Student Rights Policies

Policy on Student Rights Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects student information. The law also gives individual students certain rights:

- The right to inspect and review education records
- The right to seek the amendment of education records
- The right to consent to the disclosure of education records
- The right to obtain a copy of the school’s FERPA policy
- The right to file a complaint with the FERPA office in Washington, D.C.

Refer to the full text of the Washington University FERPA Policy (http://sites.wustl.edu/universityregistrar/student-records/ferpa-privacy/washington-university-ferpa-policy/) for more information.

Privacy Information for Parents

In accordance with federal law under the FERPA, the university may choose to release information about a student’s academic performance to a parent if the student is claimed as a legal dependent on that parent’s most recent federal income tax return. However, the university is not required to do so and prefers that students take the initiative to disclose and discuss academic goals and progress with their parents.

Students With Disabilities Policy

It is the goal of Washington University to assist students with disabilities in removing the barriers their disabilities may pose and to provide support as these students face the challenge of pursuing an education at Washington University.

Washington University recognizes and accepts its professional, legal and moral responsibility to avoid discrimination in the acceptance and education of qualified students with disabilities and to provide reasonable accommodations to such students consistent with the principles embodied in the law. These guidelines apply to students seeking admittance as well as to those who become disabled while they are enrolled.

Washington University makes every effort to ensure that all qualified applicants and students can participate in and take full advantage of all programs and opportunities offered within the university. Washington University encourages and gives full consideration to all applicants for admission. Washington University does not discriminate in access to its programs and activities on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion, color or national origin.

All students in educational programs at the School of Medicine, those seeking admittance, and those who become disabled while they are enrolled must possess the intellectual, ethical, physical and emotional capabilities required to undertake the full curriculum and to achieve the levels of competence required by the faculty and the profession.

In this regard, we will be guided by the principles outlined below.

A. Responsibilities of the Student

1. Disclosure of disability
   It is the responsibility of a student who has a disability to disclose this fact and to request accommodation from the dean for student affairs or the program director. The school encourages students with disabilities to identify themselves as early as possible to optimize the mobilization of resources and available accommodations.

2. Diagnosis of disability
B. Responsibilities of the School

1. Review of requests for accommodation

Requests for accommodations will usually be reviewed by the dean for student affairs or the program director. An ad hoc assessment team may be convened that may include the dean for student affairs, the educational program director (or curriculum supervisor), selected members of the Disabilities Oversight Committee (refer to Section B.5 below), and other consultants as appropriate to the individual circumstances. The assessment team usually should include the following people: (1) individuals who understand the curriculum in question; (2) a person who is knowledgeable about the Americans with Disabilities Act; and (3) a person with the authority to authorize accommodations and cause them to be implemented.

2. Responsibilities for accommodation

The disability, its functional impact and the requested accommodation(s) must be documented. If the student discloses a disability and requests accommodation, the school requires documentation of the disability from a qualified professional. Unless there are extraordinary and compelling circumstances, the student is financially responsible for the costs related to this documentation, which must be performed by an appropriately educated and trained professional. The information provided by the professional must be factual, objective and technically valid, and it must establish clearly that the disability substantially limits one or more of the student's major life activities. The professional(s) who evaluate the student should identify options for the management of the disability. Based on this information, the affected student should then request, in writing, the relevant accommodations. The student should work together with the dean for student affairs or the program director to arrive at a plan for reasonable accommodations. The school may also require a second expert opinion for which the school may be financially responsible under extraordinary and compelling circumstances. The school reserves the right to request as much detailed information from the student and/or the verifying professional(s) as is necessary to assess the scope of the disability and/or the reasonable accommodations.

3. Documentation of disability and request for accommodation

The disability, its functional impact and the requested accommodation(s) must be documented. If the student discloses a disability and requests accommodation, the school requires documentation of the disability from a qualified professional. Unless there are extraordinary and compelling circumstances, the student is financially responsible for the costs related to this documentation, which must be performed by an appropriately educated and trained professional. The information provided by the professional must be factual, objective and technically valid, and it must establish clearly that the disability substantially limits one or more of the student's major life activities. The professional(s) who evaluate the student should identify options for the management of the disability. Based on this information, the affected student should then request, in writing, the relevant accommodations. The student should work together with the dean for student affairs or the program director to arrive at a plan for reasonable accommodations. The school may also require a second expert opinion for which the school may be financially responsible under extraordinary and compelling circumstances. The school reserves the right to request as much detailed information from the student and/or the verifying professional(s) as is necessary to assess the scope of the disability and/or the reasonable accommodations.

3. Confidentiality

Information pertaining to a student’s disability and accommodations will be maintained in a file that is kept confidential and separate from the student’s academic record. Appropriate faculty, staff and administrators may be informed regarding the student’s disability, limitations, restrictions and accommodations when they have a need to know such information.

4. Application of the Committee on the Academic and Professional Evaluation of Students (CAPES) policies

The policies and procedures of the school regarding promotion and retention are documented for each academic unit. These policies and procedures govern the relationship between the school and all students, including those with disabilities. The school is not obligated to retain a student with a disability who poses a significant threat to the health or safety of others when there is no reasonable accommodation that either eliminates or sufficiently reduces that risk.

5. Disabilities Oversight Committee

There shall exist a standing Disabilities Oversight Committee composed of members designated by the dean of the School of Medicine. The committee shall have the following responsibilities: (1) performing a periodic review of requests for accommodations and accommodations granted; (2) providing recommendations regarding accommodations for disabilities; and (3) serving as requested on a disability appeals committee. This group serves as a resource regarding issues of significance to the institution and to students with disabilities.

C. Appeals

A student with a disability who believes that a request for accommodation has been improperly denied or who perceives that they have been discriminated against on the basis of a disability should direct their appeal to the dean of the School of Medicine. As needed, the dean of the School of Medicine may assemble an advisory group to review appeals and
make recommendations. This group may include but may not be limited to the chair of the committee that oversees the academic evaluation and advancement of students for the particular academic unit, students, and/or representatives of the Disabilities Oversight Committee.