

# Office of Disability Services Handbook



**XAVIER**  
UNIVERSITY *of* LOUISIANA





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# Xavier University of Louisiana Office of Disability Services

## Welcome to Disability Services

Xavier University is committed to the inclusion of all individuals. In realizing this commitment, we are determined to uphold and maintain all aspects of **Section 504** of the **Rehabilitation Act of 1973** and the **Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)**. In the spirit of these laws, Xavier University **Office of Disability Services (ODS)** provides equal opportunity to individuals with disabilities. "Person with a disability" means any person who 1) has physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities [including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working], 2) has a record of such impairment, or 3) is regarded as having such impairment.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities. According to these laws, no otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of a public entity.

"Qualified", with respect to post-secondary educational services, means "a person who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the education program of activity, with or without, reasonable modifications to rules, policies or practices; the removal of architectural, communication or transportation barriers; or the provision of auxiliary aids and services."

Disabilities covered by legislation include (but are not limited to) AIDS, cancer, cerebral palsy, diabetes, epilepsy, head injuries, hearing impairments, specific learning disabilities, loss of limbs, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, psychiatric disorders, speech impairments, spinal cord injuries, and visual impairments.

The Office of Disability Services provides support and assistance to students with medical, physical, emotional and/or learning disabilities, especially those experiencing problems in such areas as academic program, career choice, and adjustment to the college experience and campus environment. Among the services provided, are those related to accessibility of campus facilities, individual counseling, reasonable classroom accommodations, advocacy for student needs, and referral to appropriate governmental and community agencies.

We strongly recommend that students with disabilities identify themselves so that the university may better serve and plan for their needs.

The Office of Disability Services is located in the Counseling and Wellness Center, Building 13, Saint Joseph Academic and Resource Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Hours of service are weekdays (Monday – Friday) between 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Accessible parking is available adjacent to Saint Katharine Drexel Residence Hall.

## Xavier University's Commitment to Students with Disabilities

Xavier University of Louisiana is committed to providing for the needs of enrolled or admitted students who have disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

In general, University policy calls for reasonable accommodations, to be made for students with documented disabilities on an individualized and flexible basis. Reasonable accommodations are modifications or provision of services and equipment necessary to enable an individual with a disability to enjoy equal opportunities in education. However, it is the responsibility of students, to seek available assistance at the University and to make their needs known.

Xavier University of Louisiana Office of Disability Services (ODS) is recognized as the University's authority on all aspects related to academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Even if someone chooses not to employ ODS's assistance in acquiring accommodations, the faculty can use ODS as a resource to verify the legitimacy of the request for accommodation, and explain the student's legal rights to accommodation.

# Xavier University of Louisiana Office of Disability Services

## Confidentiality and Information Release

Students with disabilities have a right to review their file which can be arranged by scheduling an appointment with the ODS coordinator. ODS will retain a copy of all information within a student's file for five (5) years after the student has been inactive and then the file will be destroyed. When a student with a disability requests accommodations, he/she understands that some disability-related information may be provided on a need-to-know basis to University officials to help ensure that the student must be accommodated and that the student has been through the disability documentation review process at Xavier. Otherwise, University officials usually do not have access to information regarding a student's disability.

The Office of Disability Services is committed to ensuring that all information regarding a student is maintained as confidential as required or permitted by any law. Any information collected is used for the benefit of the student. This information may include test data, grades, biographical history, disability information, and case notes. Procedures about the treatment of such information have been adopted by Office of Disability Services and are rigorously followed and shared with students.

1. No one has immediate access to student files at the Office of Disability Services except ODS staff. Any information regarding disability gained from medical examinations shall be considered confidential and shall be shared with others within the institution on a need-to-know basis only. Disability-related information is accorded the same treatment as medical records.
2. Information in files will not be released except in the following circumstances:
  - The student states the intent to harm himself/herself or others.
  - A student's file may be released pursuant to a court order or subpoena.
  - A student may give written authorization for the release of information when (s)he wishes to share it with others. Before giving such authorization, the student should understand the information being released, the purpose of the release, and to whom the information is being released. Information will not be released without consent unless federal or state law requires it.
  - Office of Disability Services will retain a copy of all information provided for a minimum of 5 years.
  - A student has the right to review his or her own file.

Adapted from: [http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu/ODS/ods\\_pdfs/policies\\_032005.pdf](http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu/ODS/ods_pdfs/policies_032005.pdf)

## Attendance Expectations

The Office of Disability Services does not have a role in determining individual course policies. Attendance policies for individual classes as stated on the course syllabus and University attendance policies as stated in the University catalog apply to all students. The Office of Disability Services does not issue excuses for absences. If you have a medical or personal emergency, please contact the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at (504) 520-7652 or the Dean of the College of Pharmacy at (504) 520-7500. The Colleges may be able to assist you in the notification of your professors. It is best for you to be in contact with each of your professors about your situation.

