

Cornell University
Student Disability Services

Access Guide

2015

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Student Disability Services Access Guide

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Mission

Cornell University is committed to ensuring equal access to university programs and activities for students with disabilities. Policy and procedures have been developed to provide students with as much independence as possible, to preserve confidentiality, and to offer students with disabilities the same exceptional opportunities available to all Cornell students.

SDS is the office responsible for providing services and accommodations to meet the individual needs of students with documented disabilities.

The mission of Student Disability Services is:

- To assist students with disabilities with access issues in order to participate fully in all educational programs and campus services.
- To promote university awareness of the needs and capabilities of students with disabilities.
- To serve as a resource to for members of the university community, prospective students, parents, and members of the public.

Contact Information

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Getting Started

Registering for Disability Services

SDS provides academic and/or environmental accommodations and services for students with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as amended in 2008 defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Some of the conditions covered by the ADA are:

- Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Learning disabilities
- Neurological disorders such as traumatic brain injury
- Chronic medical conditions
- Mobility disabilities
- Mental health disabilities
- Sensory disabilities (hearing/vision)

The determination of eligibility for services is a two-step process. Students must submit current and comprehensive documentation from a licensed professional to SDS (see page five for specific documentation requirements). The student is then required to meet with an SDS staff member to discuss how his/her disability may affect him/her at Cornell and request accommodations and/or auxiliary aids. These two sources of information are used by the SDS staff to develop an accommodation plan for the student. If documentation is insufficient to determine eligibility for disability services, the SDS provider may request additional information. Except in cases of obvious physical disabilities, documentation is required before accommodations will be provided. Many accommodations take advance notice to arrange. Students are encouraged to discuss accommodation requests well in advance.

SDS has established guidelines for documenting conditions that qualify for disability services. These guidelines help provide comprehensive and current information regarding the functional limitations caused by the condition as well as any appropriate and reasonable modifications in an academic setting.

Guidelines for Documentation

Documentation Guidelines for Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Cornell University requires the following information to make informed decisions concerning academic accommodations for students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD or ADD).

Qualifications of the Evaluator

Professionals conducting assessments and rendering diagnoses of ADHD and making recommendations for accommodations must be qualified to do so. Comprehensive training and relevant experience in differential diagnosis and the full range of psychiatric disorders are essential. The name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator should be clearly stated in the documentation. All reports should be on letterhead, typed, dated, and signed.

Documentation

Cornell University requires current documentation of disabilities using well-known diagnostic criteria that are valid for adult populations:

Evidence of Early Impairment

Because ADHD is, by definition in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV), first exhibited in childhood (although it may not have been formally diagnosed) and manifests itself in more than one setting, relevant historical information is essential. A comprehensive assessment should include a clinical summary of objective historical information that establishes symptomatology indicative of ADHD throughout childhood, adolescence, and adulthood as garnered from transcripts, report cards, teacher comments, tutoring evaluations, and past psycho-educational testing, and third party interviews when available.

Evidence of Current Impairment

A history of the individual's present attentional symptoms should be provided, including evidence of ongoing impulsive/hyperactive or inattentive behaviors that significantly impair functioning in two or more settings.

Diagnostic Interview

The information collected for the summary of the diagnostic interview should consist of more than self-report, as information from third party sources is critical in the diagnosis of ADHD. The diagnostic interview with information from a variety of sources should include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- History of difficulty with attention, including evidence of ongoing impulsive/hyperactive or inattentive behavior that has significantly impaired functioning over time
- Developmental history
- Family history for presence of ADHD and other educational, learning, physical, or psychological difficulties deemed relevant by the examiner
- Relevant medical and medication history, including the absence of a medical basis for the symptoms being evaluated
- Relevant psychosocial history and any relevant interventions
- A thorough academic history of elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education
- A review of prior psycho-educational test reports to determine whether a pattern of strengths or weaknesses is supportive of attention or learning problems
- Relevant employment history
- Description of current functional limitations in an educational setting that are a direct result of problems with attention
- Relevant history of prior therapy

Alternative Diagnoses or Explanations

The evaluator must investigate and discuss the possibility of dual diagnoses and alternative or coexisting mood, behavioral, neurological, and/or personality disorders that may confound the diagnosis of ADHD. This process should include exploration of possible alternative diagnoses and medical and psychiatric disorders as well as educational and cultural factors affecting the individual that may result in behaviors mimicking Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.

Specific Diagnosis

The report must include a specific diagnosis of ADHD based on the DSM-IV diagnostic criteria. The diagnostician should use direct language in the diagnosis of ADHD, avoiding the use of such terms as "suggests," "is indicative of," or "attention problems." Individuals who report only problems with organization, test anxiety, memory or concentration in selective situations do not fit the prescribed diagnostic criteria for ADHD. Given that many individuals benefit from prescribed medications and therapies, a positive response to medication by itself does not confirm a diagnosis, nor does the use of medication in and of itself either support or negate the need for accommodation.

Recommendations

The evaluator must describe the impact, if any, of the diagnosed ADHD on a specific major life activity as well as the degree of impact on the individual. The diagnostic report must include specific recommendations for accommodations that are realistic at postsecondary institutions. A detailed

explanation as to why each accommodation is recommended must be provided and should be correlated with specific functional limitations determined through interview, observation, and/or testing.

