

# The Law

Accessibility Services at WPI is committed to provide students with appropriate accommodations according to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

## Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Federal law requires that students with disabilities be provided with appropriate accommodations. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act require that no qualified person shall, solely by reason of disability, be denied access to, participation in, or the benefits of, any program or activity operated by a university.

## Provisions of Section 504

Students with documented disabilities are entitled to receive reasonable accommodations, appropriate academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids that will enable them to participate in and to have the opportunity to benefit from all campus educational programs and activities.

Under the provisions of Section 504, universities/colleges may not:

- Limit the number of otherwise qualified students with disabilities admitted
- Make pre-admission inquiries as to whether an applicant is disabled
- Exclude an otherwise qualified student with a disability from any course of study
- Provide less financial assistance to students with disabilities than is provided to non-disabled students, or limit eligibility for scholarships on the basis of disability
- Counsel students with disabilities into more restrictive career paths than are recommended to students who are non-disabled
- Measure student achievement using modes that adversely discriminate against a student with a disability
- Establish rules and policies that have the effect of limiting participation of students with disabilities in educational programs or activities

# **Definition of Terms under the Act**

A person with a disability is an individual with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. An individual is considered to be a person with a disability if he/she (1) has a disability, (2) has a history of a disability, or (3) is perceived by others as having a disability.

## **Reasonable Accommodation**

Reasonable accommodations are required for persons with known disabilities. Universities are not required to provide the "best" or "most desired" accommodations but rather accommodations sufficient to enable these persons to enjoy equal opportunity and access. Reasonable accommodations will be provided for qualified individuals with disabilities to the extent that these accommodations do NOT (1) result in a fundamental alteration of the service, program, or activity, and/or; (2) result in undue financial administrative and/or academic burden; and/or result in a direct threat to the health or safety of self or others.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 is civil rights legislation that affects some 43 million Americans with disabilities. The purpose of this act is to provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act applies to all institutions of higher education regardless of receipt of Federal funds. Title III covers accessibility and availability of programs, goods, and services provided to the public by private entities.