

HIRAM COLLEGE

STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENTS, AUXILIARY AIDS AND SERVICES

I. Overview

Hiram College is committed to complying with the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (“**Section 504**”) and regulations promulgated thereunder, to ensure that students with disabilities are provided equal opportunity and necessary academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services (hereinafter also referred to as “accommodations”).

The purpose of this document is to describe the criteria and requirements for documenting a disability-related need and the key concepts involved in requests for accommodations.

All Hiram College students are responsible for knowledge of, and adherence to, the policies and procedures contained in the Hiram College Student Handbook and College Catalog, as amended or updated from time to time by Hiram College.

Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of physical or mental disability. It states:

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

For purposes of Section 504, a person with a disability is any person who (i) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, (ii) has a record of such an impairment, or (iii) is regarded as having such an impairment. A student must meet the first definition of disability in order to be eligible to receive academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services. That is, the key elements of a student’s disability status are as follows:

- The student has a physical or mental impairment,
- The impairment limits the student’s participation in a major life activity, and
- The degree of the limitation is substantial.

A temporary impairment does not constitute a disability for purposes of Section 504 unless its severity is such that it results in a substantial limitation of one or more major life activities for an extended period of time. The issue of whether a temporary impairment is substantial enough to be a disability must be resolved on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration both the duration (or expected duration) of the impairment and the extent to which

it actually limits a major life activity of the affected individual. Students who have a temporary impairment should contact Hiram College's Student Disability Services for assistance.

Section 504 requires Hiram College to make modifications to its academic requirements (e.g., changes in the length of time permitted for the completion of degree requirements, substitution of specific courses required for the completion of degree requirements, adaptation of the manner in which specific courses are conducted) that are necessary to ensure that such requirements do not discriminate or have the effect of discriminating on the basis of disability against a qualified student with a disability. Section 504 does not require Hiram College to lower or waive academic standards or substantially alter elements of its courses or programs that the College, after engaging in a deliberative group process, has determined to be essential, to accommodate students with disabilities (see below for more information regarding the deliberative process). The requirement to provide academic adjustments is designed to afford an equal opportunity for students with disabilities.

Section 504 also requires Hiram College to provide auxiliary aids and services (such as materials in alternative formats, interpreters, readers, note takers, etc.) to qualified students who have disabilities as are necessary to ensure that no student with a disability is denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under the education program or activity operated by the College because of the absence of educational auxiliary aids for students with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills.

Under Section 504, a Hiram College student with a disability who is in need of academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services is obligated to provide notice of the nature of the disabling condition to the College and to assist Hiram College in identifying appropriate and effective academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services.

Determining the appropriate academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services for a student with a disability is an interactive process and involves shared responsibility between the student and Hiram College.

All Hiram College students with documented disabilities are eligible for services. Some examples of disabilities include:

- Blindness/visual impairment
- Deafness/hearing impairment
- Acquired brain injury
- Attention deficit disorder
- Chronic medical disorders
- Psychological disorders
- Mobility impairments

- Learning disabilities
- Speech disorders

Hiram College students have the right to choose whether or not they wish to disclose a disability. If a student chooses not to disclose a disability and provide documentation of the student's current disability to Hiram College's Coordinator of Student Disability Services, then the student will not receive academic adjustments from Hiram College. That is, the College is not required to provide academic adjustments to a student who does not self-disclose his or her disability. If a student does choose to disclose that he or she is an individual with a disability and is in need of academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services, then it is the student's responsibility to request this (either by communication or through a scheduled meeting) from Hiram College's Office of Student Disability Services and to provide information sufficient to show the existence of a current disability and to assist the student and the College in identifying appropriate academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services.

Should the documentation submitted by the student be determined by Hiram College to be inadequate, the College will notify the student in a timely manner why it believes the documentation is inadequate and what additional documentation is needed to support the existence of a disability and/or the requested service.

Prior to refusing any requested accommodation on the basis that the accommodation would fundamentally alter the nature of the College's program or lower or waive essential program requirements, Hiram College will convene a committee comprised of persons knowledgeable about the student's disability, including Student Disability Services staff, and about the program, such as faculty and department chairs, to engage in a careful, thoughtful deliberation of: the program/course requirements at issue; whether such requirements are essential; the feasibility, cost, and effect on the program of the requested academic adjustment(s); and any available alternatives. The committee, only after engaging in such a deliberative process, will reach a rationally justifiable conclusion as to whether the requested academic adjustment would fundamentally alter the program or lower essential academic standards and whether alternatives are available, document the conclusions reached and the reasons for them, and provide copies of the documentation to the Student Disability Services office.