Comprehensive documentation must validate the need for services based on the individual's present level of functioning in the educational setting. A school plan such as an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 plan is insufficient documentation in and of itself but can be included as part of a more comprehensive evaluative report. The documentation must include any record of prior accommodations or auxiliary aids, including information about specific conditions under which the accommodations were used (e.g., standardized testing, final exams, licensing or certification examinations) and whether or not they benefited the individual. A prior history of accommodations does not in itself warrant the provision of like accommodations.

If no prior accommodations were provided, the qualified professional and/or the candidate must include information explaining why accommodations were not needed in the past but are needed at this time. Because of the challenge of distinguishing normal behaviors and developmental patterns of adolescents and adults (e.g., procrastination, disorganization, distractibility, restlessness, boredom, academic under-achievement or failure, low self-esteem, chronic tardiness or absenteeism) from clinically significant impairment, a multifaceted evaluation should address the intensity and frequency of the symptoms and whether these behaviors constitute an impairment of a major life activity.

If the requested accommodations are not clearly identified in the diagnostic report, Student Disability Services will seek clarification, and, if necessary, more information. Student Disability Services will make the final determination of whether appropriate and reasonable accommodations are warranted and can be provided to the individual.

Documentation Guidelines for Physical, Medical or Sensory Disabilities

Students with sensory impairments (e.g. vision, hearing), physical impairments or chronic medical conditions must have their physician or certified diagnostician complete and submit the Verification Form of Physical, Medical or Sensory Disabilities Form. In order to identify appropriate reasonable accommodations, SDS staff may need to discuss the student's disability with physicians or other qualified professionals and may require updated documentation at the time services are requested and/or during the course of an academic career. Verification Forms may not be completed by relatives or family members. This form can be requested from SDS in print or alternate formats and is also available on our website at:
http://sds.cornell.edu/Forms/Med_Physical_Sensory_Form.pdf.

Documentation Guidelines for Learning Disabilities

The definition of a learning disability used by Cornell University was written by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities. "Learning disability" is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and the use of listening, spelling, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical ability. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction and may occur across the life span. Problems in self-regulatory behaviors, social perceptions, and social integration may exist with learning disabilities but do not, by themselves, constitute a learning disability. Although learning disabilities may occur concomitantly with other disabilities, they are not the result of those conditions or influences.

Qualifications of the Evaluator

Professionals conducting assessments, rendering diagnoses of learning disabilities, and making recommendations for appropriate accommodations must be qualified to do so. Comprehensive training and direct experience with the college-age learning disability (LD) population is essential.

Documentation

Cornell University requires current documentation of a learning disability using well-known psychometric instruments that have been standardized using adult population norms.

Substantiation of the Learning Disability

Documentation should validate the need for services based on the individual's current level of functioning in the educational setting. A school plan such as an individualized education program (IEP) or a 504 plan is insufficient documentation, but it can be included as part of a more comprehensive assessment battery. A comprehensive assessment battery and the resulting diagnostic report should include a diagnostic interview, assessment of aptitude, academic achievement, information processing, and a diagnosis.

Diagnostic Interview

The diagnostician, using professional judgment as to which areas are relevant, should conduct a diagnostic interview which may include: a description of the presenting problem(s); developmental, medical, psychosocial, and educational history; family history (including primary language of the home and the student's current level of English fluency); and a discussion of dual diagnosis where indicated.

Assessment

The neuropsychological or psycho-educational evaluation for the diagnosis of a specific learning disability must provide clear and specific evidence that a learning disability does or does not exist. Assessment, and any resulting

diagnosis, should consist of and be based on a comprehensive assessment battery, which does not rely on any one test or subtest. Evidence of a substantial limitation to learning or other major life activity must be provided. Minimally, the domains to be addressed must include the following:

Aptitude

A complete intellectual assessment with all subtests and standard scores reported.

Academic Achievement

A comprehensive academic achievement battery is essential with all subtests and standard scores reported for those subtests administered. The battery should include current levels of academic functioning in relevant areas such as reading (decoding and comprehension), mathematics, and oral and written language.

Information Processing

Specific areas of information processing (e.g., short- and long-term memory, sequential memory, auditory and visual perception/processing, processing speed, executive functioning, and motor ability) should be assessed.

Specific Diagnosis

Individual “learning styles,” “learning differences,” “academic problems” and “test difficulty or anxiety,” in and of themselves, do not constitute a learning disability. It is important to rule out alternative explanations for problems in learning such as emotional, attention or motivational problems that may be interfering with learning but do not constitute a learning disability. The diagnostician is encouraged to use direct language in the diagnosis and documentation of a learning disability, avoiding the use of terms such as “suggests” or “is indicative of.”

Test Scores

Standard scores and/or percentiles should be provided for all measures. Grade equivalents are not useful unless standard scores and percentiles are also included. The data should logically reflect a substantial limitation to learning for which the student is requesting the accommodation. The particular profile of the student’s strengths and weaknesses must be shown to relate to functional limitations that may necessitate accommodation. The tests used should be reliable, valid and standardized for use with an adult population. The test findings should document both the nature and severity of the learning disability.

