

HANDBOOK

FOR

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

TAYLOR UNIVERSITY - UPLAND

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We are excited you are at Taylor University! Whether you are a prospective student, a student who has decided to attend Taylor, or a current student who is just beginning to utilize academic support, we are here to help. We hope that during your time here at Taylor you will find opportunities to grow spiritually, relationally, emotionally, and intellectually.

This handbook is designed to help prospective and current students with documented disabilities navigate the academic accommodation process and find success here at Taylor. It will guide you through this process and hopefully provide you with the information you need to have an equal opportunity to participate in the programs offered by Taylor University. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Academic Enrichment Center at 765-998-5524 or at AEC@taylor.edu. We are here to help.

General Information

Role of Support Services

One of the goals of the Academic Enrichment Center (AEC) is to provide students with disabilities equal access to the academic program of Taylor University. By using various tools and services, the AEC works with the student to determine the appropriate accommodations needed to ensure equal opportunity. The AEC works to provide an equal opportunity for success or failure in the classroom, not to guarantee success. Success in college is dependent upon many factors including ability, attitude, and willingness to work hard. The university does not have a specific program (i.e. special curriculum) uniquely designed for students with disabilities.

Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states:

“No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States...shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

One of the first areas that required further elaboration in the Act concerned the term “qualified handicapped individual.” Congress passed the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1974 in an attempt to clarify participant eligibility.

“(a) Section 7(6) of the Act was amended by adding the following new sentence: ‘For purposes of Titles IV and V of this Act, such term means any person who (a) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person’s major life activities, (b) has a record of such impairment, or (c) is regarded as having such an impairment.’”

Under the provisions of Section 504, colleges and universities may not:

- limit the number of students with disabilities admitted.
- make preadmission inquiries as to whether or not an applicant is disabled.

- use admission tests or criteria that inadequately measure the academic level of blind, deaf, or otherwise disabled applicants, because special provisions were not made for them.
- exclude a student from a course of study.
- counsel a student with a disability toward a more restrictive career.
- measure student achievement using modes that adversely discriminate against the student with a disability.
- institute prohibitive rules that may adversely affect students with disabilities.

What does “otherwise qualified handicapped person” mean?

An “otherwise qualified handicapped person” is defined as one who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the institution’s programs and activities. In other words, an individual with a disability must meet the same standards for admission and participation as any other student. If at some point a student with a disability no longer meets the required standards for participation in a program, the student is then considered not otherwise qualified.

Student’s Responsibilities

Receiving accommodations as a student with a disability in college is significantly different than what students may have experienced in high school. In high school, parents and school officials meet and determine what accommodations are needed. In college, it is the student’s responsibility to formally identify yourself as a student with a disability, provide the appropriate documentation, and request accommodations. To do this, the student must apply for support services through the Academic Enrichment Center in the Zondervan Library. Accommodations and resources such as audio books, note taking, extended time on tests, and other assistance are best planned in advance. The university is not responsible for meeting needs not explicitly expressed to the institution. To assist you in this process you may follow this check list.

- Meet with the Coordinator of Accessibility and Disability Resources
- Complete and return the following forms:
 - *Services for Students with Disabilities Information Form*
 - *Appropriate verification documentation*
 - *Accommodation Request form* – This is the form you use to request specific accommodations in relation to a course or program. This form will need to be filled out each semester.
 - *Release form* – This is part of the Accommodation Request form and helps the AEC provide you with the type of confidentiality you desire.
- Submit appropriate documentation
- Confirm all information has been received by the Coordinator of Accessibility and Disability Resources.

Accommodation Process

Receiving Accommodations

After you have submitted all of your information, your application and requests are processed through the following steps:

1. Your application is evaluated to determine if you are a qualified student with a disability in a major life activity. The requested accommodations are evaluated in light of the program/degree/activity requirements. A requested accommodation that would alter an essential or fundamental element of the program/degree/activity will not be provided. An example would be a request for additional time on an exam where the skill being assessed is “Can the student achieve the objective within a specific time frame?”
2. Memos are generated for each professor detailing the accommodations that directly impact the classroom setting.
3. The memos are printed for you to come pick up in the Academic Enrichment Center and hand deliver to each professor. We do not send the memos directly to the professor unless a requested accommodation requires significant planning on the part of the professor.
4. Make an appointment with each professor to discuss your needs and provide the memo.
5. Immediately notify the Academic Enrichment Center if difficulties arise with a requested accommodation. The university is not responsible for meeting needs not explicitly expressed to the institution.