# Xavier University of Louisiana Office of Disability Services

## Rights and Responsibilities

Understanding the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved in the accommodation of post-secondary students with disabilities is of key importance. The list below includes the major differences between high school and college-level disability services as well as the rights and responsibilities of the University and its students with disabilities. These lists are not exhaustive, but both do provide a good overview.

### Xavier University Students with Disability

#### Differences between Disability Services in High School and College:

Students and parents may notice differences in disability services between high school and college.

High School	College Level
Eligibility for accommodation is determined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973	IDEA does not apply. Instead, Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are in effect and cover students of all ages
Students are covered by Individual Education Plans (IEP's) or 504 Plans	These plans are no longer valid at the college level. Accommodations and modifications made on these plans may or may not be the same as accommodations provided in college
It is the responsibility of the school to determine the student's need for accommodations and to provide such accommodations	It is the responsibility of the student to self-disclose and register a disability with ODS, make a specific request for accommodations, and submit all required documentation
Students may receive individually designed instruction	Reasonable accommodations may be made to provide equal access, but personal accommodations such as private tutoring or remedial classes are not required
Granted accommodations are often coordinated by teachers and administrators for the student	It is the student's responsibility to disclose and coordinate accommodations with professors or staff
Progress toward goals is monitored by teachers and administration and communicated to the student and parents	Students monitor their own progress
Parents often advocate for students	Communication is the responsibility of the student

#### RIGHTS of Students with disabilities at Xavier University:

- Equal access to courses, programs, services, and activities offered through the University
- An equal opportunity to learn, and to receive reasonable accommodations
- All information and documentation kept confidential by all University faculty and staff
- To have the same rights and privileges available to other students at Xavier University
- To file a grievance
- Having the opportunity to meet privately with faculty and ODS staff to discuss accommodations or other disability-related concerns

## RESPONSIBILITIES of Students with disabilities at Xavier University:

- Meet qualifications and maintain essential institutional standards for courses, programs, and activities
- Self-identify as an individual with a disability when an accommodation is needed and to seek information, counsel, and assistance as necessary in a timely fashion
- Provide required documentation (from an appropriate professional) of a disability
- Follow procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodations and academic adjustments
- Initiate open communication with professors regarding special needs and must be maintained for optimal services
- Pay any costs associated with providing and updating documentation necessary to receive accommodations
- Abide by the university's code of conduct and on matters such as academic honesty
- Providing for their own personal, independent living needs (e.g. a personal assistant), personal accommodations (e.g. private tutors, software for personal use), and individually prescribed auxiliary aids (eyeglasses, hearing aids, wheelchairs)

## Xavier University Office of Disability Services (ODS)

### RIGHTS of Xavier University through the Office of Disability Services:

- Requesting and receiving accommodation requests *in writing* from students initiating the disability accommodation process
- Requesting and receiving current, substantial disability-related documentation (according to established ODS documentation guidelines) from students who request accommodation
- Limiting access to disability-related information received or generated as determined by University policy and applicable law; this is also a responsibility
- Denying unreasonable accommodations, adjustments, and/or auxiliary services if these are not supported by documentation or impose undue hardship to, or fundamentally alter, a service, program, or activity of the university
- Selecting among equally effective accommodations, adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids
- Expecting students and/or their representatives, faculty, and administration to work cooperatively to facilitate the ODS registration and accommodation process

### RESPONSIBILITIES of Xavier University through the Office of Disability Services:

- Not discriminating against students with disabilities
- Making a good faith effort to facilitate and/or provide meaningful access to services, programs, and activities of the University.
- Establishing and disseminating disability-related policies and procedures to the University community and its constituents
- Responding to disability-related requests in a timely manner
- Maintaining the confidentiality of all disability-related information received or generated as determined by University policy and applicable law; this is also a right
- Engendering self-awareness and self-advocacy in students with disabilities
- Providing a secure, monitored environment when administering accommodated exams to students with testing accommodations.
- Participating in the interactive process between the student, faculty, administration, and ODS staff

## Xavier University Faculty

### RIGHTS of Xavier University through faculty:

- Identifying and establishing essential functions, abilities, skills, and knowledge of their courses and evaluating all students on this basis; this is also a faculty member's responsibility
- Requesting verification of a student's eligibility for accommodations in the form of the ODS Accommodation Form or other official ODS document
- Expecting the student to initiate accommodation requests, both initially (with the ODS Accommodation Form) and throughout the semester (for individual exams, for example) in a timely manner
- Expecting exams administered in ODS to be in a secure, monitored environment
- Receiving guidance from ODS staff regarding disability-related questions or concerns

