

**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER**

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# SELF-ADVOCACY: COMMUNICATING WITH INSTRUCTORS

Instructors at Northern Illinois University are charged with supporting students to achieve academic excellence.

The DRC requires students to communicate directly with their instructors regarding accommodations.

Therefore, it is important for you and your instructor to have a discussion about challenges and accommodations. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) recommends that this discussion occur with each instructor as early in the semester as possible, preferably by the end of the first week of classes. During this discussion you should provide your Letter of Accommodation that lists your approved classroom and testing accommodations.

You have the right to decide what you will share regarding your disability. It is illegal for anyone to ask you what your disability is or to ask you to discuss anything about it. However, communicating with instructors helps achieve a higher level of academic success. Lack of communication with instructors may lead to perceptions that are not accurate. If you want help preparing for this conversation, please contact your Access Consultant.

For the initial meeting/discussion with each instructor:

* The discussion can take place over email, phone, or during office hours. (If you want, discuss and/or practice what you are going to say with your Access Consultant.)
* Describing your learning style may be helpful. You may also provide concrete examples of how your learning style may affect you in this class.
* Develop a plan of action with the instructor. If an instructor is skeptical or not receptive to your approved accommodations, please contact your Access Consultant.

Any email communication from your Access Consultant or the Disability Resource Center will be sent to your Z-ID. Please check your email often.

# INSTRUCTOR NOTIFICATION

Each semester, prior to meeting with your professor, you will need to request a Letter of Accommodation from the DRC by following the procedures below.

* Request your Letter of Accommodation using the [DRC Online Portal](https://drc.niu.edu/).
* Your Letter of Accommodation will be sent to your professors within 2 business days of the request. You will be included in the emails to your professors.

If you are seeking accommodations for a clinical, student teaching, practicum and/or internship course, you will need to meet with your Access Consultant to determine applicable and appropriate accommodations as they may be different from classroom and exam accommodations.

**NOTE: Northern Illinois University is not required to provide accommodations to students who:**

* + Have not registered with the DRC.
	+ Failed to self-identify to instructors.
	+ Have an out-of-date or incomplete file.
	+ Lack requested documentation.

All new student intakes must be completed and any requested documentation received **at least two weeks prior to final exams.** In addition, all new student intakes predicate upon the availability of an Access Consultant to complete the intake.

# EXAM ACCOMMODATION PROCEDURES

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides exam accommodation services to eligible students. In conjunction with current instructor/professor(s), eligible students may arrange to take exams at the DRC rather than in class.

**Please note that exam accommodations also apply to course quizzes.**

It is the student’s responsibility to initiate this service and to comply with the following procedures:

**Online Exam Procedures:**

1) If enrolled in a strictly online course, students should plan to take exams with their accommodations on the course platform.

2) Please note, an online test-booking via the DRC Student Portal is not needed for online exams that will be taken outside of the Disability Resource Center.

3) The student should contact their professor prior to any online exams or quizzes to remind the professor of their testing accommodations.

**In Person Exam Procedures:**

1) It is the student’s responsibility to connect with the instructor of the course to discuss exam accommodations as stated in the Letter of Accommodations (LOA). It may be helpful to present the instructor/professor with a copy of this form to understand the exam accommodation policies.

2) Students can access the DRC Online Portal at <https://drc.niu.edu/> .

3) Click on “Schedule a test or exam”.

4) After reviewing the information, students would need to click on “Schedule a test, mid-term or quiz” or “Schedule a final exam” (located in the black bar). Then click “Next”.

5) Students will need to select the course for which they would like to schedule a test/quiz/exam and then click “Next”.

6) Students will be asked to input the date, time, and duration of the in-class test. This is the regular date, time and duration of the test as specified by the instructor for the entire class. Then click “Next”.

7) Students will need to confirm their instructor’s contact information. Students should provide the name and e mail address of the instructor who will be approving the test booking with the DRC.

8) Student will need to select the accommodations (from the list of approved accommodations) that they would like to utilize for the exam/test/quiz. Then click “Next”.

