be used to assist the student in achieving reasonable accommodation through necessary negotiation with clinical supervisors.
4. Verification of disability will allow the SNAC to determine, on a case-by-case basis, if additional adjustments in the educational program, such as the use of non-traditional training sites, could be utilized if acceptable to the student.
5. The denial of a student's request for accommodations will occur only after the SNAC has met to discuss the request. The Chair of the SNAC will notify the student, in writing, if accommodations are denied, and will review the decision with the student. The School of Pharmacy and Health Professions is required to make reasonable

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accommodations. However, the accommodations do not need to be made if they affect the substance of the educational program or compromise educational standards.

### **Responsibilities of the Individual Members of SNAC**

The Assistant/Associate Dean for Academic Affairs or the Assistant/Associate Dean for Student Affairs shall serve as the Chair of the SNAC, coordinate the efforts of the SNAC, and schedule meetings of SNAC when a newly-admitted student has made a request for educational or clinical accommodations. It shall be the responsibility of the Chair of the SNAC to inform the student of his/her responsibility to provide the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities with verification of the disability, and the need to complete a Needs Assessment. A copy of the verification will be provided to the Chair of the SNAC when necessary.

It shall be the responsibility of the respective program's coordinator of experiential education to assist the student with special needs in selecting appropriate clinical sites. The program's coordinator of experiential education shall discuss the need for accommodations with the Clinical Supervisor prior to the student's arrival at a clinical site. The appropriate coordinator of experiential education may be invited to attend meetings of the SNAC when academic progress of students on clinical assignment is on the agenda.

The student shall be encouraged to disclose the disability and establish regular meetings with the faculty advisor, who can then monitor academic progress and work with the student to determine the need for additional accommodations. If informed of the disability by the student, the faculty advisor may be invited to attend meetings of the SNAC when her/his advisee's program of study or academic progress is on the agenda.

The SNAC Chair shall be responsible for maintaining contact with Student Support Services and for communicating additional needs for support to the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities. The Chair of the SNAC and her/his designee shall be the liaison between the student and the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities and shall supply text lists, course syllabi, an examination schedule, and any other necessary information to the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities for the purposes of arranging accommodations. The Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities shall meet with the student and the members of SNAC and shall coordinate the educational assistance offered to the student and make recommendations concerning the availability of community resources accessible to the student.

### **Meeting Schedule**

The members of SNAC shall meet twice annually, and as needed at the request of the Chair of the SNAC. The members of SNAC in cooperation with the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities and the Director of Affirmative Action will provide an annual in-service to the faculty and staff of the School in order to improve and maintain the continuity of efforts to provide accommodations to disabled students.

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## Appendix A

In this document a student with a disability shall be referred to as "student."

Definitions of disability, equal access, and reasonable accommodation (the following definitions of terms are excerpts from the Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA] with which the School and the University must be in compliance. References cited are taken directly from Title I of the ADA):

1. Disability defined: an individual is considered to have a disability if that individual fits into at least one of the following categories:
  - a. has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of the individual;
  - b. has a record of such an impairment; or,
  - c. is regarded as having an impairment. (Reg. S 16320.2[G]).
2. Physical or mental impairment defined: any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting at least one of the body systems (for instance, neurological), or any mental or psychological disorder. (Reg. S 16320.2 [H]).
3. The determination of whether an individual has a disability is not necessarily based on the name or diagnosis of the impairment the person has, but rather on the effect of that impairment on the life of the individual. (Reg. S 16320.2 [J] para. 2).
4. If an individual is not substantially limited with respect to any other major life activity, the individual's ability to perform the major life activity of working should be considered. If, however, the individual is substantially limited in any other major life activity, no determination should be made as to whether the individual is substantially limited in working (App. S 16320.2 [J] para. 10).
5. Reasonable accommodation defined (three categories):
  - a. modifications or adjustments to the pre-admission testing process (if any), that enables the student to be considered for admission;
  - b. modifications or adjustments to the learning environment or to the manner or circumstances under which a position is customarily performed which enables the person to perform an essential function of that position; or,
  - c. modification or adjustment that enables a person with a disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges. . . as are enjoyed by others similar situated . . . without disabilities. (App. S 16320.2 [O] 1).
6. An individual's need for an accommodation cannot enter into the decision regarding admission or retention. . . decisions, unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the School (App. S 1630.9 [a]).
7. It is unlawful for the School to use qualification standards, . . . tests or other selection criteria that screen out or tend to screen out an individual with a disability or a class of individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability unless the standard, test, or other selection criteria is shown to be essential for the position in question and is consistent with business necessity. (Reg. S 1630.10).

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8. Selection criteria that are related to an essential function of a job may not be used to exclude an individual with a disability if that individual could satisfy the criteria with the provision of a reasonable accommodation. (Reg. S 1630.10, para. 3).

**Special Note:** Student Empowerment Network

The School's Special Needs and Assistance Committee (SNAC), which was originally established as an informal student organization called the Student Empowerment Network, is now an officially recognized campus-wide, student-led organization that focuses on and advocates for disability issues. The mission of this group includes a commitment to empowering each member to have knowledge and political savvy to make positive change happen for and with individuals with disabilities: increasing understanding among the student body regarding the nature of various disabilities; and offering emotional support to those with a disability or who are concerned with disability issues. One of the organization's goals is to help the SNAC more effectively address issues which are most important to students with disabilities, and (as the name implies) to promote a positive spirit of empowerment among these members of our Creighton family. The specific goals and objectives the group establishes to meet its mission may change each year. If you are interested in finding out more about this new group, please plan to attend the Tuesday morning orientation session on disability issues.