### RESPONSIBILITIES of Xavier University through faculty:

- Identifying and establishing essential functions, abilities, skills, and knowledge of their courses and evaluating all students on this basis; this is also a faculty member's right
- Providing disability-related accommodations *only* to students who are registered with ODS
- Maintaining availability through office hours or by appointment for students to discuss their disability-related needs in a private setting
- Consulting with students regarding their accommodations but **NOT** asking the nature of the disability, **NOT** requesting medical/psychological documentation directly from the student, because the nature of the disability has already been documented in ODS and **NOT** restrictively counseling a student because of a disability
- Maintaining the confidentiality of students with disabilities in the classroom as well as in handling any disability-related correspondence (e.g. ODS Accommodation Forms)
- Acting immediately and appropriately upon receiving a student's ODS Accommodation Form, including: signing the form, keeping a copy of the form, and either providing the reasonable accommodation(s) or contacting ODS for guidance
- With the help of ODS, assuring that course-related media (e.g. syllabi, textbooks, course packets, videos, etc.) are available in alternate formats in timely manner
- Provide the ODS five (5) business days advance notice of all exams, including changes
- Clearly communicating classroom and testing procedures to students with disabilities
- Contacting ODS in a timely manner if any disability-related questions or concerns arise

Excerpts adapted from:  
Tulane University Office of Disability Service Undergraduate Student Handbooks, 2006

# Xavier University of Louisiana Office of Disability Services

## Grievance Procedures

Students have the right to express grievances concerning accommodations. Those with disabilities are responsible for contacting the Office of Disability Services regarding the necessity for services or the timely and effective implementation of academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids. The Office of Disability Services will work with university personnel and students with disabilities to resolve disagreements regarding the need for and/or implementation of academic adjustments/auxiliary aids. In some instances, the accommodation offered by the Office of Disability Services may not be acceptable to the student. In such cases, the student may choose to engage the grievance procedure below. More generally, however, a student may use the procedure in any situation in which the student has a complaint or grievance alleging violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act (Pub. L. No. 101-336) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Pub. L. No. 93-112, § 504, as amended).

### The Procedure for Filing a Grievance:

- All complaints alleging violation of the ADA or Section 504 must be made in writing to the ODS Coordinator within sixty (60) calendar days of the alleged violation or claim of failure to provide academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids. The written complaint should specify the time, place, and nature of the act claimed to be in violation. The complaint may be supplemented by supporting documents from persons having firsthand knowledge of the facts or other documentation and evidence, which the alleging party feels, supports the complaint.
- The ODS Coordinator will collect and investigate all pertinent facts and circumstances in support of the alleged violation within twenty (20) working days of receipt of the complaint, to include review and verification of all documentation, evidence and testimony by involved and/or knowledgeable parties.
- The ODS Coordinator may attempt resolution of a complaint through mutual agreement of the affected parties at any point during the course of the investigation. Should such resolution be achieved, the investigation shall be ended. The terms and conditions of the resolution agreement shall be issued to the charging party and the appropriate administrator of the party or department charged within ten (10) working days for review and signatures.
- When resolution through mutual agreement is not achieved, written findings from the investigation regarding probable cause, along with a recommendation(s) for resolving the complaint, shall be forwarded simultaneously to the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) or the Vice President of Student Services (VPSS). All decisions made by the appropriate VP concerning accommodations are final.

Excerpts adapted from :  
*Tulane University Office of Disability Service Undergraduate Student Handbooks, 2006*

# Xavier University of Louisiana Office of Disability Services

## Procedure for Receiving Disability Accommodations

In order to receive appropriate disability accommodations, students should follow the steps listed below:

### For Academic Accommodations

1. The student should contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) and complete the ODS Intake Form, Release of Information Form, and Documentation Request Forms.
2. The student must provide appropriate documentation that includes a statement of diagnosis and suggested accommodations to validate request for academic accommodations. Documentation must be current, and provided by an appropriate qualified health professional such as a physician, audiologist, psychologist, psychiatrist, or neuropsychologist. Documentation must be submitted before any accommodations are granted.
3. Student and Disability Coordinator complete the necessary form and select appropriate/recommended accommodation(s).
4. Student takes the Accommodation Agreement Form(s) to instructors for signature.
5. Student takes the Accommodation Agreement Form(s) to the Academic Dean for signature.
6. Student returns signed form(s) to ODS and professors within one week of receiving them. Accommodations are not valid unless ALL signed forms have been returned to ODS office, Academic Dean's office and the professor's office.