Clinical Summary

A well-written diagnostic summary based on a comprehensive evaluation process is a necessary component of the report. Assessment instruments and the data they provide do not diagnose; rather, they provide important elements that must be integrated by the evaluator with background information,

observations of the client during the testing situation, and the current context. It is essential, therefore, that professional judgment be utilized in the development of a clinical summary. The clinical summary should include:

- Demonstration that the evaluator has ruled out alternative explanations for academic problems as a result of poor education, poor motivation and/or study skills, emotional problems, attention problems or cultural/language differences.
- Indication of how patterns in the student's cognitive ability, achievement, and information processing reflect the presence of a learning disability.
- Indication of the substantial limitation to learning or other major life activity presented by the learning disability and the degree to which it impacts the individual in the learning context for which accommodations are being requested.
- Indication as to why specific accommodations are needed and how the effects of the specific disability are accommodated.

The summary should also include any record of prior accommodation or auxiliary aids, including any information about specific conditions under which the accommodations were used (e.g., standardized testing, final exams, licensing or certification examinations).

Recommendations for Accommodations

It is important to recognize that accommodation needs can change over time and are not always identified through the initial diagnostic process. Conversely, a prior history of accommodation does not, in and of itself, warrant the provision of a similar accommodation. The diagnostic report should include specific recommendations for accommodations as well as an explanation as to why each accommodation is recommended. The evaluators should describe the impact the diagnosed learning disability has on a specific major life activity as well as the degree of significance of this impact on the individual. The evaluator should support recommendations with specific test results or clinical observations.

Confidentiality

The receiving institution has a responsibility to maintain confidentiality of the evaluation and may not release any part of the documentation without the student's informed and written consent.

Tests for Assessing Adults with Learning Disabilities

When selecting a battery of tests, it is critical to consider the technical adequacy of instruments including their reliability, validity and standardization on an appropriate norm group. The professional judgment of an evaluator in choosing tests is important. The following list is provided as a helpful resource, but it is not intended to be definitive or exhaustive.

Aptitude

Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale III (WAIS-III)
Kaufman Adolescent and Adult Intelligence Test
Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale (4th ed.)

The Slosson Intelligence Test-Revised and the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test are primarily screening devices that are not comprehensive enough to provide the kinds of information necessary to make accommodation decisions.

Academic Achievement

Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-III: Tests of Achievement
Stanford Test of Academic Skills
Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT)
and/or specific achievement tests such as:
Nelson-Denny Reading Skills Test
Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test
Test of Written Language-3 (TOWL-3)
Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised

Specific achievement tests are useful instruments when administered under standardized conditions and interpreted within the context of other diagnostic information. The Wide Range Achievement Test - 3 (WRAT-3) is not a comprehensive measure of achievement and therefore is not useful if used as the sole measure of achievement.

Information Processing

Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude-3 (DTLA-3)
Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude-Adult (DTLA-A)
Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-III: Tests of Cognitive Ability
Information from subtests on the WAIS-III
as well as other relevant instruments.

Documentation Guidelines for Psychiatric Disabilities

Cornell University recognizes that "psychiatric disabilities" is a generic term used to refer to a variety of conditions involving psychological, emotional, and behavioral disorders and syndromes. The two official sources designed to outline the criteria used in making these diagnoses are the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV) and the International Classification of Diseases Manual, Tenth Revision (ICD-10). For the purpose of determining eligibility for accommodation, the symptoms must meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) definition of a disability.

Qualifications of Evaluator

Professionals conducting assessments, rendering diagnoses of psychiatric disabilities, and making recommendations for accommodations must be qualified to do so. It is essential that professional qualifications include:

1. comprehensive training and relevant expertise in differential diagnosis of psychiatric disorders
2. appropriate licensure/certification

Current Documentation

Due to the changing nature of psychiatric disabilities, it is essential that a student provide recent and appropriate documentation from a qualified evaluator. Since reasonable accommodations are based upon the current impact of the disability, the documentation must address the individual's current level of functioning and the need for accommodations (e.g., due to observed changes in performance or medication changes since previous assessment). If the diagnostic report is more than one academic year old the test taker must also submit a letter from a qualified professional that provides an update of the diagnosis, a description of the student's current level of functioning during the preceding twelve months, and a rationale for the requested academic accommodations.

Comprehensive Evaluation

In most cases, documentation should be based on a comprehensive diagnostic/clinical evaluation that adheres to the guidelines outlined in this document. The diagnostic report should include the following components:

- a specific diagnosis
- a description of current functional limitations in the academic environment as well as across other settings
- relevant information regarding medications
- relevant information regarding current treatment

Historical Information

The information collected for the summary of the diagnostic interview should include, but is not limited to, the following:

- history of presenting symptoms
- duration and severity of the disorder
- relevant developmental, historical, and familial data
- relevant medical and medication history, including the individual's current medication regimen compliance, side effects (if relevant), and response to medication
- a description of current functional limitations in different settings with the understanding that a psychological disorder usually presents itself across a variety of settings other than just the academic domain and that its expression is often influenced by context-specific variables (e.g., school-based performance)
- if relevant, a description of the expected progression or stability of the impact of the condition over time
- if relevant, information regarding kind of treatment and duration/consistency of the therapeutic relationship

Specific Diagnosis

The report must include a specific diagnosis based on the DSM-IV or ICD-10 diagnostic criteria and include the specific diagnostic section in the report with a numerical and nominal diagnosis from DSM-IV or ICD-10. Evaluators are encouraged to cite the specific objective measures used to help substantiate the diagnosis. The evaluator should use definitive language in the diagnosis of a psychiatric disorder, avoiding such wording as "suggests," "has problems with," or "may have emotional problems."

