

SCDAC Report

Senate Council Meeting
October, 2023

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Committee Members Spring 2023:

Julie Ossege (Chair), David Beach (ex-officio), Davy Jones, Channon Horn, Heather Roop (ex-officio), Alice Turkington (ex-officio), Cassandra Gipson-Reichardt, Aaron Garvey, Jennifer Pusateri

The Charge

- 05/13/22: The Senate Council expressed awareness of concerns from some faculty that reasonable accommodations for medically-qualifying learning disability are not determined through an interactive process with the faculty instructor.
 - As a result, the faculty instructor may not agree that an accommodation is pedagogically reasonable or appropriate.
- SCDAC was charged with **information gathering on reasonable accommodations** in general:
 - how are reasonable accommodations expected/intended to be established
 - if an accommodation may violate Senate policy by “fundamental alteration” of the “essential nature” of the Core program
 - how a faculty instructor can request a change to an accommodation they do not believe is reasonable, etc

Information Gathering Process: 2022-2023

- SCDAC committee members discussed transparency of Disability Resource Center (DRC) processes
 - Policy information before cases occur
 - Decision making and communication of DRC during a case with the student and faculty
 - Explanation of case outcomes
 - Distinguishing between determination the student has a diagnosed academic disability vs. determination if a potential accommodation in the class is pedagogically reasonable
- It was determined that SCDAC needed to conduct benchmarking, effective DRC website design, and discuss SCDAC composition

Benchmarking

- SCDAC members each reached out to DRCs at other institutions, including:
 - UT Chattanooga
 - Ohio State University
 - NC State
 - WVU
 - UT Knoxville
 - University of Florida
 - University of Arizona
 - Texas A&M
 - Northern Arizona University

The Process

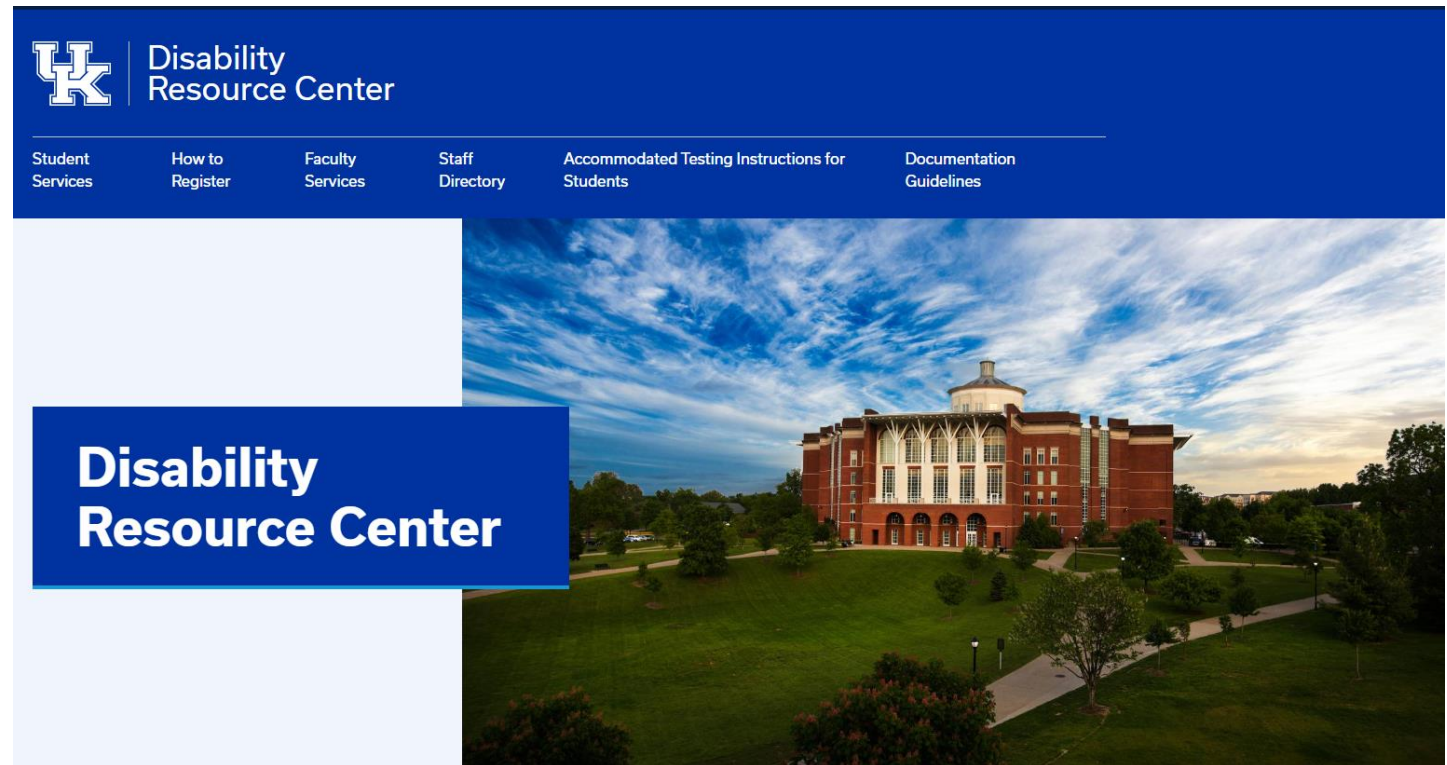
- SCDAC and DRC worked together during the 2022-2023 benchmarking
- Discussions between SCDAC and DRC have been productive
 - Defining and understanding our different roles to work together in shared governance