### For Housing / Dining Accommodations

1. Student should contact the Office of Disability Services and complete the Office of Disability Services Intake Form, Release of Information Form, and Documentation Request Forms. This should be done before the deadline set by Office of Housing & Residence Life.
2. The student must provide appropriate documentation that includes a statement of diagnosis and suggested accommodations to validate request for academic accommodations. Documentation must be current, and provided by an appropriate qualified health professional such as a physician, audiologist, psychologist, psychiatrist, or neuropsychologist. Documentation must be submitted before any accommodations are granted.
3. Once all appropriate documentation has been received, Student Health Services (Medical) or Counseling and Wellness Center (Mental Health), Office of Housing & Residence Life, and the Dean of Students are notified of the request.
4. Student Health Services or Counseling and Wellness Center makes a recommendation (based upon the documentation) to Office of Housing & Residence Life.

### Note

Accommodations are **not** applied retroactively. If students neglect to ask their professors for accommodations, or do not discover that they have a disability until after an exam, paper, or other assignment, the professor is under no obligation to try to retroactively change any grades. Accommodations apply to present, not past events.

Student needs to fill-out an **Accommodation Agreement Form** for EACH semester. This should be done in the **beginning** of the semester, preferably.

Students who are **requesting** a single room **will be assessed at the single room rate.**

# Xavier University of Louisiana Office of Disability Services

## Guidelines for Defining Disabilities and Providing Documentation

A student seeking accommodations is required to provide medical documentation that will substantiate the claim of a disability. Documentation must be provided on letterhead stationary by a licensed professional qualified in the area of the disability or a completed documentation request form. Documentation must have been completed no more than three years prior to the date that the student submits a request for accommodation, except in cases involving psychological disorders or adjustment disorders, then the documentation should be updated yearly. The documentation should address the specific diagnosis; the tests used in making the diagnosis, and, when appropriate, scores.

Specific disabilities must be documented in the following ways:

### Physical Impairments

The Americans with Disabilities Act (hereinafter referred to as “the ADA”) define a physical impairment as “any physiological disorder, or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological, musculoskeletal, special sense organs, respiratory (including speech organs), cardiovascular, reproductive, genitourinary, hemic, and lymphatic, skin, and endocrine.”

### Physical Disabilities

Physical disabilities include physical limitations or health problems, which interfere with school attendance, or learning to such extent that special services, training, equipment, materials, or facilities are required. These disabilities include, but are not limited to, neurological impairments such as Cerebral Palsy, paralysis, convulsive disorders, Spina Bifida, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, and arthritis. Other health-impairing conditions that may limit strength, vitality, or alertness and interfere with participation in educational experiences include Tourette’s Syndrome, AIDS, infection with the HIV virus, Sickle Cell Anemia, lupus, hemophilia, heart disease, cancer, leukemia, and diabetes. A student with physical disabilities requesting accommodations must have his/her physical disability and requested accommodations confirmed by a physician qualified in the area of the disability.

#### Documentation Guidelines:

- The documentation must be from a qualified professional (e.g., physician, nurse practitioner);
- The documentation must identify an actual diagnosis of an impairment;
- The documentation must discuss functional limitations in an academic environment which are caused by the impairment;
- The documentation should recommend accommodations to compensate for identified functional limitations.
- The documentation should list current medication, dosages, and existing (not possible) side effects.

## Visual Disorders

A student with visual impairment, which interferes with educational, or development progress and who is requesting accommodations should submit documentation from an ophthalmologist.

At least one of the following typically manifests disorders in the structure and function of the eye:

- 1) visual acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eye typically manifested by at least one of the following:
  - 2) a peripheral field so constricted that it affects one's ability to function in an educational setting, or
  - 3) a progressive loss of vision, which may affect one's ability to function in an educational setting.
- Examples include but are not limited to cataracts, glaucoma, nystagmus, retinal detachment, retinitis pigmentosa, and strabismus.

### Documentation Guidelines:

- The documentation must be from a qualified professional (e.g., Ophthalmologist, Optometrist);
- The documentation must identify an actual diagnosis of an impairment;
- The documentation must discuss functional limitations in an academic environment which are caused by the impairment;
- The documentation should recommend accommodations to compensate for identified functional limitations.

## Hearing Disorders

A hearing impairment is a loss of auditory function sufficiently severe to affect one's ability to communicate with others or to develop communicative or learning skills.

