

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE LETTER

SUBJECT: ACCESSIBILITY OF UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS, SERVICES, AND FACILITIES

Effective 12/12/06
Last Revised 2/26/2020

All University programs and services must be accessible to and usable by qualified individuals with disabilities, as provided under University policy and Federal and State law. All areas of the University shall be designed and operated in a manner that enables students, employees, applicants, and members of the general public who have a disability to participate or benefit on an equal basis. The University's policy includes, but is not limited to, access to:

- academic programs, including traditional and distance education programs;
- employment, cultural, recreational, and residential programs;
- information and communication systems, including hardware and software, equipment, and facilities.

Managers and administrators are responsible for accessibility of their administrative areas. Each university has an Equal Opportunity Officer, Director of Facilities, ADA Coordinator, and Disabled Student Services Coordinator with specific responsibilities for and expertise related to accessibility.

New Programs, Services, and Facilities

Planning for accessibility by people with disabilities is necessary in the development of new programs, services, and facilities. Advance planning avoids significant costs and complications of retrofitting programs, services, and facilities. It is the responsibility of each manager and administrator who is responsible for designing or implementing a new program, service, or facility or for preparing a grant application to consult with the appropriate university resources to determine and meet accessibility requirements and the cost of accessibility and accommodations in the budget.

Construction of new facilities, building renovations, and facilities to be leased by the University must conform to national and state accessibility standards. Equipment, other products, and services purchased or leased by the University, new communication systems, and University publications shall be accessible to and usable by people with disabilities.

Existing Programs, Services, and Facilities

Existing programs and services must be made accessible to qualified individuals with disabilities who request a reasonable accommodation. Building alterations may be required if a building or other facility is not accessible, the programs or services it houses cannot be relocated to an accessible location, and no other non-structural changes will provide access.

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The responsible administrator or manager shall consult with appropriate university resources for guidance in determining whether building alterations are required. All information provided by the University, including information technology, must be provided in a format that is accessible to individuals with disabilities, upon request. Equipment that is provided to or available for use by students, employees, and others must be adapted for use by individuals with disabilities. An accommodation request must not be denied prior to consultation with the university Equal Opportunity Officer and/or ADA Coordinator.

The University may request documentation to confirm a disability and the need for the requested accommodation. An exemption may be requested when a university person, department, campus, etc., believes that providing an accommodation would create an undue burden on the university or fundamentally alter the nature of the associated course, program or activity. The *University of Maine System Procedure for Accommodating Individuals with Disabilities* establishes guidelines for responding to accommodation requests from employees, applicants, and the general public.

Each university has a separate procedure for responding to student requests.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

[Board Policy 401: General Equal Opportunity](https://www.maine.edu/board-of-trustees/policy-manual/section-401/) <https://www.maine.edu/board-of-trustees/policy-manual/section-401/>

Board policy 902 Information Technology Accessibility <https://www.maine.edu/board-of-trustees/policy-manual/section-902/>

Administrative Practice Letter (APL) VI-G Information and Communication Technology Accessibility <https://www.maine.edu/apls/wp-content/uploads/sites/42/2020/02/VI-G-Information-and-Communications-Technology-Accessibility-APL-Final-January-15-2020.pdf>

APPROVED

Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration

Note: Official copy on file in the Office of Finance and Administration at the University of Maine System.