9) Students will see available options (based on DRC’s availability) to select a date and time that the test can tentatively be scheduled at the DRC. *(If the listed dates and times do not fit the students’ needs, please select any one of the available options and then contact the DRC at* *drc\_exam@niu.edu**. Students can later provide an approval email from their professors to have the exam moved to a better suited time and/or date)*. Select and click “Next”.

10) This step will summarize the student’s tentative test booking; students will need to acknowledge that the information they have provided is accurate to the best of their knowledge by checking the box that states this. Then click “Finish”.

11) Students will see a message that says, “Thank you for your submission” and will receive a confirmation e mail that the test booking request has been submitted to the DRC.

12) At this point the instructor will be notified that approval is needed for the student’s exam. The instructor will need to confirm the date, time, duration, and exam details. Once the DRC receives confirmation, we will send another email to the student confirming that the tentative test booking has been confirmed and they are scheduled to take their test at DRC.

**Please keep in mind, students will not be scheduled to test at the DRC until we receive confirmation and exam details from the instructor.**

13) It is expected that students will confirm their intent to schedule their tests at the DRC with their instructors prior to submitting a request on the DRC Online Portal. This will ensure a seamless and efficient test scheduling process.

14) We require all requests to be submitted to the portal at least 5 business days prior to the exam/test/quiz. Students will be unable to submit requests within a shorter window. In case of extenuating circumstances, please contact the DRC at drc\_exam@niu.edu.

15) Please keep in mind, holidays and weekends do not count as business days and any requests submitted past 4:30 pm on regular working days are considered submitted on the following business day as our hours are M-F 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.

16) Exams are administered based solely on the information provided by the instructor/professor on the portal. Students should discuss their needs with the professor before tests are confirmed and details are sent to the DRC. Students will be allowed to use only the materials the instructor/professor approves.

17) Electronic devices are not permitted (unless approved by the professor) into the testing rooms. Any cellphones, smart watches, ear pods or devices with Bluetooth or communication capabilities will need to be turned in and placed in a separate area at the DRC.

18) If students are approved to use a calculator or will need to use headphones for accessibility needs or audio sections on exams, they should bring their own supplies. The DRC has a very limited supply of these items, and their use is subject to availability.

19) The DRC does not provide students with time warnings so students should expect to monitor and use their allotted time with the clocks provided in each testing room or by utilizing a simple watch that they can bring into the testing room.

**Changes to Your DRC Exam Appointment:**

1) If an instructor/professor changes an exam date/time, the student is responsible for notifying the necessary details (Student Name, Class Name, Instructor/Professor Name and Exam date/time) to DRC at drc\_exam@niu.edu. The student MUST carbon copy (cc) the instructor/professor on this email for this to be valid.

**Three business days’ notice is required to make changes to a scheduled test.**

**Taking Your Exam at the DRC:**

1) The DRC testing hours are as follows

a. For fall and spring semesters:

Monday through Thursday, 8:00am until 5:00pm, and Friday 8:00am until 4:30pm

b. For summer semesters:

Monday through Friday, 8:00am until 4:30pm

2) Summer hours begin the Monday following the final week of the spring semester and end the Friday prior to the beginning of the fall semester.

3) Due to the nature of students’ accommodations and the DRC exam hours, students may need to acquire instructor approval to schedule alternative dates/times.

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# EXTENDED DEADLINES FOR ASSIGNMENTS ACCOMMODATION

Sometimes you may have a problem finishing an assignment on time due to the nature of your disability. You may be eligible for extended time on assignments. When this accommodation is needed, discuss it with your instructor. Should you ask for an extension when the assignment is given? Should you ask for an extension before the assignment is due? Should you ask for extensions on all assignments? By collaborating with the instructor early in the semester, a process can be developed and expectations can be discussed and agreed upon. You must discuss this accommodation with your professor for it to be active in the specific course. The DRC recommends that you follow up with your professor in writing regarding any extensions that have been agreed upon.

# FLEXIBILITY WITH ATTENDANCE ACCOMMODATION

Attendance is an integral part of the learning process. Instructors set attendance policies at the individual course and department levels. Similarly, instructors determine policies regarding making up work and missed quizzes/exams.