SCDAC Recommendations

1. Policy-Sharing: Understanding the Expertise and Roles of DRC and Faculty

DRC website updating: Need for fuller/more readily available information for process transparency

- DRC staff office hours
- Effective visuals of the accommodation process
- Pictures/biosketches of consultant advisors
- Need for clear delineation of DRC staff roles in determination that a diagnosed disability exists
- Need for clear delineation of faculty roles in determining the pedagogical reasonableness of potential accommodations



SCDAC Recommendations

1. Policy-Sharing: Understanding the Expertise and Roles of DRC and Faculty

DRC establishes systematic practices of outreach to colleges and departments:

- Conduct drop-ins at different colleges/departments and offer to attend educational unit meetings
- Promote a culture of collaboration

SCDAC Recommendations

2. Determination of Pedagogical Reasonableness of Accommodation

Course Substitution as Accommodation:

- The UK Core Education Committee (CEC) evaluated the procedure for course substitution related to core academic requirements.
 - **Goals:** (1) Clarify the role of the DRC in determining reasonable accommodations. (2) Clarify the role of faculty in determining whether an accommodation fundamentally alters the course or program of study. (3) Determine and standardize the communication procedures between faculty/educational units and the DRC when there may be a case of fundamental alteration of the course or program.
- CEC proposed and SCDAC supported a dynamic decision process

SCDAC Recommendations

2. Determination of Pedagogical Reasonableness of Accommodation

Course Substitution as Accommodation:

- Outside of UK Core, other programs may have a situation where the DRC determines that a diagnosed disability exists that warrants a course substitution.
 - Need to identify a procedure for this context
 - Should the procedures be similar? Or should they be individualized to each program?
- **SCDAC recommends that the procedure for disability accommodation in the UK Core context is an option available for other program disability accommodation contexts, to be reevaluated intermittently.**

SCDAC Recommendations

2. Determination of Pedagogical Reasonableness of Accommodation

Within-Course Accommodation:

