

Student Disability Services (SDS) Documentation Guidelines for Individuals with Disabilities

Students requesting accommodations at Johns Hopkins University are asked to submit documentation to receive services and/or accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments (ADAAA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Individuals with disabilities are protected from discrimination and may be entitled to reasonable accommodations and the right to equal access to programs and services.

General Documentation Guidelines

Johns Hopkins University acknowledges that disabilities are often ongoing but the severity of the condition and/or how it impacts an individual in different settings may change over time. The purpose for requesting documentation is to consider each person individually and to understand if and how the individual is impacted by their disability in a higher education environment. This information is needed to make an informed decision about the need for accommodations and services.

In order to determine if a specific accommodation(s) is reasonable and appropriate, the following factors will be considered:

- Disability
- Accommodation history
- Personal self-reported statement
- Observations and Interactions with Student Disability Services
- Previous accommodations received
- Accommodations being requested
- Unique characteristics of course and/or employment
- Any other documentation provided

Accommodation decisions typically are not made until an initial meeting has been conducted.

Definition of a Disability

In order to receive accommodations, an individual must have a mental or physical condition that substantially limits a major life activity. Types of disabilities we serve include (but are not limited to): Blind or Low Vision, Chronic health Conditions, Cognitive Disabilities (ADD, LD), Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Physical Disabilities and Psychological Disabilities.

Documentation from External Sources

Accommodations are determined based on a combination of sources and documentation can be essential to that process and may include records of receiving accommodations at past educational institutions; John's Hopkins' Documentation Forms completed by a qualified provider; and reports, assessments, and letters from clinicians and/or psychologists. Medical records should not be submitted as they may contain information that is not needed.

A 504 Plan, Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Summary of Performance (SOP) can be submitted as documentation so long as the information provided indicates the impact of the condition and helps to identify a connection between the disability and the appropriate accommodation(s) being requested.

The following information is requested:

For All Disabilities (except for Cognitive Disabilities): A completed JHU Documentation Form or type written/signed letter from an appropriate professional is needed. The letter should include:

- History of the disability
- Description of the current impact and functional limitations as it relates to:
 - Students: Meeting the various demands of higher education and residential living (academically, socially, emotionally, physically, etc.)
 - Employees: The limitations caused by the condition and how those limitations impact the employee's performance of the essential functions of the job (please refer to the position description)
- Expected progression or stability
- Recommendations for accommodations or services
- Implications of existing co-morbid conditions
- Additional observations and/or recommendations

For Cognitive Disabilities (Learning Disabilities, conditions or incidents impacting the brain, Attention Deficit Disorder, Asperger's and other Pervasive Developmental Disorders):

- A comprehensive neuropsychological or psychoeducational evaluation that includes aptitude and achievement (preferably one with measures normed for an adult) in order to determine current functional impact and to support accommodations requests
- Rating scales and objective measure of attention (for ADD)
- Standardized scales of symptoms related to Autism (Asperger's and PDD)
- Language learning related scales and interpretation (if student is requesting accommodations related to second language learning)

Transfer and Graduate Students:

- In addition to the documentation you provide, you are also encouraged to send a letter from any Institution you previously attended that includes the timeframe in which you were provided services and the accommodations used.

Accommodation needs can potentially change over time and updated information should be submitted so the most effective services and accommodations can be provided. Updates at reasonable intervals may be requested when needs are not considered ongoing.

Disability Services also reserves the right to request additional documentation in order to support specific accommodations. If additional information is needed, Disability Services may determine that it is appropriate to provide provisional accommodations in the interim. Provisional accommodations will be determined based on the information that has been provided and are typically limited to the current term for students.

These guidelines are provided so that Student Disability Services can respond appropriately to the individual needs of the student. Disability Services reserves the right to determine eligibility for services based on adherence to these guidelines and established policies and procedures.

For additional information:

Students should contact the disability services staff in their school. A list of disability services staff by school can be found at: <https://oie.jhu.edu/ada-compliance/disability-coordinator-list>

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