Once a student who is a qualified individual with a disability has requested services and has provided all necessary documentation of that disability, then appropriate academic adjustments, auxiliary aids and services can be determined by the Coordinator of Student Disability Services based on the disability documentation and interactive consultation with the student. The student will initially communicate with the College's faculty and staff with respect to a student's needs for academic adjustments and auxiliary aids. As the spirit of the law mentions, the student has ownership of (1) their disability and (2) the disclosure of their disability, both of which reside with the student. Therefore, the student is responsible to provide their accommodations letter to their professors each semester and communicate directly with faculty and staff, as needed, about the implementation of agreed upon services; however, if any problems arise with service delivery, the student should communicate with the Student Disability Services Coordinator, who will take the lead in ensuring necessary services are provided.

Student Disability Services Contact Information and Regular Office Hours:

Kevin P. Feishamel, Ph.D.
Director of Counseling, Health and Disability Services
Coordinator of Student Disability Services
Julia Church Health Center
P.O. Box 67
Hiram, OH 44234
Phone: (330) 569-5952
Fax: (330) 569-5398
Email: feisthamelkp@hiram.edu
Regular Office Hours (subject to change): August-May: 8:30 am – 5:00 pm Monday through Friday

II. Rights and Responsibilities of the Student/Student Disability Services

Rights of Students with Disabilities

- Equal access to courses, programs, services, facilities, and activities offered through Hiram College.
- An equal opportunity to learn, and to receive appropriate accommodations and academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services with the goal of diminishing the effect of a disability on performance.
- Appropriate confidentiality of information related to the student's disability.

Responsibilities of Students with Disabilities

- Meet Hiram College's qualifications and essential academic and institutional standards with or without academic adjustments or auxiliary aids and services.
- Self-identify in a timely manner as an individual with a disability when an accommodation is needed.
- Provide documentation from an appropriate professional that confirms the presence of a current disability and identifies functional limitations of the disability.
- Follow the specific procedures for requesting and obtaining reasonable and appropriate accommodations.
- Abide by Hiram College's standards and guidance for behavior and academic integrity.

Rights of Hiram College's Student Disability Services

- Request appropriate and comprehensive documentation, completed by an appropriate professional, that confirms the presence of a current disability and supports a request for academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- Determine appropriate academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services through interactive communication with the student.

- Deny a request for accommodations and/or academic adjustments if the documentation does not identify a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Responsibilities of Hiram College's Disability Services

- Provide information to students with disabilities and assure its availability in accessible formats upon request.
- Provide or arrange for appropriate academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services for students with disabilities on an individualized basis upon request and with documentation verification.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication concerning students with disabilities except where disclosure is permitted or required by law or authorized by the student.
- Notify students in a timely manner if it believes the documentation submitted is inadequate and what additional documentation is needed to support the existence of a disability and/or the requested service.
- Notify students of the determination made with regard to the academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services to be provided and how to appeal that determination.

III. General Information for Documentation Requirements

In order to be eligible for academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services as a student with disabilities, a Hiram College student is required to provide Hiram College's Coordinator of Student Disability Services with documentation that identifies the presence of a current disability. General documentation requirements are as follows:

1. Background information. An Individualized Education Program ("IEP") or Section 504 plan may be helpful in providing information about previous services that were effective. In accordance with revised Americans with Disabilities Act regulations effective March 15, 2011, considerable weight will be given to modifications, accommodations, or related aids and services provided pursuant to an IEP.
2. An appropriate professional must conduct the evaluation. The name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator—including information about licensure or certification, area of specialization, employment, and state or province in which the individual practices should be clearly stated on the documentation. Reports should be on letterhead, typed, dated, signed, and otherwise legible, or otherwise sufficient documentation to demonstrate the authenticity of the test results.
3. The documentation must support the existence of a current disability and need for an academic adjustment. Determinations of necessary academic adjustments, auxiliary aids and services are based upon the existence of a current disability and the assessment of the impact of the disability and its functional limitations on performance. Generally, this means that diagnostic evaluation should have been completed within thirty-six (36) months of the request for services. However, this

rule can be waived for conditions, such as learning disabilities or physical disabilities that do not significantly change over time, and where such documentation can be shown not to be medically necessary. No documentation may be necessary for obvious conditions, such as blindness or deafness.

