

Disability Services

General Documentation Guidelines

Statement of Purpose

Students requesting disability-related accommodations should be prepared to provide documentation of a disability by a qualified professional. This documentation facilitates services in several ways:

- 1) To assist in establishing that a student meets the definition of a person with a disability
- 2) To assist in understanding how the disability impacts the student in a particular setting
- 3) To assist in understanding the current impact of the disability as it relates to the accommodations requested

All documentation provided is reviewed on a case-by-case basis in light of these purposes. Young Harris College reserves the right to request more in-depth information or evaluations when the need arises.

About IEPs and 504 Plans: A K-12 school plan such as an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) does not alone constitute documentation of disability but may be included in a student's overall assessment as relevant background information.

Scope of Policy

These guidelines are for the purpose of establishing support for any disability-related accommodation request except for Housing and Dining accommodation requests. For housing accommodation requests, please refer to the Housing and Dining Accommodation Requests page at yhc.edu/student-life/disability/housing.

Documentation Guidelines

Obvious Disability

If the student's disability and the necessity for the accommodation are obvious (e.g., an individual with a physical disability using a wheelchair needs an accessible desk), the student need only explain, via the Request for Accommodation form and an intake meeting, what type of accommodation they are requesting. No third-party verification of disability and/or necessity is required under these circumstances.

Non-Obvious Disability or Non-Obvious Necessity of Accommodation

If the disability or necessity for the accommodation is not obvious, Disability Services will require the student to complete the Disability Services registration process and provide information from a reliable third party who can verify that the student has a disability and that the requested accommodation is necessary to provide the student equal access to YHC programs. This information should:

1. Adequately verify the nature of the student's disability and include pertinent background information related to the disability. When possible, it should state a diagnosis(es) and describe the current professional standards and techniques used to come to this conclusion.
2. Clearly describe how the student is substantially limited in one or more major life activities by this disability.
3. Clearly establish and explain the nexus between the functional limitations of the disability and the recommended accommodation.

4. Be current. This is generally defined as within the last calendar year unless the impact of the disability is stable over time. Each case is evaluated on an individual basis and exceptions may be granted depending upon circumstances and the disability.
5. Be provided by a licensed clinical professional familiar with the student's history and functional implications of the impairments. This person should be someone eligible to diagnose and assess in the field of the disability (e.g. a podiatrist would not be an appropriate professional to assess a digestive disorder, a mental health professional should diagnose a psychological disorder).
6. Be dated and signed, and include the name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator. Licensing or certification information should also be included.
7. Be printed on the letterhead of the evaluating professional and written in English.

If a requested accommodation is not supported by the information provided, Young Harris College reserves the right to request additional information in support of the accommodation request.

Learning Disabilities

Providing academic accommodations to students who have a learning disability is most accurate when we have information about how the student qualified for the diagnosis and the nature of their specific academic challenges. This information is typically available in a standard testing battery.

Students requesting accommodation on the basis of a specific learning disability should provide documentation from a professional who has undergone comprehensive training and has relevant experience in differential diagnosis of a full range of cognitive and psychiatric disabilities (e.g., Psychologist).

A comprehensive testing battery typically contains the following elements. The clinician completing the report may select tests other than those listed in the following example if they provide a rationale for the tests selected. An IEP or 504 plan is typically inadequate in this regard.

1. A diagnostic interview – the interview must include a description of the presenting problem(s), developmental, medical, psycho-social, and employment histories, family history, and a discussion of comorbidity where indicated;
2. An assessment – for the neurological or psychological evaluation to illustrate a substantial limitation to learning, the comprehensive assessment battery must contain the following domains:
 - a. Aptitude/cognitive ability – an assessment of global intellectual functioning as measured by the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-IV (WAIS-IV) or the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-III) with all subtests, standard scores, and index scores;
 - b. Academic achievement – a comprehensive achievement battery (e.g., Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery – III: Tests of Achievement), with subtest and standard scores, indicating current level of functioning in the academic areas of reading, math, oral and written language; and
 - c. Information processing – a comprehensive battery (e.g., Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-III: Tests of Cognitive Abilities), with subtest and standard scores, which addresses the specific areas of short and long-term memory, sequential memory, auditory and visual perception, processing speed, executive functioning, and motor ability.
3. A specific diagnosis which conforms to the criteria for the specific learning disability, as stated in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.
4. A clinical summary which:
 - a. Indicates the substantial limitations to major life activities posed by the specified learning disability;

- b. Describes the extent to which these limitations impact the academic context for which accommodations are being requested;
 - c. Suggests how the specific effects of the learning disability may be accommodated; and
 - d. States how the effects of the learning disability are mediated by the recommended accommodations.
5. Testing must have been administered using adult norms or have occurred within the last 5 years. Contact Disability Services in for guidance if you are updating a previous testing battery.

Types of Documentation Generally Not Accepted

Disability Services is generally unable to accept the following types of documentation:

1. Information originating from YHC Student Counseling Services.
2. Photographs of documentation.
3. Entries from patient medical charts or other clinical notes.
4. Information written on prescription pads.
5. Information that is illegible or in a language other than English.
6. Self-evaluations.
7. Information from non-professionals.
8. Research articles.
9. Copies of documentation that you will need to have returned to you. All physical documentation received is scanned into an electronic format and then confidentially shredded.

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Submitting Documentation

Information can be submitted in one of the following ways. Unfortunately, Disability Services no longer supports fax communication.

- Attached to the online RFA form upon submission **preferred**
- Uploaded using the [Disability Services - Document Submission](#) form **preferred**
- Dropped off at the YHC Success Center front desk during regular business hours
- Sent by post mail to the following address:
Disability Services - Success Center
1 College St.
Young Harris, GA 30582

The accommodations process is not an immediate process. Disability Services at YHC will not review accommodation requests until all information is received. **Please allow up to 10 business days for review.** Required information includes:

- 1) A completed [Request for Accommodations form](#)
- 2) Appropriate documentation as outlined above

Once information is processed and reviewed, students will be contacted at their yhc.edu email address outlining next steps which may include a request to submit additional information and/or an invitation and directions to schedule an intake or follow-up meeting.

Confidentiality of Information

Disability Services views all materials pertaining to a student's disability as confidential. All disability-related information for students at Young Harris College is housed in Disability Services. Only staff persons working at Disability Services have access to these files. Registration with Disability Services will not appear on transcripts.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) do not allow faculty or others access to disability-related information (e.g. diagnosis, medications). Disability Services will not share a student's medical information with faculty or staff without the student's consent. Disability Services personnel will confirm registration and approved accommodations on a need-to-know basis.

Additional Information

If requested supporting information does not meet the guidelines listed above, students are still encouraged to submit any information they have related to their diagnosis. Disability Services will work with students to determine what additional documentation may be necessary. In some cases, provisional accommodations may be granted while the student is in the process of gathering additional documentation.

If a student does not have any documentation, they are still encouraged to contact Disability Services. Our office can provide more information about documentation requirements, as well as provide referrals to resources on and off campus.