

# **POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS**

Wake Forest University is committed to ensuring that no qualified student with a properly documented disability is excluded from participation in, subjected to discrimination in connection with, or denied the benefits of any University program or activity due to the student's disability. To that end, the University provides reasonable accommodations to enable qualified students with properly documented disabilities equal access to University programs and activities.

The Policy and Procedures for Student Disability Accommodation Requests (the "Policy") sets forth the policy and procedures applicable to student disability accommodation requests. It applies to any disability accommodation request made by any University undergraduate, graduate, or professional student (including students of the Wake Forest School of Medicine Academic Nursing, Physician Assistant (PA), and Undergraduate Medical Education (MD) programs, and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Biomedical Sciences Program) regardless of the type of disability involved and regardless of the University program or activity in which the student is enrolled and/or participating.

## **Where and How Students Can Request Disability Accommodations**

All student disability accommodation requests must be made to the Learning Assistance Center & Disability Services ("LAC-DS"). For information on how to initiate a request, visit our website <https://lac.wfu.edu/disability-services/requesting-accommodations/>

Students may also contact the LAC-DS at 336-758-5929 or [lacds@wfu.edu](mailto:lacds@wfu.edu).

Submitting documentation and requesting accommodations will begin the processes of determining (1) whether the student has a properly documented disability and, if so, (2) what reasonable accommodations the University will provide to the student.

The LAC-DS may solicit input from other University employees regarding accommodation requests. The LAC-DS and/or the Section 504 Coordinator are the only University employees authorized to determine whether a student has a properly documented disability and, through the interactive process, what reasonable accommodations the University may provide to the student. Accommodations are reasonable when they do not fundamentally alter the nature of a program or service and do not represent an undue burden. Accordingly, it is imperative that students seeking disability accommodations engage in the interactive process with the LAC-DS and that other University employees, including faculty and staff, promptly direct any student seeking disability accommodation to the LAC-DS.

## **Timing of Accommodation Requests**

Although a student may make an accommodation request at any time, the University strongly encourages students to make requests as early and as far in advance as possible to allow adequate time for consideration and proper documentation of the disability; the interactive process that will determine what reasonable accommodations the University will provide to the student; and implementation of those accommodations. The University strongly encourages the student to request the reasonable accommodation to the LAC-DS as soon as possible in advance of the need for the reasonable accommodation. *Absent significant extenuating circumstances, the University will not consider or implement any retroactive disability accommodations.*

## **Determination of Whether a Student Is Qualified and Has a Properly Documented Disability**

Before determining what reasonable disability accommodation(s) the University will provide to a qualified student, the University must determine whether that student is a qualified student with a properly documented disability.

A *qualified student* is one who, with or without reasonable disability accommodation, is able to meet the essential requirements -- including but not limited to technical standards of the applicable program -- for participation in a program or activity.

A *person with a disability* is any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities. *Major life activities* are functions such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, concentrating, thinking, and working as well as major bodily functions such as normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, immune system, and reproductive functions. This list is not exhaustive.

A student requesting a disability accommodation must provide required documentation as described below.

### **Required Documentation**

Documentation of the requesting student's disability shall be obtained at that student's expense and must meet the criteria set forth in this Policy. The LAC-DS has developed Guidelines for Documenting a disability. These guidelines can be found at <https://lac.wfu.edu/disability-services/information-for-students/documenting-a-disability/>.

Generally, the following is required:

**Current Documentation:** The current impact of a disability upon the student is at the crux of determining a reasonable accommodation and as such, documents submitted to support an accommodation request must be current.

**Comprehensive Evaluation:** The student must include documentation of an evaluation of the student's disability. The evaluation must be conducted by a qualified professional and must provide information in five areas:

- (1) a specific medical diagnosis of a physical, mental, or learning disability;
- (2) a description of how the diagnosis was confirmed based on established diagnostic criteria using diagnostic testing and methods currently utilized in professional practices within the relevant field;
- (3) a description of how the disability limits a major life activity and of the expected duration of the limitation;
- (4) the requesting student's history with the disability; and
- (5) specific recommendation(s) for reasonable accommodations and an explanation of the way in which the proposed accommodation will allow the student equal access to the programs and/or activities in question.

**Qualified Professional:** The documentation must include the professional credentials of the evaluator, including their licensure and area of specialization. Additional information about their experience with the diagnosis and treatment of adults in the appropriate field is recommended. The evaluator should not be a family member.

## **Evaluation of Accommodation Requests and Determination of Reasonable Accommodations**

As part of the interactive process, the LAC-DS may confer with the student's program to determine whether the student is an otherwise qualified student. If the LAC-DS determines that the student requesting accommodation is qualified and has a properly documented disability, the LAC-DS will then continue to engage in an interactive process with the student, other University faculty and staff and, as appropriate, the qualified professional who provided the disability documentation to determine what reasonable accommodations the University will provide to the student. *Reasonable accommodations* are those that do not lower or substantially modify essential program or activity requirements; fundamentally alter the nature of a University service, program, or activity; or result in an undue financial or administrative burden on the University.

## **Letters of Accommodation**

The LAC-DS will provide to the student, to the faculty member, or to the School's or Program's liaison the student's letter of accommodation detailing any accommodations the University will provide to the student. The student is responsible for ensuring that letters of accommodations are provided to faculty members and other University employees who the student needs to implement the accommodations.

## **Requests for Modification or Continuation of Accommodations**

It is the requesting student's responsibility to inform the LAC-DS or the Section 504 Coordinator of any changes to the disability or to request modifications to approved accommodations. Similarly, it is the student's responsibility to request continuation of the approved accommodations beyond the time period set forth in the letters of accommodation. To request a continuance or modification, students must re-submit supporting documentation and an updated request for accommodations.

## **Confidentiality**

The LAC-DS is responsible for information disclosed by a student seeking accommodations. The Director of the LAC-DS is responsible for maintaining this information in confidential locked files separate from the student's academic file. Disability information is shared with faculty and staff on a limited "need to know" basis. The confidential file is maintained for seven years after the student has graduated or left the University. The file is then shredded.

## **Appeals / Grievances**

Students who are denied requested accommodations and/or believe that they have been discriminated against or harassed on the basis of their disability may appeal the denial or file a discrimination or harassment complaint through the Student Disability Grievance Procedure, which is available at <http://lac.wfu.edu/disability-services/grievance/>.