Alternative Diagnoses or Explanations

The evaluator must also investigate and rule out the possibility of other potential diagnoses involving neurological and/or medical conditions or substance abuse, as well as educational, linguistic, sensorimotor, and cross-cultural factors that may result in symptoms mimicking the purported psychiatric disability.

Recommendations for Accommodations

The evaluator must describe the degree of impact of the diagnosed psychiatric disorder on a specific major life activity, as well as the degree of impact on the individual. A link must be established between the requested accommodations and the functional limitations of the individual that are pertinent to the anticipated academic setting. Accommodations will be provided only when a clear and convincing rationale is made for the necessity of the accommodation. A

diagnosis in and of itself does not automatically warrant approval of requested accommodations. A prior history of accommodations, without demonstration of current need, does not in and of itself warrant the provision of accommodations. If there is no prior history of accommodations, the evaluator must include a detailed explanation of why accommodations were not needed in the past, and why they are now currently being requested. Psychoeducational or neuropsychological testing may help to support the need for accommodations based on the potential for psychiatric disorders to interfere with cognitive performance.

Adults with Psychiatric Disabilities

If psychological instruments are used, tests should be current and have sufficient reliability, validity, and utility for the specific purposes for which they are being employed. All tests should also be normed on relevant populations, and the results should be reported in standard scores and/or percentile ranks. Tests that have built-in validity scales or indicators are preferred over those that do not. No single test or subtest should be used solely to substantiate a diagnosis.

Temporary Disabilities

Services are available to students with temporary disabilities to provide access to campus academic programs and services. Examples include transportation, a scribe for test-taking, and the use of carbonless copy notepads. Assistance can not be provided for tasks of a personal nature such as typing homework or assisting with home-health care. Students must submit documentation of their condition by using The Verification Form of Physical, Medical or Sensory Disabilities Form. This form can be requested from SDS in print or alternate formats, and is also available on our website at:

http://sds.cornell.edu/Forms/Med_Physical_Sensory_Form.pdf

Please call SDS with any questions and concerns related to a temporary disability and we will discuss resources and assistance that can be provided by Cornell during this difficult time.

Accommodations and Services for Registered Students

Reasonable accommodations are modifications to a course, program, services or employment to ensure equal access and opportunity to education. Appropriate accommodations are determined through a process of self-identification by the student to SDS and specific request for accommodations, submission and review of disability documentation, and an evaluation of the essential requirements of the course or program. Students with disabilities are held to the same academic standards as their peers. SDS provides many of the services listed here in cooperation with academic and Campus Life departments. Policies and procedures for using these accommodations are detailed in the Policies and Procedures chapter of this handbook.

Accommodations and services include:

- Exam accommodations; (e.g. extended time for test-taking, reader/scribe, assistive technology, a reduced distraction environment)
- Faculty notification letters of disability status and accommodation accommodations
- Adaptive equipment for classroom use; e.g. FM systems, adaptive computer equipment
- Alternative media; e-text, enlarged print, Braille
- Sign language interpreters and C-print captionists
- Accessible residential housing
- Strobe alarms in residential housing
- Emergency evacuation plans
- Transportation around campus on a scheduled basis
- Assistance with access to library collections
- Relocation of programs to accessible campus locations
- Access to Text Telephone/TTY equipment

Exam Accommodations

At Cornell University, the course instructor is primarily responsible for providing academic accommodations. The instructor is the proper person to provide accommodations because this affords the instructor the opportunity to maintain academic control over the testing environment. The instructor has an obligation to present testing materials in an accessible format and fairly evaluate academic performance through the use of test accommodations. Logistically, if the instructor is unable to provide the accommodation, then the college disability representative or SDS will provide support.

Extended time for test taking

This allows additional time for reading, processing, attention or other adjustments. Extended time does not mean unlimited time and as such, is intended to remediate but not remove the pressure that students feel during testing. Accommodation letters supplied by SDS designate how much extended time has been approved. Questions from students, staff, or faculty about the use of extended time should be directed to the student's SDS counselor.

A reduced distraction environment

This accommodation provides a test taking environment with a small group rather than a large lecture environment.

Use of assistive technology during exams

If your accommodation involves the use of a computer during exams, discuss it with your instructor. The instructor, TA, or your college disability representative may be able to obtain a computer. Or, if the instructor approves, you may decide to use your own portable computer. To use one of the laptops that SDS has available on loan, e-mail SDS at sds_cu@cornell.edu well in advance of your scheduled exam. If none of these options work, and the instructor agrees, the exam can be proctored in the SDS office using our technology.

Readers

Students who require a reader may be visually impaired or have a learning disability. It is the responsibility of the test reader to read information exactly as it is on the printed page. Students should provide feedback on the best speed and tone for them. While reading exams, readers may repeat questions but are not allowed to explain or reword questions.

Scribes

Scribes will write down exactly what the student has dictated. Corrections, such as punctuation and spelling are the responsibility of the student. Student should review what the scribe has written before submitting it to the professor.