A student with a hearing loss, congenital or acquired, who seeks accommodations must provide evidence of a loss in both ears of 70 dB average or worse, unaided in any one or more of the speech frequencies of 500, 1K, or 2K Hz, tested with pure tones, and certified by an audiologist, and either

- 1) evidence that the student has received special education services during elementary, secondary, and/or vocational schooling, to be certified by the provider of the special education services, or
- 2) evidence that he/she has performed below the 75% level on the Quigley Test of Syntactic Abilities or a comparable test.

The causes and degrees of hearing loss vary across the deaf and hard-of-hearing community, as do methods of communication, and attitudes toward deafness. In general, there are three types of hearing loss: 1. Conductive loss affects the sound-conducting paths of the outer and middle ear. The degree of hearing loss can be decreased through the use of a hearing aid or by surgery; 2. Sensorineural loss affects the inner ear and the auditory nerve and can range from mild to profound; and, 3. Mixed loss results from both a conductive and sensorineural loss (Disability Services, U of Minnesota, 1995).

Persons who have hearing impairments may have different communication preferences and rely on residual hearing, lipreading, captioning, or perhaps an English based or American sign language. Available services are designed to provide communication access for deaf and hard of hearing students attending the University.

### Documentation Guidelines:

- The documentation must be from a qualified professional (e.g., certified Otologist, Audiologist);
- The documentation must identify an actual diagnosis of an impairment;
- The documentation must discuss functional limitations in an academic environment which are caused by the impairment;
- The documentation should recommend accommodations to compensate for identified functional limitations.

## Developmental Impairments

### Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

The essential feature of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder is a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that is more frequent and severe than typically observed in individuals at a comparable level of development. Some impairment from the symptoms must be present in at least two settings (e.g., at home and at school or work). There must be clear evidence of interference with developmentally appropriate social, academic, or occupational functioning (***Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition***). A student with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder requesting accommodations must submit documentation of the disorder by a duly licensed psychologist or psychiatrist.

Students requesting accommodations from the Office of Disability Services (ODS) due to a diagnosed attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder must provide current and comprehensive documentation of the disability from a **Qualified Professional**. A qualified professional includes the following types of licensed psychologists: clinical, educational, school, and neuropsychologist and other relevantly trained medical doctors. In order to be considered **CURRENT**, an evaluation **must** be performed within 3 years prior to the student's request for accommodation(s).

The following information is provided as a guide to what must be contained in the documentation.

1. The report must include a specific diagnosis of AD/HD based on the DSM-V diagnostic criteria.
2. Level of Severity: Mild, Moderate, or Severe.
3. Date of Diagnosis.
4. Date of last contact with the student.
5. One of each of the following should be included in the documentation:
  - a. Evidence of early impairment.
  - b. Evidence of current impairment.
  - c. Clinical/diagnostic Interview.
  - d. Rating scales.
    - i. Wender Utah Rating Scale.
    - ii. Brown Attention-Activation Disorder Scale.
    - iii. Beck Anxiety Inventory.
  - e. Neuro-psychological and psycho-educational testing.
    - i. Weschler Adult Intelligence Scale – 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (WAIS-IV).
    - ii. Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery Revised: Test of Cognitive Ability.
    - iii. Kaufman Adolescent and Adult Intelligence Test.
  - f. Academic Achievement.
    - i. Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery Revised: Test of Achievement.
    - ii. Weschler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT).
  - g. Information Processing.
    - i. Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude
    - ii. Subtests from the WAIS-IV or the Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery Revised: Test of Cognitive Ability
  - h. Medical Evaluation
    - i. Rule out of the following:
      - Neuroendocrine disorders.
      - Neurologic/Psychological disorders.
    - i. Other tests deemed necessary such as:
      - i. Conners Continuous Performance Test (CPT).
      - ii. Integrated Visual and Auditory (IVA) CPT

## Interpretative Summary

A well-written interpretative summary based on a comprehensive evaluative process is a necessary component of the documentation. Because AD/HD is in many ways a diagnosis that is based upon the interpretation of historical data and observation, as well as other diagnostic information, it is essential that professional judgment be utilized in the development of a summary, which must include:

- a. indication of rule out for inattentiveness, impulsivity, and/or hyperactivity as a result of psychological or medical disorders or noncognitive factors (including medications).
- b. indication of how patterns of inattentiveness, impulsivity, and/or hyperactivity across the life span and across settings are used to determine the presence of AD/HD.
- c. indication of whether or not the candidate was evaluated while on medication, and whether or not the prescribed treatment produced a positive response.
- d. indication and discussion of the substantial limitation to learning presented by the AD/HD and the degree to which it affects the individual in a higher education setting.
- e. indication as to why specific accommodations are needed and how the effects of AD/HD symptoms, as designated by the DSM-IV, are mediated by the accommodations.