4. Hiram College will, through an interactive process with the student, determine appropriate academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services and may request more detailed and/or updated documentation as needed to support the student's request(s). Students will bear the expense for all documentation and/or re-evaluation if needed to clarify the student's request for an academic adjustment, provided, however, that if Hiram College requires information of a different type than the student has provided, Hiram College will incur the cost of such.
5. Documentation provided to and accepted at Hiram College **may not** be sufficient for graduate schools or assessments required for graduate schools or licensure (e.g., GRE, GMAT, PRAXIS, etc.). Students are responsible for contacting schools or organizations sponsoring the assessments for their specific documentation requirements.
6. Additional documentation may be required for students with disabilities applying for travel abroad programs sponsored by Hiram College or applying to Hiram College's affiliate institutions in order to determine appropriate needs for academic adjustments and services in an environment significantly different from that of the Hiram College campus.

IV. Hiram College's Specific Documentation Guidelines for Learning Disabilities

1. A qualified professional must conduct the evaluation: such as, a licensed psychologist, licensed school psychologist, learning specialist, depending upon the student's current disability. The evaluator's name, title, and professional credentials must be provided.
2. Assessment/testing should be sufficiently current to indicate the current functional limitations of the student's current disability.
3. Documentation needed to substantiate a learning disability should be comprehensive and should, ideally, include the following:
 - Diagnostic interview, with relevant history
 - Assessment
 - a. Cognitive ability/aptitude.
 - b. Academic achievement (reading, oral and written language, math).
 - c. Information processing.

- d. Depending upon the student's particular current disability, actual test scores from standardized instruments.
4. Terms such as "learning styles," "learning problems" and "academic difficulties" typically do not constitute the identification of a learning disability. A substantial limitation of a major life activity needs to be evidenced .
5. Interpretative summary should be provided and will typically need to:
 - Indicate how the learning disability limits learning and/or affects test performance

V. **Hiram College's Specific Documentation Guidelines for Attention Deficit Disorder ("ADD")/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder ("ADHD")**

1. The evaluation must be performed by an appropriate professional, such as a medical doctor or licensed psychologist who is knowledgeable regarding ADD/ADHD. The evaluator's name, title and professional credentials must be provided.
2. Documentation should include a medical or clinical diagnosis of ADD/ADHD as well as a rationale for the diagnosis of the student's current disability.
3. The documentation should be comprehensive and should, ideally, include the following:
 - a. Quantitative and qualitative information or a clinical evaluation that supports the existence of a current disability.
 - b. Because ADD/ADHD is, by definition in the DSM-IV, first manifested in childhood (although it may not have been formally diagnosed) and manifests itself in more than one setting, relevant historical information to establish symptomology indicative of ADD/ADHD throughout childhood, adolescence and adulthood may be helpful.
 - c. Summary and interpretation of assessment instruments (formal assessment instruments and/or clinical interview including a developmental history).
 - d. Information regarding the current specific functions affected by the disability and the severity of the limitations (e.g., ability to sustain attention, distraction index).
4. Documentation may reflect the current array of symptoms/features and level of functioning as well as the current level of impairment; if the documentation does not, students may be required to submit updated information and/or documentation.

5. Terms such as “suggests,” “is indicative of” or “attention problems” are not sufficient, in and of themselves, to support the existence of a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (see the definition of a person with a disability in I. on the first page hereof).
6. Problems with organization, test anxiety, memory, or concentration in selective situations do not generally, in and of itself, fit the definition of disability.

VI. Hiram College’s Specific Documentation Guidelines for Psychological Disabilities

1. The evaluation must be conducted by an appropriate professional such as a psychiatrist, clinical or counseling psychologist, clinical social worker. The evaluator’s name, title and professional credentials must be provided.
2. Documentation should include a medical or clinical diagnosis of a psychological disability as well as a rationale for the diagnosis
3. Documentation necessary to substantiate a psychological disability should include the following:
 - Information regarding the severity of the disability and the specific life/academic functions affected by the disability and/or affected by medication for such psychological disability.
4. Documentation should reflect the current array of symptoms/features and level of functional limitations; if the documentation does not, the student may be required to submit updated information and/or documentation.