You are responsible for following each instructor’s requirements regarding attendance and make-up policies. Most instructors include this information in their course syllabus. Request clarification from your instructor if you are not sure about a policy.

Because working with your instructor is vital to success, discuss this accommodation at the beginning of the semester. If your condition is unpredictable, disclosing this possibly may help.

If you have an attendance accommodation, each time you are absent, email your instructor. This email simply needs to say that you were absent for a disability- related reason and will follow up with the instructor.

This accommodation **does not excuse you from assignments or coursework**, nor does this void attendance policies that are tied to essential elements of the course. You must discuss this accommodation with your professor for it to be active in the specific course. The DRC recommends that you follow up with your professor in writing regarding any attendance exceptions that have been agreed upon.

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# GETTING MATERIALS IN ADVANCE

Some students receive an accommodation of receiving course materials in advance of a class lecture. The purpose is to allow students extra time to process information and materials before learning about them during a lecture setting.

If you have this accommodation, talk about how to receive materials in advance during the initial meeting with your instructor. Will the instructor put materials on Blackboard? Will the instructor email the materials directly? By setting up a specific process, it will be easier for you and your instructor to coordinate.

Instructors should speak with your Access Consultant about concerns regarding the accommodation.

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# INTERPRETING AND CART SERVICES

American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreting and Communication Access Real- Time Technology (CART) services may be provided as a reasonable accommodation based upon documentation of a disability and discussion with the student and instructors.

Requesting ASL Interpreting or CART Services in the Classroom

* + Inform your Access Consultant during the intake process/initial conversation. After establishing accommodations with the Access Consultant, email the Coordinator of Interpreting/CART Services a copy of your schedule.
	+ Immediately notify the Coordinator of Interpreting/CART Services of any changes in your schedule. Late notification of changes or late registration may delay Interpreting/CART services.

Requesting Interpreting/CART Services Outside of Class

* + Meetings with professors, academic advisors, university officials, etc. require a **minimum of two days’ advance notice** because of the time needed to schedule an interpreter. Efforts will be made to fulfill requests made on short notice, but interpreters may not be available.
	+ Interpreters **are not permitted to accept direct requests** for services. A request for services must be made through the DRC by completing and submitting the [Interpreter/CART Service Requests](https://www.niu.edu/disability/forms/interpreter-request.shtml) form.

A general request made by email or text is not acceptable.

As the DRC strives to provide student-centered services, the following guidelines have been created:

Attendance:

Interpreters have expectations to arrive before class begins. Notify the Coordinator if your interpreter is late or misses a class.

When the interpreter reports to a class, they must wait 10 minutes for a class up to one hour long, or 20 minutes for any class over one hour. If the student is still not there and does not communicate via phone/text, the interpreter will leave. Interpreters are required to report student no-shows immediately to the Coordinator to monitor student absences.

When tests are announced, determine if the interpreter will be needed for that class period. Inform the interpreter if their services will not be required for the testing period.

**All final exam services are per request only**. If you would like an interpreter for a final exam, contact the Coordinator **five** business days before the final exam.

Absences:

If interpreting or CART services have been scheduled and you know that you will not attend class or will not be using services on a specific day, inform the Coordinator and the interpreter at least 24 hours in advance.

In some situations, such as illness or sudden cancellation of class by the professor, if you cannot provide 24 hours’ notice, notify the Coordinator and your interpreter **as soon as possible.**

Repeated last minute cancellations without valid reasons will be individually reviewed by the Coordinator. Failure to provide 24 hours advance notice is considered a “No-show.”

Failure to provide notice will result in the following actions:

1. **First “No-show.”** The Coordinator will contact you via email to remind you about the policy and appropriate procedures.
2. **Second “No-show.”** An email will be sent to you informing you that you have two “No-shows,” remind you about the policy and appropriate procedures and notify you that services will be suspended until you meet with the Coordinator. Services will resume after the meeting if it is determined that this is the most reasonable and appropriate course of action.
3. **Subsequent “No-shows.”** Cancellation of regular services for that class. To get services for future sessions of that class, schedule another meeting with the Coordinator to review policy and discuss concerns with the class and the accommodation. A decision will be made during that meeting regarding interpreting/captioning for the remainder of the semester. It is possible that the student will need to turn in a completed “Service Request Form” for each remaining class session.

