

Reasonable accommodations in the academic environment for students with different abilities - proposed protocol -

This protocol is put forward in order to:

- equate study opportunities for students with different abilities and ensure the conditions for quality and equally accessible education to every student
- define the protocol in cases of students with disabilities and other documented difficulties submitting the request for accommodations in the academic environment at the level of the University of Rijeka.

The right to reasonable accommodations is in accordance with numerous documents and legal acts (Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, Convention and Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, National Strategy for Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2017-2022). The need for the accommodations in the academic environment arises in interaction with environmental factors, such as the university's infrastructure, knowledge assessment methods, teaching process organization and the like.

The Request for Reasonable Accommodations in the Academic Environment

The request for reasonable accommodation of the academic environment can be submitted by students with disabilities and all other conditions that may affect the course of their studies who require certain reasonable accommodations of the academic environment¹. Students submit the Request with **relevant documentation** in person to the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD Office), by sending an e-mail to uredssi@uniri.hr, or calling the Office at 051 265 844.

Upon submission, students attend **an individual counseling session during which:**

- (1) personal data, contact details, and documentation on the stated disability are collected,
- (2) information on the course of their studies and accommodations at previous levels of education are discussed

¹These are students with impaired sensory functions (vision, hearing), impaired neuromuscular and skeletal functions and functions related to motor abilities and mobility, organ and organ system damage, students with multiple impairments, chronic diseases, mental health issues/difficulties, specific learning difficulties (dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, ADHD), impaired language, voice and speech functions, and other health conditions or difficulties that may affect the course of their studies.

- (3) necessary adjustments of the academic environment are identified and a work plan for the duration of their studies is defined.

The staff of the Office for Students with Disabilities jointly conduct professional procedures of counseling, reviewing the documentation and determining the necessary support, and, if necessary, in consultation with relevant adolescent medicine specialists and teaching staff from the respective University constituents².

Granting the Request for the Accommodations of the Academic Environment

Upon receiving the relevant documentation and conducting the individual counseling session with the student, the OSD Office sends ***Recommendations for the Accommodations of the Academic Environment*** to the respective University constituent. These recommendations mainly involve curricular and knowledge assessment accommodations in order to provide students with the necessary support in the academic environment. However, this process may include additional procedures, depending on the specific needs of the student. Additional procedures are defined by the *Protocol for the Care for and Monitoring of Students with Health Problems, Disabilities and Chronic Illnesses* (Class: 003-01 / 17-03 / 01, Reg. No. : 2170-57-01-17-110).

The OSD Office submits the Recommendations to **coordinators for students with disabilities**³ without supporting documentation, as it has already been considered and accepted by the OSD Office. The OSD Office is available for all inquiries and ambiguities, as well as additional clarifications of students' health conditions or the justification of requested accommodations. The coordinator informs the OSD Office about the (non-)acceptance of the sent recommendations and, in case of acceptance, forwards them to relevant teaching staff as well as informs the OSD Office thereof. In case of non-acceptance, the respective University constituent must elaborate on its decision in writing to the OSD Office. The OSD Office informs the student of the outcome within 8 days from the day of receiving feedback from the component coordinator. The student is entitled to appeal to their University constituent.

Unless otherwise stated, the issued **Recommendations for the Accommodations of the Academic Environment is valid during the whole course of student studies**, except in the event of a change in the situation, of which the OSD Office will inform the respective constituent in a timely manner.

²In addition to teaching staff, when determining the necessary curricular, knowledge assessment and literature accommodations, the OSD Office consults the curriculum of University constituents. In case they are not publicly available, University constituents allow the OSD Office insight into curricula in order to provide appropriate support to students with different abilities. Curricula should be in harmony with the principles of universal design for learning as much as possible, i.e. use flexible teaching methods that enable effective acquisition of learning outcomes for as many students of different educational needs as possible (guidelines available [here](#)).

³Coordinators for students with disabilities at University constituents represent the link between students with disabilities, professors, constituents' staff and the Office for Students with Disabilities. The coordinator is the contact person at the University constituent to whom students can turn in order to exercise their rights to curricular and exam accommodations and at the same time resolve all other issues related to the rights and studying of students with disabilities.