

BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

Chapter 4: The Process for Determining Disability Accommodations

Elisa P. Laird with Jan Serrantino and J. Leigh Culley

1. “A disability accommodation refers to academic adjustments and auxiliary aids that enable students with disabilities to have access to education equivalent to that of their peers.” When determining a disability accommodation, it is the role of the DRP to determine what disability-related barriers may be present in the health science educational environments. Discuss the multiple types of environments that must be considered for health science students. Who should the DRP involve in the interactive process to determine what accommodations are appropriate for each environment? Brainstorm possible barriers students may experience in these learning environments.
2. The ADA mandates that students are entitled to accommodations where a proven disability-related need exists. As a student progresses into new academic settings or personal experiences change, new disability-related barriers may arise, creating the need for new accommodations that were not previously necessary. How does your school identify and support students who require accommodations when program expectations or student circumstances change?
3. Describe your institution’s interactive process between the DRP and the student for discussing barriers and determining an accommodation plan. How is the determination process communicated to students? What are some of the barriers a student might identify during the interview?
4. DRPs sometimes have to balance concerns expressed about potential risks to the health and safety of patients with the accommodation needs of students. Referring to the ADA regulations about how to assess the potential for “direct threat” and Case Example 4.5, discuss past accommodation requests at your school that have raised patient safety concerns, or accommodation requests you think could raise concerns, and how you might resolve them. Who would you want to bring into the discussion? What questions would you ask?
5. The process used when determining the reasonableness of an accommodation request should be documented. Discuss the procedures your school follows to keep written records throughout the process of determining an individual student accommodation plan. What do you include? Why? Is there more you might consider adding to record keeping in the future?

6. What are the factors that cannot influence accommodation decisions? What can you do to help ensure those factors are not included in decisions made at your institution?
7. According to OCR, schools must have an established procedure for alerting faculty of approved accommodations. What protocols are in place at your school for notifying faculty of a student's approved accommodation plan? A list of questions to assist schools with developing or refining a notification procedure is available in Appendix 4.3.
8. Effective communication and collaboration between multiple parties is required throughout the process of determining reasonable accommodations. Discuss the rights and responsibilities of the students, DRPs, faculty, and administrators in this process.