If an interpreter is unable to interpret for a class for any reason, the Interpreter/CART Coordinator will attempt to find a replacement. Please note that DRC may not be aware the interpreter is absent, especially in unpredictable events such as car problems, traffic, weather conditions, etc.

Communication with your Interpreter/CART Provider:

If you have difficulties with your Interpreter/CART provider that you are unable to resolve, please contact the Interpreter/CART Coordinator, your Access Consultant or the main DRC office. Every reasonable effort will be made to resolve quickly and fairly.

A high standard of professionalism is required of NIU interpreter/CART providers. They are expected to follow the Code of Professional Conduct and the policies and procedures of NIU Interpreter/CART Services. These policies include the following:

* + Treat all assignment-related information confidentially.
	+ Keep all job-related information confidential.
	+ Interpret the full message accurately and do not censor or add to the message.
	+ Remain impartial and do not become involved in a situation they are interpreting.
	+ Do not offer or give personal information about the student, but instead suggest the person speak to the student directly.

In the educational environment, an Interpreter/CART provider may at times need to share accommodation-related issues with other staff on a need-to-know basis. The DRC staff uses a team approach in the collaboration and sharing of work- related information. As a result, there will be times when information regarding students and work experiences are shared for the purpose of improving the quality of the DRC services.

# LAB ASSISTANCE ACCOMMODATION

You may need an assistant for a lab or non-lecture classroom setting due to the nature of your disability. A lab assistant can read, write/scribe or manipulate lab tools/materials. Clear boundaries are necessary in these situations. In all cases, the student is responsible for directing the actions of the lab assistant, not vice versa. You are always responsible for doing your own work.

If you think you may qualify for lab assistance, contact the DRC at least four weeks in advance. Requests for lab assistance services received with less than four weeks’ notice for ongoing classes can result in delayed services. In addition to the date and time of the lab, include information about any dress requirements for the lab assistant.

# NOTE-TAKING ACCOMMODATION PROCEDURES

If you receive a Note-Taking Accommodation, please connect with your Access Consultant directly to discuss the classes a volunteer notetaker is needed. After connecting with your Access Consultant, a *Note-Taking Accommodation Information* document from the DRC will be provided to each instructor of the requested classes, containing a prompt for the instructor to read to the class requesting a volunteer notetaker.

The note-taker must connect with the DRC in order to be considered a note-taker. Please ask the volunteer to contact the Access Consultant listed on the *Note-Taking Accommodation Information* document to register.

After discussing notetaking assistance with your Access Consultant, DRC students should complete the following:

1)Access the DRC Online Portal at <https://drc.niu.edu/> .

2) Click on “Student Notes”.

3.) Click on “Course/Notes” on the left menu.

4.) Please ensure the “I require notetaker” reads “Yes” for each course that you require notes for.

5.) DRC students will access class notes from the volunteer notetaker by signing into the DRC portal.

**NOTE: Receiving a Note-Taking Accommodation does not mean you are exempt from taking notes.**

* + You are still expected to take notes in class unless your disability precludes it. Using a note-taker provides access to additional notes enabling you to fill in missing information.
	+ You must attend class in order to receive note-taking services. Note-takers are not required to take notes for students choosing to be absent from class.
* Communicate with the instructor regarding the format of online classes. Will the course be asynchronous, recorded, and shared, etc.? For some online formats you may not be able to use your note-taking accommodation as there may not be need to. In others you may be able to request access to a volunteer’s notes that were taken during a class virtual meeting.

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# PRIORITY REGISTRATION

After your first semester, you **may be eligible to** receive priority registration as an accommodation. Priority registration is a window of opportunity to register early, based on stated deadlines. It is not a guarantee of class admission, nor does it provide access to courses after they have been filled. Therefore, it is critical that all students eligible for priority registration follow the stated times to complete their registration. If you need Sign Language Interpreters or Captionists, you are strongly encouraged to register during priority enrollment periods to assist with the scheduling of services.