Adequate Documentation

The documentation provided must be completed by an individual qualified to make the diagnosis stated in the information form. The diagnostician should be an impartial individual who is not a family member of the student and does not have a conflict of interest. In addition to submitting a completed disability verification form, the following items should be included in all documentation submitted for consideration:

- A clear statement of the disability.
- A summary of assessment procedures and evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis.
- Medical information related to your need, including the impact of medication on your ability to meet the demands of the college environment.
- Information on how the impairment impacts your ability to participate in the Taylor experience
- Suggestions of reasonable accommodations which might be appropriate at the college level. Recommendations should be supported by the diagnosis.
- Information on how the impairment substantially limits one or more major life activities as defined by Section 504 and the ADA.

Age of Documentation

Documentation provided should not be older than three years. Documentation which is older than three years may be considered if the diagnosis is not affected by maturation, time or coping strategies.

The Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) in its effort to define best practices in disability documentation in higher education has identified seven essential elements.

Seven Essential Elements of Quality Disability Documentation

The dimensions of good documentation discussed below are suggested as a best practices approach for defining complete documentation that both establishes the individual as a person with a disability and provides a rationale for reasonable accommodations. By identifying the essential dimensions of documentation, institutions allow for flexibility in accepting documentation from the full range of theoretical and clinical perspectives. This approach will enhance consistency and provide stakeholders (students, prospective students, parents and professionals) with the information they need to assist students in establishing eligibility for services and receiving appropriate accommodations.

Users of this document are encouraged to also review AHEAD's best practice information on the Purpose and Use of Documentation and the Foundational Principles for the Review of Documentation and the Determination of Accommodations

1. The credentials of the evaluator(s)

The best quality documentation is provided by a licensed or otherwise properly credentialed professional who has undergone appropriate and comprehensive training, has relevant experience, and has no personal relationship with the individual being evaluated. A good match between the credentials of the individual making the diagnosis and the condition being reported is expected (e.g., an orthopedic limitation might be documented by a physician, but not a licensed psychologist). When providing his/her recommendation, the medical provider should be sure to use official letterhead.

2. A diagnostic statement identifying the disability

Quality documentation includes a clear diagnostic statement that describes how the condition was diagnosed, provides information on the functional impact, and details the typical progression or prognosis of the condition. While diagnostic codes from the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association (DSM) or the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) of the World Health Organization are helpful in providing this information, a full clinical description will also convey the necessary information.

3. A description of the diagnostic methodology used

Quality documentation includes a description of the diagnostic criteria, evaluation methods, procedures, tests and dates of administration, as well as a clinical narrative, observation, and specific results. Where appropriate to the nature of the disability, having both summary data and specific test scores (with the norming population identified) within the report is recommended.

Diagnostic methods that are congruent with the particular disability and current professional practices in the field are recommended. Methods may include formal instruments, medical

examinations, structured interview protocols, performance observations and unstructured interviews. If results from informal, non-standardized or less common methods of evaluation are reported, an explanation of their role and significance in the diagnostic process will strengthen their value in providing useful information.

4. A description of the current functional limitations

Information on how the disabling condition(s) currently impacts the individual provides useful information for both establishing a disability and identifying possible accommodations. A combination of the results of formal evaluation procedures, clinical narrative, and the individual's self report is the most comprehensive approach to fully documenting impact. The best quality documentation is thorough enough to demonstrate whether and how a major life activity is substantially limited by providing a clear sense of the severity, frequency and pervasiveness of the condition(s).

While relatively recent documentation is recommended in most circumstances, common sense and discretion in accepting older documentation of conditions that are permanent or non-varying is recommended. Likewise, changing conditions and/or changes in how the condition impacts the individual brought on by growth and development may warrant more frequent updates in order to provide an accurate picture. It is important to remember that documentation is not time-bound; the need for recent documentation depends on the facts and circumstances of the individual's condition.

5. A description of the expected progression or stability of the disability

It is helpful when documentation provides information on expected changes in the functional impact of the disability over time and context. Information on the cyclical or episodic nature of the disability and known or suspected environmental triggers to episodes provides opportunities to anticipate and plan for varying functional impacts. If the condition is not stable, information on interventions (including the individual's own strategies) for exacerbations and recommended timelines for re-evaluation are most helpful.

6. A description of current and past accommodations, services and/or medications

The most comprehensive documentation will include a description of both current and past medications, auxiliary aids, assistive devices, support services, and accommodations, including their effectiveness in ameliorating functional impacts of the disability. A discussion of any significant side effects from current medications or services that may impact physical, perceptual, behavioral or cognitive performance is helpful when included in the report. While accommodations provided in another setting are not binding on the current institution, they may provide insight in making current decisions.