Faculty Notification of Disability Status and Accommodations

Students requesting academic accommodations are obligated to inform their instructors by providing Faculty notification letters from SDS which state that the student is registered with SDS and also provide recommendations for accommodations. These letters may be obtained by completing the *Request for Faculty Notification Letters Form* on the SDS website or by filling out the form in the SDS office. Letters are available to be picked up from SDS two business

days after the request is made. Letters can be mailed for students with mobility impairments.

Early notification and active communication with instructors is the best way to ensure that your accommodation needs are handled smoothly. When providing the Faculty notification letter to faculty members, it is important that students are well-informed about the accommodation process. Students do not have to discuss the nature of their condition, but should be prepared to discuss how the instructor can assist with disability-related issues in the course. Instructors have the right to two weeks notice of accommodation requests in order to make the necessary arrangements. If students have followed these procedures but have a concern that accommodation requests will not or are not being met, SDS should be contacted immediately.

Interpreting and C-Print™ Captioning Services

Cornell University will arrange and incur the cost of interpreter services for classes, related academic requirements, and non-academic, out-of-class activities sponsored by the University for any registered Cornell student. Currently, available options are sign language and oral interpreters as well as C-Print™ captioning and CART. In this publication, “interpreter” will refer to either a sign language or oral interpreter or a captionist.

Requests for Interpreter Services

At the time of the first request, each student will meet with a staff member from SDS to discuss his or her needs and to become familiar with policies and procedures. The student will receive a copy of the Interpreter/C-Print Captionist Request Policy (see page 23 of this document; this information can also be accessed online at http://sds.cornell.edu/Policies_Procedures/ProcTerpRequest.html), which describes the policy and procedures for obtaining interpreters. Students are asked to schedule their classes in such a way as to achieve maximum benefit from minimum interpreter time. Students are urged to finalize their schedules far in advance of the first class day so interpreters can be scheduled.

Auxiliary Aids

SDS will provide auxiliary aids for students to afford access to educational programs and university services. Examples include adaptive equipment in an academic department, print materials in alternate formats, strobe alarms in residence hall rooms, assistive technology in libraries and labs, and FM listening devices.

Personal Aids and Equipment

Students are responsible for aids or assistance of a personal nature such as wheelchairs, hearing aids, computers to be used at home or attendants for services of a personal nature including assistance with eating, bathing or dressing.

Print Materials in Alternate Formats

Students whose disability prevents them from accessing print material may qualify for print materials in an alternate format. SDS primarily converts print material to Electronic Text (E-text). New York State law requires publishers to provide electronic files of textbooks and related materials to universities whenever possible.

SDS determines eligibility for E-text through a review of the student's disability documentation and the request of the student. Students who qualify for the accommodation of E-text must submit the Request for Alternative Formats Form with complete textbook information. This form can be submitted online through the SDS website (<http://sds.cornell.edu/sdsdocconv/DCCForm.php>) or is available in print or alternate formats through the SDS office. Textbook conversion is a lengthy process and students are advised to submit requests immediately after pre-registration. **SDS recommends that students submit requests three weeks in advance to ensure that materials are converted when needed.**

Upon receiving textbook information from students, the Document Conversion Specialist will request the electronic text of textbook publishers. Publishers require 15 business days notice for E-text requests. Upon receiving the electronic texts, SDS often must edit and reformat the material. Once materials are obtained as an electronic file, it can be converted to Braille, audio recordings, enlarged print and saved to a CD/DVD for use with screen reading software provided by SDS.

In the event that the publisher cannot provide an electronic file of the text, SDS will seek permission from the publisher to convert text in our facility. The binding of the material is cut to allow for high speed scanning. Once the scanning is completed, the book is converted into a Word document. The file is then edited and provided to students in the preferred format.

Policies and Procedures

Rights and Responsibilities

Rights and Responsibilities of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities at Cornell University have the right to:

- Equal access to courses, programs, services, and activities offered through the University.
- An equal opportunity to learn, and to receive reasonable accommodations and academic adjustments in an effort to diminish the effect of the disability on academic functioning.
- Self-determine who will receive student released disability-related materials and information within and outside the University.
- All other rights and privileges available to other students at Cornell University.

Students with disabilities at Cornell University have the responsibility to:

- Meet qualifications and maintain essential institutional standards for courses, programs, and activities.
- Self-identify as an individual with a disability when an accommodation is needed and to seek information, counsel, and assistance as necessary in a timely fashion.
- Demonstrate and/or provide documentation (from an appropriate professional) on how the disability limits participation in courses, programs, services, and activities.
- Follow university procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- Contact SDS as problems or concerns arise about the accommodations process in order to resolve the situation as it is occurring.

Rights and Responsibilities of Cornell University

Cornell University has the right to:

- Identify and establish essential functions, abilities, skills, knowledge, requirements, and standards for courses, programs, services, and activities, and to evaluate students on this basis.
- Request and receive, through SDS, current documentation that supports requests for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.

- Deny a request for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services if the documentation demonstrates that the request is not warranted, or if the individual fails to provide appropriate documentation.
- Select among equally effective accommodations, adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- Refuse an unreasonable accommodation, adjustment, and/or auxiliary aid or service that imposes a fundamental alteration of a program or activity of the University.