Priority registration dates are typically the first full week of April for the summer and fall semesters, and the first full week of November for the spring semester.

Exact dates are posted to your My-NIU Student Center, listed under Enrollment Dates, and are typically posted on DRC website.

Priority registration is provided as an accommodation to help you:

* + Get the most appropriate classes and class schedule for meeting accommodation requests.
	+ Give you time to contact instructors before classes start to discuss accommodation needs and request a course syllabus.
	+ Get alternate format of printed materials in a timely manner.
	+ Plan a course schedule that arranges classes in the most easily accessible locations and get appropriate travel times.
	+ Schedule sign language interpreting/captioning.

# REQUESTS FOR ALTERNATIVE FORMAT OF MATERIALS

Examples of alternate format of materials include electronic text (in Microsoft Word, PDF, straight text, etc.), Braille and tactile drawings.

If you need alternative formats, submit requests and materials to be adapted at least **2-3 weeks before the materials are needed**. Although that seems like a long time:

* + There may be copyright issues to resolve.
	+ Some conversion processes take a lot of time.
	+ The DRC needs to get the materials to convert them.
	+ Requests are processed in the order received.
	+ If the course structure does not allow timely provision of adapted materials, DRC staff, the course instructor and you will discuss whether an alternative reasonable accommodation is available.

The DRC retains the right to determine the most effective and timely accommodation after appropriate consultation with you.

Contact the instructor or the bookstore well in advance of the semester (preferably four weeks prior) to:

* + Identify required textbooks.
	+ Identify printed materials that need to be adapted such as Word/text files, PowerPoint slides, visual aids and/or additional readings like library reserve or e-reserve readings.
	+ Discuss the option of providing Word/text files of materials directly to you or the DRC as appropriate.

Contact the DRC and follow the appropriate steps, depending on the type of format needed, to obtain the alternative media.

Electronic Text (E-Text):

* Purchase (or rent) the text to be converted, as required by publishers and industry standards.
* Access the DRC Online Portal at <https://drc.niu.edu/> .
* Click on “Alternate Format”.
* If submitting a new request for an alternate format, click “Create new request”. You can view your submitted requests by clicking “View my requests”.

* The DRC does not require students to include textbook receipts when completing the alternate format request. However, students should hold on to their textbook receipts in the event the publisher requires proof of purchase or rental.
* When your converted textbooks/course materials are ready, you can access these files by clicking “Download my files”. You will get one copy of the alternate format for each material required for academic use. This electronic file has copyrights and may not be reproduced or distributed. Any further reproduction or distribution is an infringement of the agreement with the publisher.

Some publishers require that students return material received from the DRC at the end of the semester. In most of these cases, the DRC will have an agreement from the publisher that you sign. If you do not return the materials, an encumbrance is placed on our account which will suspend the release of grades, registration of classes, release of transcripts or receipt of degree upon graduation.

Braille, Enlarged Print and Screen Magnification

Across the NIU campus, there are resources that you can use independently:

* + Closed-Circuit TVs (CCTV) in Founders Memorial Library, Room 102.
	+ CCTVs in the DRC for testing use.
	+ Assistive technology computers in Division of Information Technology computer labs. Visit the DoIT [Technology Labs webpage](https://doit.niu.edu/doit/services/desktop/labs.shtml).

If you need materials in Braille, enlarged print or tactile drawings, complete the [Alternative Format Request](https://fs19.formsite.com/niuform/qp1jfird8l/index.html) and submit it with the printed material/electronic to the DRC. Please note that books are seldom available in Braille or large print, but sections can be made available as needed. Discuss what you need with your Access Consultant, but realize that it can take 2-3 weeks to get the material in alternative formats.

Alternative format materials will be sent via OneDrive for E-Text but will be available for in-person pick up when a hard copy is requested and approved.

**AUDIO RECORDING ACCOMMODATION**

When necessary, it may be possible to audio record class lectures as an accommodation. Connect with your professors to get permission before you start audio recording. If your instructor has concerns, they should contact the DRC. For additional information, please see the [Classroom](https://www.niu.edu/u_council/reports/FS-Academic-Affairs/2014-2015/Classroom%20Recording%20Policy-FS-02-18-15.pdf) [Recording Policy for Northern Illinois University](https://www.niu.edu/u_council/reports/FS-Academic-Affairs/2014-2015/Classroom%20Recording%20Policy-FS-02-18-15.pdf) (PDF).

