

# Housing Accommodation Documentation Guidelines



## Statement of Purpose

Students requesting disability-related housing 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. Young Harris College reserve the right to update these guidelines at any time as circumstances dictate.

## Scope of Policy

These guidelines are for the purpose of establishing support for disability-related housing accommodation requests. For all other accommodation requests, please refer to information at <https://www.yhc.edu/student-life/disability-services/>

Business Day(s) refers to a Business Day or Business Days in which the College is open for business. This is generally Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. and excludes weekends, holidays, designated closures including but not limited to weather delays and closures

## Submitting Documentation

Documentation information should be submitted to Disability Services in one of the following ways. Disability Services no longer accepts fax communication. Please do not submit documentation by email.

- Attached to the online Request For Accommodation (RFA) form upon submission <sup>\*preferred\*</sup>
- Uploaded using the [Disability Services - Document Submission](#) form <sup>\*preferred\*</sup>
- 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

## Types of Documentation Generally Not Accepted

Young Harris College 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.

6. Information in a language other than English.
7. Self-evaluations.
8. Information from non-professionals.
9. Research articles.
10. 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.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has been asked to investigate websites that purport to provide documentation from a health care provider in support of requests for an ESA. The websites in question offer for sale documentation that is not reliable for purposes of determining whether an individual has a disability or disability-related need for an ESA because the website operators and health care professionals who consult with them lack the personal knowledge that is necessary to make such determinations.

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.

## 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 a room with a roll-in shower), 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 eligibility process and provide information from a reliable third party who can verify that the student has a disability (for [emotional support animal requests](#), please see below). 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 any 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.

## Documentation in Support of an ESA Accommodation Request

Generally, we prefer documentation from providers in the State of Georgia or the student's home state who have personal knowledge of the student, consistent with their professional obligations. Letters purchased from the internet for a set price rarely provide the information necessary to support an ESA request.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has been asked to investigate websites that purport to provide documentation from a health care provider in support of requests for an ESA. The websites in question offer for sale documentation that is not reliable for purposes of determining whether an individual has a disability or disability-related need for an ESA because the website operators and health care professionals who consult with them lack the personal knowledge that is necessary to make such determinations.

Documentation in support of an emotional support animal accommodation request should also include or address the following:

1. An established therapeutic relationship between the student and the mental health professional including dates of first and last visit and frequency of visits during that time.
2. Adequately verify the nature of the student's psychological disability and include pertinent background information related to the psychological disability. A stated diagnosis and current professional standards used in arriving at the diagnosis are helpful in establishing the disability.
3. Clearly describe how the student is substantially limited in one or more major life activities by this psychological disability.
4. Clearly establish and explain the nexus between the functional limitations of the psychological disability and the recommended accommodation.
5. Include a description of the animal to be used as an emotional support animal including:
  - a. Type of animal
  - b. Breed of animal
  - c. Age of animal
  - d. Size of animal
6. Affirm and explain how having the described animal alleviates identified symptom effects of the student's mental health disability or serves a defined role in treatment.
7. Affirms having the described animal in residence is necessary to benefit effectively from YHC's residential program.
8. Be current. This is generally defined as within the last calendar. Each case is evaluated on an individual basis and exceptions may be granted depending upon circumstances and the psychological disability.
9. Be provided by a licensed mental health care professional familiar with the student's history and functional implications of the impairments. A general practitioner, physician's assistant, nurse, or nurse practitioner may not be considered an appropriate source of documentation for a mental health disability.
10. Be dated and signed, and include the name, title, and professional credentials of the mental health care professional. Licensing or certification information should also be included.
11. Be printed on the letterhead of the evaluating professional and written in English.

If any 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.

## Statement of Human Animal Interactions Interventions in Counseling

As a marker of best practice, YHC recommends that any mental health professional providing support to a student request for an emotional support animal request be familiar with the [position statement on emotional support animals](#) by the American Counseling Association's Human Animal Interactions in Counseling Interest Network.

## 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.