

Facts for Faculty

Distinguishing Between a Learning Outcome and a Functional Impact

What's the difference?

It's important to differentiate between a functional impact related to a disability and a non-ability to meet learning outcomes.

For example, a nursing student with a hearing impairment may be required to demonstrate an ability to build rapport with patients. In this case, difficulty hearing would be considered the functional impact and building rapport would be considered the learning outcome.

As supervising faculty, we have a duty to accommodate the student's functional impacts so that they can safely meet learning outcomes.



The table below provides few examples of functional impacts, learning outcomes, common concerns and possible accommodations. Accommodations should be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Functional Impact	Learning Outcome	Concern	Accommodation
Hearing Impairment	Build rapport	Difficulty hearing patient	FM System; Safety protocol training
Fatigue	Administer meds on schedule	12-hour shift	Split shifts; different learning environment
Memory	Write case notes	Incomplete, inaccurate charting/notes	Notetaking, recording, confidentiality plan

"The duty to accommodate...includes a willingness to be creative and directed in the search for accommodating students; ...The accommodation must be meaningful to the student's individual needs". (Pardo and Tomlison, 1999, p. 15).

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