

DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES

General Information

American University, under the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and its amendments, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, provides services to qualified students with documented disabilities.

Federal law defines a disability as a “physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.” It is important to note that a condition in and of itself does not necessarily constitute a disability. The degree of impairment must be significant enough to substantially limit one or more major life activities, e.g. walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, or taking care of oneself. To determine eligibility, the ASAC requires comprehensive and relevant documentation of the student’s disorder and its functional impact on the student in the educational environment.

The following information is provided to assist American University students who wish to obtain disability-based accommodations.

Documentation Must Be Relevant to the Accommodations Request

Comprehensive documentation about the current functional impact of the disability in a university setting is required in order to determine whether a particular accommodation can be provided. Students or their professional evaluators may be able to provide the most current information about the impact of their disability in a written or verbal format.

Students may be required to furnish periodic reevaluation to support continuing accommodation needs depending on the nature of the disability and documentation received. If a disability is a physical or sensory impairment of an unchanging nature, e.g., blindness or congenital deafness, documentation may not need to be updated.

The student is responsible for submitting this documentation. All documentation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and students may be required to provide additional documentation.

Qualifications of the Evaluator

The ASAC requires documentation of the student’s condition from a licensed clinical professional or health care provider with the appropriate expertise. This evaluator must be familiar with the history and functional limitations of the student’s condition. The provider must not be a relative of the student or a friend of the student or student’s family. The documentation must include the name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about licensure and/or specialization. All evaluation reports must be typed on letterhead, signed, dated, and legible.

Deadlines

There are no specific deadlines for requesting services through the Academic Support and Access Center and students may register with a disability at any time during the semester.

Please note that accommodations are not granted on a retroactive basis. Timely requests prevent a delay of services or accommodations. In particular, students requesting interpreters or books in alternate format should notify the ASAC well in advance of the beginning of each semester.

Documentation of a Learning Disability

A complete psychoeducational or neuropsychological report is required to document a learning disability. [Documentation guidelines for a learning disability](#) detail the recommended components of such a report. Additional reports, such as a record of accommodations from a previous school, an IEP, or a record of SAT/ACT accommodations, can be helpful in determining a student's disability status and the need for specific accommodations.

Evaluation of Documentation

Once documentation is received, students are responsible for follow-up with the ASAC. Please note that sending documentation to the ASAC does not constitute a formal request for accommodations. Students register with the office by completing a student questionnaire and meeting with an ASAC counselor for an intake appointment to discuss documentation and accommodation requests.

The ASAC counselor will advise the student of any specific documentation needs or other requirements during the process.

Questions regarding these guidelines should be directed to asac@american.edu or by calling 202-885-3360.

The above guidelines are intended to inform students about the university's decision-making process but is not exhaustive as situations vary. The educational process necessitates change. This publication must be considered informational and not binding on the university. The university reserves the right to amend these guidelines with or without notice. Consult the Academic Support and Access Center for additional information.