

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO GGU DISABILITY SERVICES PROGRAM

Self-Identification

1. The student identifies her/himself as having a disability to a professor, staff member or the Disability Services Coordinator. Once the student self-identifies as a person with a disability, s/he should be referred to the Disability Services Office.
2. During an initial meeting with the Disability Services Coordinator, the following is evaluated with the student: the nature of the disability and how the student believes the disability limits their academic success, types of accommodations received in previous educational settings (if applicable), the student's service expectations, and disability documentation guidelines (listed under #5). Students at this time may file a "Request for Accommodations" form. Students are encouraged to submit complete, current documentation at the earliest possible date to ensure accommodations are granted at the beginning of the term. Partial or old documentation may delay granting of accommodation. Late requests for service may also delay granting of accommodations.

Eligibility for Services

3. Upon submission, documentation is reviewed to determine eligibility. To be eligible for disability-related services, students must have a visibly obvious or documented disability as defined by the ***American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)*** and/or ***Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973***.

Documentation Guidelines:

Documentation requirements vary for different disabilities. The Disability Services Office has developed the following requirements for documentation to be used for evaluating eligibility. If documentation does not meet the following requirements, the student may be asked for additional documentation. Students should direct questions about documentation guidelines to Disability Services at 415-442-7228.

Physical and Psychological Disabilities

- (a) An appropriate agency or certified professional capable of diagnosing the disability in question should provide documentation. If the person signing the verification is not a certified professional, the documentation should state that it was based on a review of records prepared by an appropriate qualified professional or appropriate agency who performed the diagnosis.
- (b) The documentation should be printed on agency, office, or company letterhead, listing the name, office address, and credentials of the qualified professional who performed the diagnosis, and /or the name of the appropriate agency.
- (c) Documentation should include a diagnostic statement, which describes the current functional limitations caused by the disability. Currency of documentation is dependent upon:
 - the typical progression of the disability,
 - its interaction with development across the life span;
 - the presence or absence of significant events since the date of evaluation which may have altered the impact of the disability on the student's educational process;
 - the current context for accommodations.
- (d) If applicable, a description of treatments, medications, assistive devices/services in current use, and the estimated effectiveness in ameliorating the impact of the disability. Significant side effects that may impact physical, perceptual, behavioral or cognitive performance should also be noted.
- (e) A description of the expected progression or stability of the impact of the disability over time should be included. This will provide a relevant timeframe for reevaluation of the student's needs. Expenses incurred in reevaluation are the student's responsibility.
- (f) Academic accommodations recommended, i.e.; additional time, auxiliary aids, etc.

Learning Disabilities

Initial documentation will be reviewed by the Disability Services Coordinator. Because criteria for eligibility may differ between institutions, especially between community colleges and four-year institutions, a learning disability specialist may be consulted to review documentation in support of accommodations for a learning disability. GGU will select and pay the expense of the specialist for the purpose of determining eligibility if needed. If documentation is partial, out-dated, or

unsupportive of the request for accommodation, the student will be asked to obtain further documents or new test results. All expense for appropriate documentation is the responsibility of the student. Learning disability eligibility guidelines are listed below.

- a) **Qualified Evaluator:**
The documentation should list the name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator. The evaluator should have the professional training to make a diagnosis regarding the specific learning disability. For example, the Association of Higher Education and Disability generally considers the following professionals who have additional training and experience in the assessment of learning problems to be considered qualified; clinical or educational psychologists, school psychologists, neuropsychologists, learning disabilities specialists, medical doctors, and some other professionals. Documentation should be on letterhead, typed, dated, signed and otherwise legible.
- b) **Currency of Documentation:**
Documentation diagnosing a learning disability must be less than three years old. Exceptions may be made to this requirement based upon the learning disability consultant's review of out-dated documentation.
- c) **Substantiation of Learning Disability:**
Documentation should include a comprehensive assessment battery. The resulting diagnostic report should include a diagnostic interview, assessment of aptitude, academic achievement, information processing and a diagnosis.
- d) **Rationale for Accommodation:**
Specific evidence to establish a rationale supporting the need for accommodation and recommended accommodations.

Temporary Disabilities

Even though the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 does not cover students with temporary disabilities, Golden Gate University will accommodate students with temporary disabilities.

Students with Temporary Disabilities should follow the physical and psychological disability documentation guidelines. Students with temporary disabilities should have the appropriate agency or certified professional note the time frame for reevaluation of the student's needs.