Cornell University has the responsibility to:

- Provide information to students with disabilities in accessible formats upon request.
- Ensure that courses, programs, services, and activities, when viewed in their entirety, are available in the most integrated and appropriate settings.
- Evaluate students on their abilities and not their disabilities.
- Provide or arrange for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services for students with disabilities in courses, programs, services, and activities.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication except where permitted or required by law or when the student requests that such information be shared.
- Work together with students and faculty members to resolve problems or concerns in the accommodation process.

Confidentiality

SDS has developed the following guidelines regarding confidentiality:

- All disability-related information including documentation, correspondence, and accommodation records are considered confidential.
- Cornell University and the SDS office have an obligation to maintain confidentiality on all disability-related information.
- Access to disability related information within SDS is on a need-to-know basis and only for the purpose of assuring appropriate accommodations.
- SDS is prohibited by law from releasing any disability records or identifying information to any outside entity. This includes documentation the student provides to the SDS office when requesting accommodations.
- The student may request, in writing, that information be released to specific persons or agencies by signing a "Release of Information" form.

Disability-Related Information

Information contained in the student's file is considered part of his or her educational record and is protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (the Buckley Amendment). Information may be released from the student's file in only three circumstances:

1. Court order
2. With the student's written permission
3. Internally within Student Disability Services based on a legitimate educational reason.

Student Disability Services Grievance Procedure

Cornell University prohibits its faculty, staff, and students from engaging in any form of prohibited discrimination or protected status harassment, and expects these individuals to refrain from committing acts of bias within the university's jurisdiction. The university has processes to provide redress and remediation to individuals who believe they have been the victims of these acts. If you believe that you have experienced discrimination on the basis of disability, you have the right to seek a resolution through informal or formal processes.

Informal Processes:

- A student who believes that he or she has been discriminated against in violation of University Policy 6.4 is encouraged to first resolve the issue through a discussion with the person(s) directly involved in the situation. The office of Student Disability Services will work with students to resolve concerns with classroom accommodations, disparate or disparaging treatment related to disability, or access issues on campus. Addressing an issue when it arises can lead to an effective and timely resolution.
- The Campus Disability Representatives ([list](#)) can advise about strategies for resolving access issues involving faculty or staff members within the college, or situations that involve a staff member in Student Disability Services. The campus disability representative is a staff person in a college/school or department who is designated to assist students at the local level with issues related to disability.
- The Office of the University Ombudsman can help resolve problems or complaints within the university and achieve equitable settlements. Its services are independent of the university administration and are confidential. The Office of the Ombudsman can provide information on university policies and practices, help examine alternatives, and find the proper authorities to resolve the situation. As an unbiased "third party," the office can frequently find solutions that have eluded the interested parties.

If you opt to pursue an informal resolution to your issue and are not satisfied with the outcome, you may later pursue a formal grievance.

Formal Grievance Procedure

Students who believe they have been discriminated against and wish to seek a formal resolution should use Policy 6.4, Prohibited Discrimination, Protected Status (Including Sexual) Harassment and Bias Activity. The policy is administered through the Office of Workforce Policy and Labor Relations. Policy 6.4 can be found at this website,

<http://www.dfa.cornell.edu/dfa/treasurer/policyoffice/policies/volumes/humanresources/prohibited.cfm>

At any time a student has the right to submit a complaint to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights or the New York State Division of Human Rights.

United States Department of Education - Office for Civil Rights

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html>

New York State Division of Human Rights

<http://www.dhr.state.ny.us/>

Interpreter and C-Print Captionist Policy

Cornell University will arrange and incur the cost of sign-language or oral interpreting and real-time captioning services for students with disabilities who are registered with SDS. Interpreting services are available for classes, related academic requirements, and non-academic, out-of-class activities sponsored by the University for any registered Cornell student.

The following procedures are important to follow to ensure appropriate coverage of classes and events.

1. All requests for a sign-language/ oral interpreter or real-time captioning services must be made via e-mail as far in advance as possible (3 business days for individual requests; four weeks for scheduling a full semester).

For **interpreter** service, send an e-mail to: sds_cu@cornell.edu with a copy to: signlangsols@aol.com

For **real-time captioning** service, send an e-mail to: sds_cu@cornell.edu and a copy to your primary captionist.

All requests are subject to approval by Student Disability Services.

Interpreting/real-time captioning needs may not be covered without an official request. All requests are formally tracked through email/on computer. This documented information is vital in referencing for future interpreter/captionist placements.

2. All requests must include the following information:

- Date
- Start time
- Duration or end time
- Location
- Brief explanation of meeting purpose (this is essential in determining if more than one interpreter may be necessary)
- Any other specific requests (i.e., specific interpreter preference, etc.)

Upon submitting a request for sign language interpreting, students will receive an e-mail reply from the Sign Language Solutions within 24 hours confirming the request and providing information regarding the assigned interpreter.

Requests for captioning will be confirmed by email from SDS within 24 hours.

3. Last minute requests (with 2 or less days notice) should be:

For **interpreters**: called in to Susan Wardwell at Sign Language Solutions at (607) 738-8244 (through relay) followed by an e-mail (see #1 above).

For **captionists**: email or text message to Student Disability Services at sds_cu@cornell.edu

Every possible effort will be made to cover these requests with the understanding that interpreting/captioning resources are limited and may not always be available to meet last minute requests.