- **SCDAC recommends that the Senate Council encourage a culture of collaboration between DRC and faculty to mitigate pedagogical impact of various within-course diagnosed academic disability-related accommodations.**
- Faculty perception is that the following examples of within-course accommodations are imposed on course instructors:
 - Greater time for the educational activity (e.g. taking exam, or due date for assignment)
 - Excused absence from the activity (implicating on occasions the 20% Rule)
 - Allowance of information recall prompts (memory aids)
 - Certain accommodations of exam taking may compromise integrity of the exam (e.g., insufficient monitoring of exam takers; certain third party exam assisters).
 - Change in modality (virtual vs. face to face, when each have different pedagogical contexts)
 - Creation of new physical course teaching materials (e.g. physical display models)
 - Untimely notice of the need to make a disability accommodation (e.g. unreasonably long after a course has started)

SCDAC Recommendations

2. Determination of Pedagogical Reasonableness of Accommodation

Within-Course Accommodation:

- The DRC letter to the student can sometimes occur without what the faculty instructor would consider as opportunity for due consideration of whether the accommodation constitutes a fundamental pedagogical alteration in the course and its program.
- **Through the interactive process with the DRC, SCDAC will identify more concrete best-practices as they relate to idiosyncratic pedagogical circumstances.**

SCDAC Recommendations

3. Assessment of Performance of Policies/Practices

DRC: continue periodic survey of faculty on effectiveness of DRC activities of faculty contact and support.

Senate: Encourage educational units to establish educational policy about pedagogical aspects of their programs and courses that cannot be reasonably altered.

- Need for clear delineation and faculty exercise of ADA-compliant guardianship of the “fundamental nature” of programs.

SCDAC Recommendations

4. Determination of Pedagogical Reasonableness of Accommodation

SCDAC was made aware that the DRC urgently needs increased resources for administering accommodations.

Through our information gathering process, we determined that the DRC is severely understaffed. This likely has widespread impact on many of the DRC processes and should be addressed.

SCDAC Recommendations

4. Institutional Resourcing of DRC/Faculty for Disability Accommodation Activities

Resources homed at DRC: Alarming below level of benchmarked institutions

- Staff personnel
 - Information technology
 - Communication pathways
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- **SCDAC recommends that effective DRC activities must be founded on resources commensurate with expectations.**

Appendix B

<u>School</u>	<u>Staff</u>	<u>Students Served</u>	<u>FT/Student Ratio</u>
UT Chatt.	7 FT 6FT (autism)	1000	1000/13 = 77
OSU	36 (FT?)	6000	6000/13 = 461
NC State	3FT 4 consultants	2300	2300/7 = 328
WVU	20FT 2Gas 45 student workers	2800	2800/20 = 140
UT Knoxville	22 (FT?)	2500	2500/22 = 113
U of F	15FT 1GA 20 student workers	6225	6225/15 = 415
U of Az	39 (FT?)	4718	4718/39 = 130
N Az Univ	11?	Unknown	
UK	5 FT staff 4 FTE equiv as student workers	3832	3832/5 = 766

SCDAC Recommendations

5. Institutional Resourcing of DRC/Faculty for Disability Accommodation Activities

Resources homed in educational units:

- SCDAC recommends increased activity of local faculty/faculty bodies to identify accommodations that pedagogically retain the fundamental nature of the course/program.
- **SCDAC recommends that these increased local activities be commensurately resourced.**

SCDAC Recommendations

6. Plan for 2023-2024 Academic Year

- Research how to assess the effectiveness of faculty/faculty bodies in their identification of pedagogical parameters for diagnosed academic disability related accommodations and make appropriate recommendations to the Senate.
- Prior to the guarantee to students of accommodation, we recommend that faculty and the DRC develop an accommodation plan through an interactive process. We will continue to work with the DRC to research best ways to define this process.
- SCDAC review the accommodations letter and providing input regarding clarity of faculty ability to discuss concerns with DRC. This can be reiterated in AIM as well.
- Advise the Senate or educational units on potential procedures for ADA-compliant course substitution situations outside of certain UK Core courses.
- SCDAC availability to input to DRC on its various faculty outreach developments.
- SCDAC availability to advise on the relationship between retroactive withdrawal and course substitution in an ADA compliance situation.