### All documentation must include the following:

- a. Name of assessment instruments used and dates of testing
- b. Quantitative and qualitative information which supports the diagnosis (including subtest scores)
- c. The areas of educational impact and the severity of the condition
- d. Previous history of the disability and verification of any previous testing
- e. Recommendations for prescriptive treatments
- f. Notation of medications prescribed, if any, and potential impact on learning
- g. Additional observations or recommendations, which could assist us in adequately serving the student
- h. The names, titles, addresses, phone numbers, state of license and license number of the evaluator(s)

## Specific Learning Disabilities

A specific learning disability is a permanent disorder, which affects the manner in which individuals with normal or above average intelligence take in, retain, and express information. Students with learning disabilities demonstrate a significant discrepancy between aptitude (intellectual functioning) and achievement in one or more of the following areas: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, or mathematical reasoning. This discrepancy cannot be primarily attributed to vision, hearing, or motor impairments; mental retardation; emotional disabilities; environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage; or a history of an inconsistent educational program.

A student with a specific learning disability must provide the following material when requesting accommodations:

- 1) Documentation of a specific learning disability. Documentation must relate to the specific area in which the student is requesting accommodations (e.g., foreign language or mathematics). A licensed psychologist must complete documentation.

The documentation should address specific cognitive-processing strengths, weaknesses, and deficits. Clear documentation of deficit areas is necessary in order for the University to provide appropriate modifications. The following processing areas should be discussed:

- A. Visual spatial abilities
- B. Memory (auditory and visual; short-term and long-term)
- C. Fine motor dexterity (speed/ sequence of motor patterns)
- D. Executive functions (verbal and nonverbal reasoning). Information concerning the student's cognitive flexibility and automaticity with cognitive tasks is helpful
- E. Selective attention/perception (visual and auditory)

Documentation should include an assessment and discussion of the student's oral language skills. Formal instruments or an informal analysis of a language sample is appropriate. The University is primarily interested in determining if the student's learning disability affects oral language and/or if a separate speech disorder is also present.

Also required is a social-emotional assessment that does not suggest a primary emotional basis for the results. The social-emotional status should be assessed and discussed. Formal assessment instrument and/or clinical interviews are appropriate. The University needs to be made aware of differential diagnoses of psychological disorders that impact upon academics. College is typically quite stressful for students who have learning disorders. In an attempt to best serve students, it is helpful to know about their personality characteristics, psychological welfare, self-esteem, and stress level tolerance.

Significant specific achievement deficits relative to potential must be documented. Assessment results must be provided across the following areas:

- A. Written language (spelling and written expression). A written language sample is recommended but not required.
- B. Reading (decoding and comprehension). The report should indicate the student's ability to comprehend longer passages, more typical of college text than some assessment instruments provide.
- C. Mathematics (applied [word problems] and calculations). The report should indicate whether or not the student was successful with algebra problems. Raw scores rarely provide measures of success. For example, students can score within the low average on the WRAT-R without attempting any of the algebra problems.

Assessment instruments with appropriate norms for high school seniors/college freshmen or age appropriate to older students must be used.

Standard scores must represent all standardized measures or percentile ranks based on published norms. These can certainly be supplemented by informal assessment.

- 2) Information regarding special services received during elementary, secondary, and/or vocational schooling.
- 3) Average broad cognitive functioning demonstrated on any of the following individually administered intelligence tests:

- Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale- Revised (WAIS-R)
- Stanford-Binet V
- Kaufman Adolescent & Adult Intelligence Test (KAIT)
- Subscale scores must be provided

## Mental Impairments

A mental impairment is defined by the ADA as “any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.”

### Adjustment Disorder

The essential feature of an adjustment disorder is the development of clinically significant emotional or behavioral symptoms in response to an identifiable psychosocial stressor or stressors. The symptoms must develop within three months after the onset of the stressor(s). The clinical significance of the reaction is indicated either by marked distress that is in excess of what would be expected given the nature of the stressor(s), or by significant impairment in social or academic functioning (**Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition**).

A student with an adjustment disorder requesting accommodations must submit documentation of his/her disorder by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist.

### Psychiatric and Psychological Disabilities

Students with psychiatric disabilities may experience significant emotional difficulty that generally has required treatment in a hospital setting. With appropriate treatment, often combining medications, psychotherapy, and support, the majority of psychiatric disorders are cured or controlled (Disability Services, U of Minnesota, 1995). Some examples include depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, and schizophrenia.

#### Documentation Guidelines:

- The documentation must be from a qualified professional (e.g., psychologist, psychiatrist);
- The documentation must identify an actual diagnosis of an impairment according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders V;
- The documentation must discuss functional limitations in an academic environment which are caused by the impairment;
- The documentation should recommend accommodations to compensate for identified functional limitations, and
- The documentation should list current medication, dosages, and existing (not possible) side effects.