Changes in Schedules

There may be times that an interpreting/real-time captioning schedule may change and/or the interpreter/ captionist may need a substitute (i.e., vacation, etc.). The student will be notified via email when this may happen. If an interpreter is ill the day of the assignment, the student will be contacted via email as well. If a student would like to provide a phone number or contact information for last minute changes or cancellations, please forward those numbers on to signlangsols@aol.com or the class captionist as well as to sds_cu@cornell.edu.

Report a Physical Barrier

It is Cornell policy to ensure that no student with a disability is denied access to a course in which s/he is enrolled because the classroom/lecture hall is not accessible to wheelchairs. Student Disability Services will assist with the relocation of classes or programs that are held in locations that are physically inaccessible.

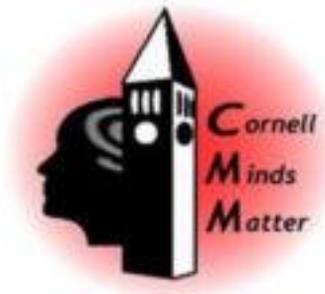
The age and topography of our campus as well as the weather can pose challenges to easy mobility around campus. Please report any barriers you encounter as you travel around campus, including sidewalks, curb cuts, elevators and campus buildings. We will expedite easily achievable changes while continuing to modify and upgrade older and historic buildings that pose greater challenges of accessibility.

Physical barriers can be reported to SDS at 607-254-4545 or to Andrea Haenlin-Mott, ADA Coordinator for Facilities at accessibility@cornell.edu

Student Groups Supporting Students with Disabilities



Cornell Union for Disabilities Awareness
(CUDA)
<https://orgsync.com/72432/chapter>



Cornell Minds Matter
<http://mindsmatter.dos.cornell.edu/>

Complete list of more organizations: <http://sds.cornell.edu/organizations.html>

Testing Accommodations for National Standardized Exams

Students with documented disabilities who have received academic accommodations while at Cornell may be eligible to receive accommodations on examinations that are required by various advanced degree programs. Documentation requirements for these programs are quite stringent. Please check the website below for the exam you expect to take. Every exam has its own procedure for requesting disability accommodations. Testing services usually require six to eight weeks to process requests for accommodations. Remember to plan ahead when deciding to take all post-secondary exams.

NOTE: For exam applications that include forms to be completed by the Office of Student Disability Services, Cornell SDS personnel will complete the form requesting accommodations only if our files contain the documentation required by the testing agency.

Many testing organizations require current documentation. If you need new documentation, plan accordingly. Psycho-educational testing could take 6-8 weeks or more to obtain. Other types of documentation may take less time.

- Graduate Record Exam (GRE): www.gre.org/disatest.html
- Medical College Admission Test (MCAT): www.aamc.org/students/mcat/registration.htm
- MCAT Disabilities Accommodations Supplemental Forms (PDF files): <https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/mcat/accommodations/>
- Law School Admission Test (LSAT): <http://www.lsat.com/LSAC.asp?url=lsac/accommodated-testing.asp>
- Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT): <http://www.mba.com/mba/TaketheGMAT>
- GMAT Disabilities Accommodations Supplemental Forms and Information: <http://www.mba.com/mba/TaketheGMAT/RegisterfortheGMAT/GMATAppointments/TestTakerswithDisabilitiesin2006.htm>

For examinations not listed here, visit the Cornell Career Services website at <http://www.career.cornell.edu/> for test dates and relevant websites of additional graduate entrance and professional exams.

If you're not sure if your documentation meets the requirements of the testing organization for the exam you want to take, one of our counselors will over your SDS records with you. Please make an appointment by calling 254-4545.

Self-Advocacy

Best Practices for Talking with Professors about Accommodations

Upon request, Students Disability Services (SDS) prepares faculty notification letters each semester for students. The letters provide verification that the student is registered with SDS and lists the approved accommodations. Students who want to use accommodations are required to meet with professors, provide the faculty notification letter and discuss arrangements for accommodations. Students who employ positive skills as a self-advocate find that this system results in a good working relationship with their instructors. Below are some tips on self-advocacy.

Make an appointment to meet with professors

The time immediately after class is not a good time to talk with instructors about accommodations. It does not allow the opportunity for the professor to give his/her full attention to the student. Many faculty members have obligations directly after class so they are unable to give a student the time necessary to adequately discuss the student's needs. Also, the classroom environment does not afford the privacy to ensure confidentiality. After class is the time to set an appointment, not to have one.

Understand the effect of your disability

Students do not have to disclose their disability to professors, but it is helpful to know the effect of the disability may have on one's ability to meet the course objectives.

Disability accommodations and services are intended to modify barriers caused by a disability to provide equal access to education. The student's ability to discuss anticipated barriers and effective modifications will provide the best opportunity for success in the course. Further discussion with instructors about effective study strategies may also be productive.

Be prepared

When meeting with professors to request accommodations, be prepared with the faculty notification letter from SDS and written questions. It is also a good practice to meet with professors to review exams to identify areas for improvement and further study. Students who are experiencing difficulty in a course often find instructors very helpful in suggesting ways to study and improve on assignments. Instructors may also appreciate suggestions from students that may improve understanding of the course material.

Request accommodations at the beginning of the semester

Managing life as a student requires attending to many details and requesting accommodations is usually very important to the success of students with disabilities.