7. Recommendations for accommodations, adaptive devices, assistive services, compensatory strategies, and/or collateral support services

Recommendations from professionals with a history of working with the individual provide valuable information for review and the planning process. It is most helpful when recommended accommodations and strategies are logically related to functional limitations; if connections are not obvious, a clear explanation of their relationship can be useful in decision-making. While the post-secondary institution has no obligation to provide or adopt

recommendations made by outside entities, those that are congruent with the programs, services, and benefits offered by the college or program may be appropriate. When recommendations go beyond equitable and inclusive services and benefits, they may still be useful in suggesting alternative accommodations and/or services.

Confidentiality

All documentation and information kept in the files of the Academic Enrichment Center are confidential and are treated as such by office personnel. Because of this, no information regarding you or your disability will be shared with others, unless you have granted a release of this information or there is an educational need to know as defined by FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act). *It should be noted that this includes your parents or guardians if you are 18 or older.*

New and Prospective Students

Campus Visits

As a prospective student with a disability, you are encouraged to visit the Taylor University campus. When arranging a campus visit, it is recommended that a part of the itinerary include a meeting with the Coordinator of Accessibility and Disability Resources. To arrange for a campus visit call the Office of Admissions at 1-800-882-3456.

Acceptance to the University

As soon as the university has informed you concerning the outcome of your application for Admission, it is valuable to contact the Coordinator of Accessibility and Disability Resources. Providing accommodations requires time and planning, so the sooner the process is started, the better the university can meet those needs.

Taylor University Placement Testing

All entering freshmen and transfer students are encouraged to attend orientation. A part of the orientation process may include placement testing. It is important to contact the Coordinator of Accessibility and Disability Resources well in advance of orientation if accommodations will be needed for placement testing or course scheduling.

Financial Aid

We would encourage you to start the application process for financial aid as soon as possible after acceptance. The deadline for filing the FAFSA is February 15th. If the paperwork is finished well in advance of deadlines, you will be better able to deal with any unexpected problems which may occur.

If you plan to request financial assistance from Vocational Rehabilitation, it is especially important that you complete the application process as soon as you are able. Vocational Rehabilitation assistance is viewed as a resource to be used in addition to the funds the student/parents can provide. Therefore, applications for financial aid (particularly the Pell Grant) must be made before Vocational Rehabilitation can determine the amount of help they will provide. Basic financial aid information may be obtained by contacting the Taylor University Financial Aid Office at 765-998-5358.

You have the responsibility in meeting deadlines, keeping counselors informed of Taylor University requirements and due dates, and letting them know of progress toward academic and vocational goals.

Scholarships

Two scholarships are available to qualified individuals with disabilities. Awards will vary depending upon available funds and number of individuals receiving awards. To be considered for either scholarship, application for the scholarships must be received by the Coordinator of Accessibility and Disability Resources by March 1.

Diane Newman Memorial Endowed Scholarship

Potential recipients must:

- submit FAFSA and demonstrate financial need
- evidence Christian commitment and personal relationship with Jesus Christ
- be entering a field of service, i.e. teaching, missions, work with handicapped, social work
- have physical impairment

Mephibosheth Endowed Scholarship

Potential recipients must:

- submit a FAFSA and demonstrates financial need
- be a full-time student and not conditionally admitted
- have physical impairment that is likely to continue indefinitely
- scholarship is intended to replace federal work study earnings if needed

Grievance Procedure

Students who are dissatisfied with any decision or accommodation provided may file a grievance. Depending on the nature of the grievance, the student may file in one of three ways – filing an Academic Grievance, filing an on-campus Section 504 complaint or by filing a Section 504 complaint with the federal Office of Civil Rights.

Academic Grievance Procedure

To ensure an open atmosphere in academic endeavors, procedures have been established to provide fair process of any academic complaint registered by a student. The procedures are part of the University commitment to maintaining a climate of openness and justice in all areas of academic life. The objective is to provide fair treatment to any student who registers an academic complaint and any faculty member, or any other academic staff member, who is accused of unfairness toward a student. These procedures are outlined in the Academic Policies and Regulations section of the Academic Catalog (<https://www.taylor.edu/offices/registrar/catalog>)

Institutional Section 504 Grievance Procedure

Taylor University has designed an internal process to review and respond to Section 504/ADA concerns raised by students, employees, and guests. The ADA/504 Compliance Officer is not the Coordinator of Accessibility and Disability Resources, but students may choose

to work with the Coordinator of Accessibility and Disability Resources to help file the grievance in the correct office. If the student chooses to take the grievance to the ADA/504 Compliance Officer, the ADA/504 Compliance Officer will be responsible to launch an investigation of the alleged discrimination, in the following manner:

