

Academic programs with clinical components, such as teaching, health science, or social work, pose special challenges both for the student with disabilities and also for the institution. Clinical work typically tests different skills and requires distinct physical or behavioral competencies from classroom work. Students often need different accommodations, modifications, or auxiliary aids from those afforded during classroom coursework, and institutions struggle over whether proposed accommodations in fact work fundamental alteration in programs. Issues may arise when the student seeks admission, begins the clinical component, or fails to succeed in the clinical component. Further complicating this already difficult process, many clinical experiences are conducted at off-site locations and supervised by outside personnel inexperienced in addressing student disability issues. In this article, the authors review developing law related to clinical program admission and to the accommodation of disabilities before, during, and after a student clinical experience. The authors then offer a proposed framework and practical suggestions for addressing the significant challenges posed by clinical programs.