#### When to contact ODS:

- To request accommodations each semester
- To request additional accommodations(s) or review existing accommodations
- When you are not able to work out ODS approved accommodations with faculty
- When accommodations do not seem to be helping
- When there is a problem; we cannot help, if we do not know a problem exists

## Xavier University of Louisiana Office of Disability Services

### Exam Administration Policies and Procedures

#### Policies for exams at ODS

The Office for Disability Services (ODS) works to ensure that appropriate testing accommodations are provided for students who are eligible for services and is committed to maintaining the highest academic integrity standards possible in the ODS exam environment.

Students will be held responsible for following these instructions at all times.

- Leave all class materials and personal items outside of the testing area.
- Take care of personal needs before or after testing.
- Leave all cell phones, watch phones, or electronics devices outside the testing area.
- Empty all pockets.
- Hats/Caps/Jackets will be checked and all pockets should be emptied.
- Budget your time wisely. NO extra time given to transfer answer to scantron.
- If you are late by 10 minutes, there will be no time adjustments. Anything over 10 minutes, you will have to take exam with professor.

#### **I. Procedure for Scheduling Exams in the Counseling Center**

- Complete the **Test Proctoring Form** in its entirety, having the form signed by the instructor of the course, and submitting the form five days before the exam. **Please do not rely on the instructor to do this for you. This is your responsibility.**
- Exam appointments are made from submitted **Test Proctoring Forms**. Be sure to schedule the exam at a time when you do not have a class immediately following.
- All exams will be administered at the scheduled date/time of the class, unless other arrangements have been made by the professor and ODS to take exam at a different time.
- Students are required to give ODS **five (5) business days** advance notice of all exams, including changes.
- Any exam not scheduled five (5) business days in advance may result in you having to take your test with the instructor or a need to reschedule with your instructor for another date/time)

#### **II. Taking Your Exams**

- Students are expected to take their exam at the scheduled time. Students are allowed to use only those items their instructor has approved for use on the exam.
- Students are responsible for following instructions on the exam and will assume any penalties that may result from misunderstandings and misinterpretations.
- No food or drinks are allowed in the testing room, with the exception of water in clear bottles
- Anyone found cheating will be required to surrender his/her exam and the instructor will be notified. The testing room will be monitored on a regular basis.
- You are not permitted to leave the ODS testing area once you have begun your exam.
- Faculty instructions on the **Test Proctoring Form** will be reviewed with you before the exam begins.
- If you are unclear about the exam instructions or conditions, stop the exam and seek assistance from an ODS staff member. The ODS staff member will attempt to contact your professor.

#### **Lateness, Illness, No Show, Cancellation and Final Exams**

You are expected to be at ODS at the time designated on the **Test Proctoring Form** and approved by your instructor.

- If you arrive late for your exam, you must take the remaining time or reschedule your exam with your instructor
- There is no guarantee that the instructor will permit a makeup exam.
- This policy also applies if you are late due to illness.

- If you are unable to take an exam due to illness or emergency, It is your responsibility to contact your teacher/instructor immediately.
- You are responsible for coordinating the makeup of any missed exam or quiz with your instructor.
- If you fail to show up for a scheduled exam, ODS will contact your instructor and you will have to reschedule with that instructor.
- You will be responsible for making contact with ODS to ensure that future exams for that class are schedule
- If for any reason, you have decided not to take your exam at ODS after completing and returning the **Test Proctoring Form**, you are responsible for notifying our office so that we can have the space available for other students. This includes withdrawing from a course.
- Students must notify ODS 24 hours in advance to cancel test accommodation appointments. Students who have two no-shows or two incidents of failure to cancel within 24 hours will need to meet with ODS staff member before scheduling additional exams at the testing center.

### **Academic Misconduct**

- Students are monitored by ODS staff.
- Any student observed utilizing unauthorized resource(s) during an exam will be reported to his/her instructor.
- Any unauthorized notes and any scrap paper used during the exam will be copied and returned with the exam to the instructor.
- Any suspected evidence of cheating will be documented by the ODS staff and reported to the appropriate faculty member.
- Any student caught cheating will lose the privilege of testing with ODS.

### **Delivery and Return of the exams**

- Exams can be delivered or emailed to ODS by 4:00pm the day before the exam.
- Professors can pick up the exams or have scanned and emailed back to the office.