# CAMPUS ACCOMMODATIONS AND ACCESSIBLE HOUSING

NIU Residence Halls offer rooms and facilities that are accessible to students with disabilities. If you need housing arrangements because of a disability, discuss it with your Access Consultant. The Access Consultant will be able to explain options and recommend how to get them. Indicate on the NIU Housing application that you need accommodations based on disability. You must still comply with all University Housing timelines. The NIU Housing Accommodations information can be found on the [NIU Housing and Residential Services](https://www.niu.edu/housing/halls/accessibility/) webpage.

If you need a single room due to a disability, contact your Access Consultant or call the DRC main office at 815-753-1303 to make an appointment to register.

Emergency Evacuation

If you need assistance for emergency evacuation from a residence hall, contact the Complex Coordinator or full-time Hall Director. Do this as soon as possible upon moving in.

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# ACCESSIBLE PARKING

All arrangements for parking permits are made through [NIU Campus Parking](https://www.niu.edu/parking/) [Services](https://www.niu.edu/parking/). All students who park on campus must purchase an NIU parking permit.

A license plate or parking placard is required before purchasing a permit for accessible parking. A license plate or parking placard is also required if you need accessible parking temporarily. See the [Office of the Illinois Secretary of State](https://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/services/persons_with_disabilities/) webpage for information about getting the license plate or parking placard application.

NIU Campus Parking Services is at 121 Normal Road in DeKalb on the corner of Normal Road and Highway 38 (Lincoln Highway).

# EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS

Under the Fair Housing Act, Comfort or Emotional Support Animals may be allowed in public housing but are not required to be allowed across campus.

Your Responsibilities

Register your emotional support animal with the DRC. Registering with the DRC provides an opportunity to discuss additional accommodations beyond the emotional support animal. University housing staff may consult with or refer a student with a disability to the DRC to assist with determining the reasonableness of the use of an emotional support animal as an accommodation in the residence hall.

The cost of care, food, arrangements, supervision, and responsibilities for the well- being of an emotional support or a service animal are the sole responsibility of the owner at all times. Animals on campus must:

* + Meet all requirements for the presence of animals in public places (vaccinations, licensure, ID tags, etc.) mandated by state or local ordinances. For DeKalb County, these requirements can be found on the [DeKalb County,](https://library.municode.com/il/dekalb_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=DECOCO_CH10AN_ARTIINGE) [Illinois Municipal Codes](https://library.municode.com/il/dekalb_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=DECOCO_CH10AN_ARTIINGE) webpage.
	+ Be in good health. Animals to be housed in university housing must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian.
	+ Be under control. You must be in full control of the animal at all times. Reasonable behavior is expected from emotional support animals while in university housing. If an emotional support animal, for example, exhibits unacceptable behavior, you are expected to employ the proper training techniques to correct the situation.
	+ Not cause damage to the campus. If you have an emotional support animal in university housing, you are financially responsible for property damage caused by your assistance animal.
	+ Not cause undue financial burdens to the university. All functions of emotional support animal use, including emotional support animal training or retraining, independent travel, animal food purchasing and maintenance, grooming, veterinarian care and hygiene maintenance is the full responsibility of the individual with the disability.

Emotional Support Animals in University Housing

You must request for housing accommodations. The DRC will work with University Housing to ensure appropriate accessible housing is provided.

* + Disturbing vocalizations or noises from the animal must be kept to an absolute minimum.
	+ Emotional support animals may not be bathed in the shower rooms, bathtubs or sinks in the residence halls. Food dishes must be cleaned only in the large sinks for resident use on each floor. Animal food must be kept in a covered storage container.
	+ Emotional support animals will not be allowed in dining centers. Emotional support animals are allowed in other public residential spaces only to be taken in and out of the building to defecate or to travel to an off-campus location.
	+ Emotional support animals must be able to remain in the residence unattended while you are in class or attending other university events.