Notification of Request for Services

4. Initial determination of eligibility will take a maximum of 5 working days. In the case of discrepancy in a learning disability, a specialist may be consulted.
5. Students will receive a written response from the Disability Services office within a timely manner notifying them of the outcome of their request for accommodations. For approved requests, students will be notified of granted accommodations, Disability Service policies and procedures, and student rights and responsibilities in utilizing the program.* In the case of a denied request for accommodations, students may receive information about further testing or documentation required.
6. After accommodations are granted to the student, Disability Services will provide letters addressed to student's instructors (as indicated on filed "Request for Accommodations" form). These letters are given to the student to deliver to his/her instructor. Students are encouraged to discuss their needs with instructors as early as possible to ensure that the instructor is aware of the accommodations the student is eligible to receive.

Working with Faculty

In most cases, instructors work well with students who have disability accommodations. However, if a professor is reluctant to agree with the accommodations to which the student is entitled, students should clarify their needs, or they should remind the instructor that they are entitled to the accommodation under federal law (*as stated in Accommodation Letter*). Students should do this only if they feel comfortable in doing so. If the professor's reluctance continues the student should notify Disability Services and the Coordinator will meet with the professor to discuss the accommodations and the student's right under federal law to receive them. Most often, Disability Services is able to ameliorate any reluctance or disagreement by clarifying the law and the specific needs of the student. If no resolution can be reached, however, Disability Services will seek the support of the Director of Student Affairs and the instructor's Academic Dean. The University will support your right to receive appropriate accommodations as determined by a qualified professional for

a documented disability as mandated by Federal Law. Students will also be informed of their right to file discrimination complaints with Golden Gate University and the Office of Civil Rights. Faculty members with questions or concerns should contact the Disability Services Office. Materials are available regarding various disabilities, teaching strategies, or a copy of the federally mandated rules and regulations from the ADA or Section 504.

Requests for Exams Proctored at Disability Services Procedure:

Students must:

- File a Faculty Exam Authorization Form, obtaining instructor approval and turn in to Disability Services within required timeline (see form for information).
- Students must file a Faculty Exam Authorization Form for each test.
- Students who miss a scheduled exam: Exam will be returned to instructor. Student must schedule another appointment to retake the tests with Disability Services.
- **Students who miss tests proctored through Disability Services are abusing accommodations and may jeopardize their accommodations, if offenses are numerous.**

GGU Academic Resources & Other Services

Students are encouraged to take advantage of GGU support services:

Writing Center
On-Line Writing Lab (OWL)
Math Resource Center
Tutoring services (not offered in all departments).
Center for Counseling & Psychological Services

Student's Role

Golden Gate University's Disability Services Program encourages students to gain independence and to promote their own responsibility and empowerment. Students are expected to be proactive and organized in seeking, and using the services provided by the Disability Services Program.

We are advocates for you, but you are the best advocate for yourself!

***NOTE:** Accommodations are made on an individualized basis, depending on the needs of the student and the instructional format. These accommodations could vary each semester depending on the demands for each course. Students dissatisfied with the Coordinator of Disability Services or consultant's decision for denial of service or accommodation recommendations may appeal the decision through the defined appeals process.

Documentation Guidelines based upon:

GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTATION OF A LEARNING DISABILITY IN ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS. July 1997. [online]. The Association for Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD). [Http://www.ahead.org](http://www.ahead.org). [February 25, 2000].

Lissner, L.Scott . GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTATION OF A DISABILITY. [online]. Disability Access and Support (DAIS) Public Library. [Http://www.janejarow.com/public_library/samplepolicy/index.html](http://www.janejarow.com/public_library/samplepolicy/index.html). [May 25, 2000]

Other references:

Implementing Guidelines for Title 5 Regulations: Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSP&S): August 1995. [online]. Chancellor's Office of California Community Colleges. [Http://www.htctu.fhda.edu/ccdocs/guide1.html](http://www.htctu.fhda.edu/ccdocs/guide1.html) [May 23, 2000]

Policy and Procedures For The Provision of Academic Accommodations To Students With Disabilities At Santa Clara University School of Law. March 12, 1999. [online]. Santa Clara School of Law. [Http://www.scu.edu/SCU/Departments/Law/depts/records/ADA/ada.html](http://www.scu.edu/SCU/Departments/Law/depts/records/ADA/ada.html). [May 24, 2000]

Disability Services

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