# APPENDIX

# Dispelling Myths about People with Disabilities

**MYTH 1:** *Persons who have disabilities are brave and courageous.*

**FACT:** Adjustment to a disability actually requires adaptation to a lifestyle rather than bravery and courage.

**MYTH 2:** *Wheelchair use is confining; users of these devices are literally wheelchair bound.*

**FACT:** A wheelchair, like an automobile, is a personal assistive device that enables a person with a mobility impairment to get around.

**MYTH 3:** *All persons who are deaf or have hearing impairments can read lips.*

**FACT:** Lip-reading skills vary greatly among individuals and is never totally reliable.

**MYTH 4:** *If you cannot see the disability, it does not exist.*

**FACT:** Hidden disabilities such as AD/HD, learning disabilities, and psychological disabilities, can create significant limitations or difficulties just as someone who is blind or in a wheelchair.

**MYTH 5:** *The lives of people with disabilities are entirely different from lives of most other people.*

**FACT:** People with disabilities go to school, get married, work, have families, do laundry, grocery shop, laugh, cry, pay taxes, get angry, have prejudices, vote, plan for the future and dream just as anyone else does.

**MYTH 6:** *People with disabilities always need help.*

**FACT:** Many people with disabilities are quite independent and capable of giving help.

**MYTH 7:** *There is little one person can do to help eliminate barriers confronting persons with disabilities.*

**FACT:** Every individual can contribute to change. You can remove barriers by:

- Understanding the need for “handicapped” parking and leaving it for those who need it.
- Encourage participation of people with disabilities in community activities by making sure that community meeting and event places are accessible.
- Encourage a barrier-free environment.
- Speaking up when negative words or phrases are used in connection with a disability.

**MYTH 8:** *People without disabilities do not want to be around persons who have disabilities.*

**FACT:** Lack of experience can make people uncomfortable. People, both able-bodied and disabled, must learn to reach out, introduce themselves, and help put others at ease.

**MYTH 9:** *Providing accommodations to persons’ with disabilities gives them an unfair advantage over individuals without disabilities.*

**FACT:** Accommodations are not intended to give individuals with disabilities an unfair advantage, but rather to help level the playing field for all individuals regardless of their disabilities.

**MYTH 10:** *Persons without disabilities are obligated to provide a wide range of special services and treatments for people who have disabilities.*

**FACT:** Since the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act, society as a whole is becoming more aware of all persons’ civil rights and the need to provide certain legal and moral accommodations. However, people without disabilities are not obligated to address all the injustices people with disabilities may encounter as they participate in life. Persons with disabilities are obligated to speak up for their rights and the services available.

# Frequently Asked Questions

***Does Office of Disability Services (ODS) test for LDs and AD/HD?***

No, a student is referred to an outside professional.

***What are accommodations and how do I receive them?***

Accommodations are modifications or changes to limit the impact of a person's disability. In order to receive accommodations, you **must** provide documentation of your disability and how it impacts you in the academic environment. Once accommodations are determined, you are responsible for requesting your accommodations each semester. This is done by coming to ODS and completing an accommodation request form.

***If I register for accommodations, then who will have access to my documentation?***

ODS staff will have access to your documentation but your disability records are confidential and not part of your Xavier University academic records. For more information, see our statement on confidentiality.

***Does ODS provide tutoring?***

No, ODS does not provide tutoring. Tutoring is offered through Academic Support Services on campus. You may also contact the department of the course you are having difficulty in for a tutoring referral.

***Who is responsible for getting the documentation I need to apply for services?***

The student is responsible for getting the appropriate and current documentation to the ODS Office. The ODS Coordinator may assist the student in facilitating this process (i.e., mailing consent form, sending a letter of request to provider), however, the student must follow up with their provider. All cost incurred is the responsibility of the student.

***I am an incoming freshman. Can I get accommodations for Freshman Orientation placement tests?***

Yes, accommodations are available. Please contact ODS at (504) 520-7315 for more information.

***Do I have to complete an Accommodation Request Form every semester?***

Yes, in order to receive accommodations, an Accommodation Request Form must be completed every semester. It is recommended that the form be completed within the first three days of class.

***Are accommodations retroactive?***

No, accommodations are not retroactive. Accommodations do not take effect until the student has completed registration with ODS and has provided the professor with their Accommodation Letter. Students must further give professors at least three (3) school days notice before use of an accommodation. ODS cannot require the professor or anyone else to make changes in grades for assignment/ exams given prior to notifying the professor of the accommodations.

# Xavier University of Louisiana Disability Services Handbook

12th Revision June 2017

Adapted from handbooks from Xavier University Office of Disability Services

Louisiana State University Office of Disability Services

Ohio State University Office of Disability Services

Tulane University Office of Disability Service

University of Georgia Office of Disability Services

University of New Orleans Office of Disability Services

American Council on Education