1. A written and signed statement of the grievance should be presented to the designated ADA/504 Compliance Officer.
2. This individual (or their designee) will conduct an investigation into the alleged complaint and issue a decision in writing within ten working days from the time of the informal hearing.
3. If the decision rendered by the ADA/504 Compliance Officer is not satisfactory to the individuals involved, those individuals may present a written request for appeal to the Provost (or his/her designee) within five (5) days of the initial decision by the Compliance Officer. The Appeals Officer will review the appeal request and provide a written response ten working days of the written request for appeal. The decision of the Appeals Officer will be rendered within five working days of the hearing before him/her and will be considered final.

Title IX and Section 504

Any student who believes he/she may have a legitimate grievance regarding alleged discrimination based on Title IX or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or any other federal civil rights law, may do one of two things. First, the student may go to the duly appointed ADA/504 Compliance Officer, the Dean of Students, or secondly, the student may file a grievance directly with the Office of Civil Rights Chicago Office:

Office for Civil Rights/Chicago
 U.S. Department of Education
 Citigroup Center
 500 W. Madison Street
 Suite 1475
 Chicago, IL 60661
 Tel.: (312) 730 – 1560
 Fax: (312) 730 – 1576
 TDD: (312) 730 – 1609
 Or 1 – 877 – 521 – 2172

Emergency Procedures

Emergency Procedures for Assisting Individuals with Disabilities

Taylor University calls to the attention of all individuals with disabilities the fact that no one else can look out for their well-being as well as they can. Therefore, individuals with disabilities need to be responsible for studying and remembering the important parts of each building they are in, including exits, phone locations and elevator procedures.

Students need to assume responsibility for asking several people in their classes to assist them if emergency evacuation becomes necessary and share pertinent instructions with them. Faculty members who have students in their classes who might have problems leaving the building during emergencies should discuss procedures ahead of time.

Mobility Impairments

One of the biggest concerns in building evacuation is for individuals with mobility limitations:

- Elevators should **NOT** be used during a fire or earthquake.
- **If there is NOT imminent danger** (no obvious fire or smoke) move the individual with a mobility impairment to a fire-rated stairwell entry or other safe place and close the fire door until emergency personnel determine the nature of the situation. Officials may then decide that no evacuation is necessary, or they may remove the person by carrying him/her out of the building using special techniques and evacuation chairs.

Someone should be designated to remain with the individual while the faculty member, staff member or residence hall staff person meets emergency personnel and tells them where the person is. **Due to the risk of causing physical injury, it is extremely important that the person not be moved unnecessarily or improperly.**

- If there **IS** imminent danger and evacuation cannot be delayed, the person with a disability should be carried or helped from the building, in the best and fastest manner. The person with a disability is the best authority as to how to be moved out of the building. A person may be carried using a two-person lock-arm position or may sit in a stiff chair, preferably one with arms. The best procedure is to let professional emergency personnel perform the evacuation of these individuals.

Additional Evacuation Considerations

- Wheelchairs have many movable or weak parts that are not constructed to withstand the stress of lifting (e.g., the seat bar, foot plates, wheels, movable arm rests).
- Some individuals in wheel chairs may have electric artificial respirators attached. These persons should be given priority assistance if smoke or fumes are present, since their ability to breathe will be seriously jeopardized.
- Some wheelchair users do not have strength in the upper trunk or neck.
- If the wheelchair is left behind, remove it from the stairwell and leave it where it does not block evacuation areas or paths.
- If there is an attempt to move a power wheelchair, disconnect the batteries before attempting to transport it. Make sure that the foot rests are locked and the motor is off.

- If a seatbelt is available, secure the individuals in the chair.
- If you are carrying person more than three flights, a relay team may be needed.

Visual Impairments

Most visually impaired individuals will be familiar with the immediate area they are in. In the event of an emergency, tell the person specifically how and where to exit. Have the person take your elbow and escort him/her (this is the preferred method when acting as a “sighted guide”). As you walk, tell the person where you are and advise him or her of any obstacles. When you have reached safety, orient the person to where he or she is and ask if any further assistance is needed.

Hearing Impairments

Since individuals with impaired hearing may not perceive audio emergency alarms, an alternative warning technique is required. Two methods of warning are the following:

- Write a note telling what the emergency is and the nearest evacuation route (e.g., “FIRE-go out rear door to right and down. Now!”)
- Turn the light switch on and off to gain attention then indicate through gestures or in writing what is happening and what to do.

It may be prudent to escort the hearing impaired person as you leave the building.