Removal of Assistance Animals

If your Emotional support animal is unruly or disruptive (e.g., barking, running around, bringing attention to itself) you may be asked to remove the animal from university housing if you do not take effective action to control the animal. If the improper behavior happens repeatedly, you may be told not to bring the emotional support animal into university housing until you take significant steps to mitigate the behavior. Mitigation can include muzzling or refresher training for both you and the animal.

Emotional support animals that are ill should not be taken into public areas. If you have an ill animal you may be asked to remove the animal from university housing or leave university housing until the animal is healthy.

If your animal is unclean or noisome, you may be asked to leave university housing. An animal that becomes wet from walking in the rain or mud or from being splashed by a passing automobile, but is otherwise clean, should be considered a clean animal. If the animal in question is usually well-groomed, the university may consider the animal that appears messy due to environmental conditions (rain, snow, sleet, mud, etc.) well-groomed until the handler is able to groom the animal appropriately (give it a bath, brushing, towel dry, etc.).

Grievances and/or Complaints

If you are dissatisfied with a decision concerning your emotional support animal follow the applicable institutional Appeal/Grievance Procedure. Other individuals who have complaints regarding the use of service or emotional support animals in university housing should direct them to Residential Services staff.

Veterinarian Care

The following veterinarians are located within the area operated by the Huskie Bus Line and the paratransit service (Dial-A-Ride). Each veterinarian may offer some type of discount to assistance animal owners. Check when making an appointment. The DRC is providing this contact information as a service to students and does not endorse or guarantee the services provided by these independent veterinarians.

* + Bethany Animal Hospital, 2400 Bethany Road, Sycamore, Illinois 60178; 815- 239-6938
	+ Prairie View Animal Hospital, 24 Rich Road, DeKalb, Illinois 60115; 815-756- 9976 or after hours.
	+ VCA Aurora Animal Hospital, 2600 West Galena Boulevard, Aurora, IL 60506; 630-896-8541

Dog Parks

There are two dog parks in the DeKalb area. One is Katz Park located at 393 W. Dresser Road in DeKalb. The other is the Brian Bemis Family Dog Park located at 480 South Airport Road in Sycamore. Please check both the [DeKalb Park District](https://dekalbparkdistrict.com/) and [Sycamore Park District](https://sycparks.org/) websites for updates.

# SERVICE ANIMALS

If you use a service animal, you may want to register with the DRC. Registering with the DRC provides an opportunity to discuss additional accommodations beyond the service animal.

Service Animals in University Housing

You must make a request for housing accommodations. The DRC will work with university housing to ensure appropriate accessible housing is provided.

Service animals must always be kept under control and on a leash/lead, except in your room with the door shut. **All** policies listed above for assistance animals apply to service animals.

Additionally, in dining centers, service animals must:

* + Remain quietly by your chair or under the table out of the way of others.
	+ Not disturb others at the table in any way, including other service animals.
	+ Keep their noses and all body parts off tables, trays and food-servicing counters at all times.

Service animals are not allowed in food preparation areas.

# LIBRARY SUPPORT SERVICES

Founders Memorial Library offers services and assistive technology for students. Contact the Coordinator of Library Services for Persons with Disabilities at 815- 753-5290.

# PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS

Personal Care Attendants (PCAs) are allowed on campus with students with disabilities. PCAs must abide by NIU policies and codes of conduct. It is your responsibility to recruit, interview, hire, train and pay for PCAs. Analyze your needs so you can be clear and specific when talking to potential PCAs. Negotiate the details of the work arrangement. In addition, plan on employing one or two back-up PCAs to be on call.

If you are working with the Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services, consult with your counselor to determine eligibility for financial reimbursement of PCA costs.

# PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY ON CAMPUS

If you encounter classes or service spaces that are inaccessible, contact your Access Consultant. Access to most campus locations is provided through NIU on- campus transportation. You can report a [physical barrier on campus](https://www.niu.edu/affirmative-action/disabilities/report-barrier.shtml) though the DRC website.

