

Erie Institute of Technology
Academic Adjustments for Students with Disabilities

1. Policy

In keeping with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, Erie Institute of Technology (“EIT”) is committed to providing equal access to educational opportunities for qualified students with disabilities. EIT shall provide reasonable academic adjustments as defined in Section 3.3 of this Policy, to qualified students with disabilities as necessary to ensure equality of access to the courses, programs, services, and facilities of EIT. However, students with disabilities are still required to adhere to all EIT policies, including policies concerning conduct and performance.

The student is responsible for demonstrating the need for an academic adjustment by providing the Accessibility Resource Officer with complete and appropriate current documentation that establishes the disability, and the need for and appropriateness of the requested adjustment(s). EIT is responsible for all costs of academic adjustments. The following sections provide procedures for students, faculty, and staff on academic adjustment requirements.

2. Procedures for Requesting and Determining Academic Adjustments

The first step in the process for a student who seeks academic adjustment because of a disability is to register with the Accessibility Resource Officer and submit documentation of the disability and submit documentation of the disability from a licensed or certified professional in order to become eligible for services. Documentation evidencing the prior receipt of services during the student’s primary or secondary school education, standing alone, is not sufficient to demonstrate a student’s current disability. Once a student establishes that he or she has a disability, EIT will work with the student to determine what academic adjustments are appropriate and reasonable in accordance with Section 3.3 of this Policy.

The name and contact information for EIT’s Accessibility Resource Officer are listed at the end of this Policy.

2.1. Student Responsibilities

It is the student's responsibility to demonstrate the need for an academic adjustment by providing the Accessibility Resource Officer with complete and appropriate current documentation that establishes the disability, and the need for and appropriateness of the requested adjustment(s). The Accessibility Resource Officer can provide information on the kind of documentation that is required. If the initial documentation is incomplete or inadequate, the Accessibility Resource Officer will consult with the student regarding additional documentation the student may provide at the student's expense.

The Accessibility Resource Officer will determine a student's eligibility and, in consultation with the student, will determine effective and appropriate academic adjustments in accordance with Section 3.3 of this Policy. The Accessibility Resource officer may consult with other EIT departments or personnel, as necessary, in order to make a determination of eligibility and what academic adjustments are appropriate and reasonable. The Accessibility Resource Officer will send a letter, per the student's request, to faculty, with a copy to cognizant department chairs, informing the faculty members of what adjustment(s) the student is to receive. EIT is responsible for costs relating to academic adjustments that are part of instructional courses.

Once the student has established his or her eligibility for academic adjustments, The Accessibility Resource Officer will provide appropriate adjustments as expeditiously as possible. Generally, adjustments will be in place within fifteen (15) working days; however, some adjustments can require a longer period of time to arrange. Therefore, students are encouraged to pre-register with the Accessibility Resource Officer before classes begin so that adjustments can be in place when needed at the start of the academic term. If pre-registration is not possible, students should register at the start of the term or as soon as the need for an adjustment becomes known, and the Accessibility Resource Officer will make every effort to accommodate the student's needs as soon as possible. Requests received right at or after the start of a term may result in the student being without the adjustment for part of the term. Students should be aware that an academic adjustment does not apply retroactively, so that grades earned on exams, assignments, or other classroom activities before the adjustment takes effect normally will not be changed.

2.2. Faculty Responsibilities

Faculty members must provide students with the academic adjustments identified in the letter from the Accessibility Resource Officer. If the faculty member has questions or concerns, or needs help with making the modifications called for, he or she should contact the Accessibility Resource Officer. If a student discloses a disability to a faculty member and requests an academic adjustment but the student does not have a letter from the Accessibility Resource Officer, the faculty member should direct the student to the Accessibility Resource Officer. It is not the faculty member's responsibility to decide whether the student has a disability and what adjustments are appropriate. Faculty can help EIT meet its obligations to provide students with academic adjustments in a timely manner by stating on their class syllabus that students should inform them of any special needs as soon as possible. Students who do so should be referred to the Accessibility Resource Officer.

2.3. Appeal

In most instances the academic adjustment determination made by the Accessibility Resource Officer will be acceptable to the student and faculty. However, if that is not the case, the determination is subject to appeal. In addition, the student can appeal a determination by an academic unit that an adjustment would result in a fundamental alteration of a course or program. The Executive Director, or designee, will convene an ad hoc committee to consider

the appeal. Members of the ad hoc committee will include representatives from relevant EIT departments as determined on a case-by-case basis. The ad hoc committee will make a recommendation to the Director, or designee, whose decision on the appeal is final for EIT. Every effort should be made to arrive at a determination of the appeal as expeditiously as possible.

3. Criteria for Determining Academic Adjustments

EIT shall make academic adjustments for the known physical or mental limitations of a qualified student with a disability, unless EIT can show that providing an adjustment would result in:

- a fundamental alteration of the service, course, program, or activity;
- an undue financial, administrative, or academic burden, and/or;
- a direct threat to the health or safety of the student or others.

3.1. Individual with a Disability

An individual with a disability is a person who has, or has had a record of, or is regarded as having a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, or working.

3.2. Qualified Student with a Disability

A qualified student with a disability is a student with a disability who meets the academic and technical standards required for admission and participation in the programs and activities of EIT.

3.3. Academic Adjustment

An academic adjustment is a modification or adjustment to instructional methods and/or to a course, program, service, or facility of EIT that enables a qualified student with a disability to have equal access and opportunity to attain the same level of performance and to enjoy equal benefits and privileges as are available to similarly-situated students without a disability. Determining reasonable academic adjustments must be done on a case-by case basis and in consultation with the student. EIT is not required to provide the specific adjustment requested, but the adjustment must be effective to enable a qualified student with a disability to enjoy equal opportunity and access. All offers of adjustments are subject to applicable EIT policies.

3.3.1. Course or Program Modifications

EIT shall provide such modifications to courses, programs, or educational requirements as are necessary and appropriate to enable a qualified student with a disability to enjoy equal opportunity and access. However, EIT is not required to fundamentally alter the essential nature of a course or academic program. Reasonable academic adjustments may include, but

are not limited to, extended time on an examination or paper, and oral instead of written examinations, where appropriate.

3.3.2. Auxiliary Aids and Services

Reasonable academic adjustments in the form of auxiliary aids and services may include, but are not limited to: note-takers, readers, Braille or large print materials, and sign language interpreters. However, EIT is not required to provide devices or services of a personal nature such as personal attendants or personal devices utilized in activities of daily living.

4. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator for EIT is the Director of EIT's Office of Equal Opportunity. Students who believe that they have been discriminated against on the basis of a disability may contact the Office of Equal Opportunity to file a complaint.

5. Contact

Accessibility Resource Officer:

Paul Fitzgerald, Director
Erie Institute of Technology
940 Millcreek Mall, Erie PA 16565
Email: paulf@erieit.edu
Telephone: 814-868-9900

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator:

Paul Fitzgerald, Director
Erie Institute of Technology
940 Millcreek Mall, Erie PA 16565
Email: paulf@erieit.edu
Telephone: 814-868-9900

Equal Opportunity Director:

Paul Fitzgerald, Director
Erie Institute of Technology
940 Millcreek Mall, Erie PA 16565
Email: paulf@erieit.edu
Telephone: 814-868-9900