Professors also must attend to many details in the accommodation process, such as finding proctors or arranging for extra rooms. Please understand that accommodations take time to arrange. Professors must have two weeks notice of accommodation requests. Last minute requests cannot be guaranteed.

Know your rights and responsibilities

The responsibility to provide disability accommodations to student is widely understood and accepted by Cornell faculty. However, if a faculty member seems resistant to meeting accommodation requests when the proper procedures have been followed, contact SDS immediately. It is much more effective to address situations as they occur than after an exam or at the end of the semester.

It is important for students to understand the purpose of accommodations and services as well as how their disability may require modifications to a course or program. The disability accommodation process is intended to protect students from discrimination and provide equal opportunity to education. The accommodation plan the student agrees to with SDS is an agreement of approved accommodations. Students may have to discuss with instructors how to facilitate some accommodations and work with professors to identify appropriate modifications. Instructors are not required or encouraged by SDS to provide extra credit or change essential course requirements for students with disabilities.

Know yourself and your disability

The more a student understands about his/her disability and its impact in college and life, the more able one is to advocate for oneself. Students should learn about their disability by talking with SDS, their parents, doctor or diagnostician as well as researching their condition.

Concerns or problems with accommodations

Any student who experiences problems or has concerns about accommodations or services, should contact SDS immediately. SDS will work with the student to resolve the situation. Working through a problem as it is happening gives SDS and the student the opportunity to make changes. Waiting until the semester is over to address concerns is often too late.

Resources

Campus Resources to Assist with Academic and Personal Support

Campus Disability Service Representatives serve as a liaison between Student Disability Services (SDS) and the colleges and offices regarding disability issues. A list of the college and staff disability representatives can be found at: http://sds.cornell.edu/Resources/Disability_Reps.html.

The Learning Strategies Center (LSC) is the central academic support unit for undergraduates at Cornell University, provides students with tutoring and supplemental courses in Biology, Chemistry, Economics, Mathematics and Physics. Assistance in improving general study skills is available through semester long courses, workshops, individual consultations, and web site resources. Call 607-255-6310 or visit <http://lsc.sas.cornell.edu>.

John S. Knight Institute for Writing in the Disciplines supports writing seminars and writing intensive courses in a broad range of disciplines and at all levels of undergraduate education. The Writing Walk-In service is a resource for every writer on campus, including faculty, staff and graduate students as well as undergraduates. Tutors can discuss the writing process as well as address questions about specific pieces of writing. The Institute is located in 101 McGraw Hall. Call 607-255-4061 or visit http://www.arts.cornell.edu/knight_institute/.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) provides crisis intervention, brief counseling, outpatient psychiatric care, outreach, and referral services to Cornell University students. CAPS also offers consultation, education, and prevention strategies to the University community. Call 607-255-5155 or visit <http://www.gannett.cornell.edu/services/counseling/caps/index.cfm>.

Gannett Health Center is the primary care provider of medical services for all enrolled students. They provide some specialty medical services on site (such as physical therapy, travel services, occupational medicine, laboratory and x-ray, and allergy shots). They also have a full-service pharmacy. Call 607-255-5155 or visit <http://www.gannett.cornell.edu/>.

The CU Libraries provide services and assistance with adaptive technology within the libraries. Students who have difficulty accessing the stacks, finding materials in alternate formats or are experiencing other accessibility concerns with the Cornell Libraries, please contact Bethany Silfer at 105A Uris Library; 255-3758, or via email at bb29@cornell.edu. The CU Libraries Disability Policy can be found at <http://www.library.cornell.edu/policies/disabilities>

EARS (Empathy, Assistance, & Referral Service) is a peer support service sponsored by the Dean of Students' Office of Student Support. EARS volunteers are highly trained and rigorously selected students who offer personal counseling and/or guidance for problem-solving and decision-making. Walk-in and phone services are available every day, including evenings and weekends, during the academic year. For hours or more information, call 607-255-3277 or visit <http://ears.dos.cornell.edu/>.

Employment and Disability Institute Industrial and Labor Relations is the home for DBTAC-Northeast ADA Center which provides quality training, technical assistance and materials on the ADA and accessible information technology throughout all of Federal Region II: New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. DBTAC-Northeast ADA Center is a neutral resource for employers, businesses, educational entities, disability advocacy organizations and individuals with disabilities. More information can be found at <http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/ped/northeastada/>.

Community, State and Federal Resources for Persons with Disabilities

Community

National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI): 607-272-6573, <http://www.nami.org/>

Finger Lakes Independence Center, Ithaca, NY: 607-272-2433 or email at FLIC@clarityconnect.edu

State

Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR): <http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/> or 1-800-222-5627.

National

The National Council on Disability: <http://www.ncd.gov/resources.htm>

The HEATH Resource Center of The George Washington University, Graduate School of Education and Human Development, is the national clearinghouse on postsecondary education for individuals with disabilities.
<http://www.heath.gwu.edu/index.htm>

The U.S. government's website with information about disability issues:
<http://www.disabilityinfo.gov/>

The Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) is a nonprofit organization that works to expand learning opportunities for all individuals, especially those with disabilities, through the research and development of innovative, technology-based educational resources and strategies. <http://www.cast.org/>

The Learning Disabilities Association of America: <http://www.ldanatl.org/>