In the event of an unanticipated situation, such as a wheelchair or scooter breakdown, contact the DRC during business hours for help getting to classes.

# TRANSPORTATION

Huskie Bus Line

NIU has a bus system operated by the City of DeKalb which runs throughout campus and some areas of the DeKalb community. The buses are accessible with wheelchair lifts and tie-downs. Preferential front seating is available to students with severe mobility and/or visual disabilities. Be sure to ask the driver to verbally announce stops. See the [City of DeKalb public transit webpage](https://www.cityofdekalb.com/1283/DeKalb-Public-Transit) for bus routes.

Community Safety Services

The NIU Department of Police and Public Safety provides a variety of services to the community. [List of Community Safety Services](https://www.niu.edu/publicsafety/safety-services/index.shtml)

Paratransit

Paratransit is operated by the City of DeKalb. This service provides transportation services for people with disabilities who are unable to utilize the city’s Huskie Line bus service. Eligible users of the ADA paratransit service should make a reservation at least one day in advance and are able to request reservations up to seven days in advance. [ADA Paratransit Service Rider's Guide](https://www.cityofdekalb.com/DocumentCenter/View/12776/Paratransit-Riders-Guide-Updated-062321)

# DRC BEHAVIOR POLICY

In accordance with the Northern Illinois University Student Code of Conduct, disruptive and abusive behavior will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.

This behavior includes, but is not limited to:

* Name-calling of or yelling at any DRC/university staff and students.
* Swearing at DRC/university staff and students.
* Slamming open/close doors at the DRC.
* Displaying behavior that is meant to be intimidating (standing over employees, banging hands against desks/tables etc.).
* Threatening DRC/university staff and students.
* Refusing to turn in exam when time has expired.
* Emailing inappropriate comments or threats to DRC/university staff and students.
* Stalking or harassing DRC/university staff and students.

The DRC acknowledges that students often use our services during stressful situations. However, there are appropriate ways to convey your experience. This can include calmly and respectfully explaining your concerns or frustrations or asking for a moment to process your initial reaction. If you have questions about appropriate ways to voice your concerns or discomfort, please discuss this with your Access Consultant.

Please view the [Northern Illinois University Student Code of Conduct](https://www.niu.edu/conduct/process/index.shtml) in its entirety.

**GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

# DIVERSITY-RELATED APPEAL AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

We hope everything goes smoothly for our students. If you have concerns or problems related to a disability, accommodations or discrimination, use one of the grievance procedures listed below.

The first grievance procedure is for a concern with the DRC and/or a particular DRC staff member. The second procedure is for filing a complaint because of a disability-related concern or a problem with an office or someone at the university outside of the DRC.

For issues that are unrelated to disability, follow [general NIU grievance procedures](https://www.niu.edu/u_council/constitution/bylaws/article12.shtml) which apply to all students.

Resolving Disability-Related Conflicts with the DRC and/or a DRC Staff Member

If you want to appeal a disability-related decision made by a DRC staff member, talk with the staff member first. If the complaint is unresolved, talk with that person’s supervisor. If that does not resolve the issue, notify the director of the DRC in writing. The director will investigate the issue and respond to the student within 10 class days.

If this does not resolve the disability-related issue, you may appeal to the assistant vice president of Student Affairs and dean of students (Section 504 compliance officer). The appeal should include a written statement regarding the nature of the complaint, results of the previous appeal and requested resolution. This appeal will have an investigation, and a decision will be rendered within 10 class days of the request. This will be a final decision.

Resolving Disability-Related Conflicts within the University Outside of the DRC

If you have a disability-related grievance/concern about a department, faculty or staff member at the university, contact your Access Consultant. If the grievance is discrimination-related or academically related, the grievance should be filed with the Ethics and Compliance office.

**Note:** Northern Illinois University has a “Non-Discrimination-Harassment Policy and Complaint Procedure.” You may use this process for complaints involving a claim of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, citizenship, intending citizenship, sex, sexual orientation, age (over 40 years), disability, Vietnam-era veteran status, or special disabled veteran status. Contact NIU’s [Ethics and Compliance Office](https://www.niu.edu/ethics-compliance/index.shtml) to initiate this process.

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