

**ACCESS AND ACCOMMODATION
FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**

I. General Policy

The university is committed to providing equal access to and opportunities for individuals with disabilities. In accordance with federal and state law, Rice University will provide reasonable accommodations upon request for individuals with disabilities. Further, the University does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities in admissions, hiring or personnel actions.

II. Roles and Responsibilities

Applicants for employment who want to request reasonable accommodations should contact Human Resources at any point in the hiring process. Applicants for admission to academic programs who want to request reasonable accommodations should contact Rice's Disability Support Services office.

Faculty, Staff, and Students who want to request reasonable accommodations should contact Rice's Disability Support Services office.

Supervisors and Department Chairs who are notified of a request (or become aware of a need) for accommodation should forward the request or information to Human Resources. Once an accommodation is established, Supervisors and Department Chairs should continue to work with the individual and Disability Support Services to ensure that the accommodation request is evaluated and any reasonable accommodation decided upon is implemented in accordance with its terms.

Human Resources will ensure that applicants and employees are granted accommodations in accordance with the law, and will seek input from Disability Support Services as necessary.

Disability Support Services (DSS) is charged with administering the University's program for access, accommodation, and auxiliary aids and is the university coordinator for American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. DSS is the authority (in conjunction with the Office of General Counsel) for all matters pertaining to federal and state law pertaining to disability and accommodation.

Facilities Engineering & Planning (FE&P) is responsible for ensuring that new construction or building renovations meet all applicable legal requirements.

Parking and Transportation is responsible for providing adequate accessible parking and transportation services (as defined by federal law).

Visitors to Rice University who have questions or concerns about reasonable accommodations should contact Rice's Disability Support Services office.

III. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the applicable federal and state anti-discrimination law definitions will apply.

IV. Elaboration of Policy

A. Reasonable Accommodation

A reasonable accommodation is any change in the academic or work environment (or in the way things are usually done) to help a person with a disability apply for a job, perform the duties of a job, or enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment. Reasonable accommodation might include, for example, making the workplace accessible for wheelchair users or providing a reader or interpreter for someone who is blind or hearing impaired. It does not require elimination or modification of an essential function of the academic program or position.

Faculty and Staff who have a disability and wish to request an accommodation must submit a request to DSS, and should inform their supervisor, department chairs, and human resources. Applicants for employment who have a disability and wish to request an accommodation must contact Human Resources at any point in the hiring process. All forms are available on the DSS website and Section VII of this policy (see below).

A person who is not satisfied with the accommodations provided may appeal to Rice's Office of Equal Employment Opportunity Programs/Affirmative Action.

B. Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals

A service animal, as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations, is trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. In compliance with the ADA, service animals are welcome in most buildings on campus including dining halls, and the animal may attend any class, meeting or other event which its handler is permitted to attend.

Service animals may be prohibited in certain designated areas when necessary for health or safety (e.g. a controlled laboratory environment, or the Rice Animal Use Facility). Any such prohibition must be approved in writing by DSS.

Employees requesting accommodation for a disability that includes a service animal in the workplace must contact Disability Support Services and register the animal. Applicants for employment may bring service animals with them to any campus interview or meeting.

Emotional Support Animals (or "comfort animals") are not considered service animals under the ADA. Generally, Emotional Support Animals are not allowed in the workplace, classroom or at university events (including but not limited to offices, academic buildings, dining halls, laboratories, concerts or sporting events). Emotional Support Animals may be permitted in residence halls, housing, or other campus locations with prior written application and approval by DSS.

C. Electronic and Information Technology (EIT)

Rice University is committed to ensuring equal access to information, programs, and activities through its information technologies, web pages, web-based applications, operating system-based applications, online instructional content, services, and resources ("electronic information technology" or "EIT"). In conjunction with the Office of Information Technology, DSS is responsible for establishing and implementing appropriate guidelines for all Rice University EIT. An individual who detects electronic information technology that does not provide equal access may report this to DSS.

D. Architectural Barriers and Physical Access

All new construction or renovation must at a minimum conform to relevant state or federal regulations regarding access, and should be designed and include features to allow for independent use and equal access.

Certain buildings on Rice University’s historic campus predate current disabilities requirements, and may not have been designed in ways which provide for access by individuals with disabilities. Future renovations to these buildings must conform to applicable law. Additionally, in conjunction with Facilities Engineering & Planning, DSS should periodically assess potential architectural barriers and provide recommendations for continued enhancement.

In the event that any Rice University service, department, or office is in a location that cannot be accessed by an individual with a disability, Rice will make arrangements (upon request by the individual with a disability) to meet or provide services in another accessible location.

V. Cross References to Related Policies

Policy 815, Equal Opportunity/Non-Discriminations/Affirmative Action Policy

VI. Responsible Official and Key Offices

Responsible Official:	VP of Administration
Other Key Offices:	Disability Support Services
	Human Resources
	Facilities Engineering & Planning
	Information Technology
	Office of Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action
	Parking and Transportation

VII. Procedures and Forms

Disability Support Services homepage, with information, forms, and other resources
Reasonable Accommodation Request Form
Disability Documentation Guidelines

Signed David W. Leebron
David W. Leebron
President

Policy History

Revised: March 17, 2017; October 1, 1994; January 1, 1993