VII. Hiram College’s Specific Documentation Guidelines for Medical/Physical Disabilities

1. A qualified health care professional must conduct the evaluation. The evaluator’s name, title, and profession credentials must be provided. Depending on the specific condition, examples of appropriate professionals might include— audiologist, ENT specialist, orthopedist, cardiologist, ophthalmologist, neurologist or other medical specialists with expertise in the student’s condition.
 - Because the provision of all reasonable academic adjustments and services is based upon assessment of the impact of the student’s current disability, it is important to provide current and appropriate documentation, such as the following:
 - A clear statement of the chronic health/orthopedic disorder.
 - A summary of assessment procedures and evaluation instruments/reports used to make the diagnosis (i.e., physical findings, lab tests, etc.).
 - Status of the individual’s condition—static, improving, declining.

- A description of the condition's current functional impact on learning or other major life activities relevant to the service sought.
- Information that supports the need for academic adjustments for the student.

VIII. Hiram College Student Disability Appeals Procedures

The appeal procedures contained herein apply to current students of Hiram College in cases where a student believes that the student's request for academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services has been improperly denied .

Appeals

A Hiram College student who believes that a request for academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services has been improperly denied may file an appeal by completing a **Request for Appeal and Authorization to Release Information** form (hereinafter referred to as the "**Appeal Form**"). The Appeal Form is available at the Student Disability Services office listed in I. above and should be filed with the Coordinator of Student Disability Services. The student must complete the Appeal Form in its entirety and attach a description of the circumstances leading the student to believe that a request was improperly denied. The description should, with all possible accuracy, include dates of requests for accommodations and subsequent denial, as applicable. Appeals should be filed within thirty (30) business days after the student receives the determination on their request for academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids.

Informal Resolution

After the Appeal Form has been filed, a mutually agreed-upon time and place will be arranged for the student to meet with the Coordinator of Student Disability Services in consultation with any appropriate College representative in an attempt to resolve the appeal. Appeals not resolved to the satisfaction of the student within fourteen (14) business days after the filing of the Appeal Form shall be referred to a committee convened by Hiram College (of which the Coordinator of Student Disability Services shall be a member) (the "**Committee**") for formal resolution as provided for below. The Coordinator of Student Disability Services may, with the agreement of the student, extend the fourteen (14) business day time period for appeal resolution. The extension will be acknowledged in writing or by email.

Formal Resolution

A formal hearing shall be held with respect to all appeals referred to the Committee within thirty (30) business days after referral of the appeal to the Committee. The thirty (30) day business time frame may be extended by the Committee for good cause. Prior to the hearing date, the Committee shall require the student and the appropriate College representative to summarize in writing their respective positions. Their summaries may include statements from appropriate professionals. Their summaries should address, among other things, documentation of the student's disability, the nature of the accommodation requested, and, if applicable, information regarding the effect of any request for the accommodation on the educational program in which the student is enrolled. Copies of the summaries will be provided to the

Committee for distribution to the Hearing Committee (defined below) that will hear the case, and a copy of the summary shall be exchanged between the student and the appropriate College representative no less than ten (10) business days prior to the hearing.

At the hearing, both the student and the appropriate College representative shall be entitled to comment on their respective positions. Appeals discussed at the hearing will be limited to those presented in the original summary. Both may utilize the assistance of one person from the Hiram College community, specifically a Hiram College student, employee, or faculty member. The matter will be heard by a committee consisting of no less than three (3) persons designated by the Committee to serve as its members (the “**Hearing Committee**”). One of the members of the Hearing Committee will be selected by its members to chair the Hearing Committee.

The Hearing Committee shall, unless such time is extended by the Hearing Committee for good cause, render its decision in writing within ten (10) business days after the hearing, and a copy of the decision will be provided to the student, the appropriate College representative, and the Coordinator of Student Disability Services.

Student’s Right to Withdraw/Reimbursement

If the Hearing Committee’s decision is adverse to the student, then depending on the timeliness of the accommodation request, the student may be able to withdraw from the course or program without academic penalty. Reimbursement for any associated costs are determined by the College’s refund policies. A student may always proceed in the course or program without the requested academic adjustments.

Confidentiality

Appeals will be handled as confidentially as is reasonably possible. Consultation by the Coordinator of Student Disability Services, or any investigator appointed by the Committee with students, faculty, staff or others will be strictly limited to those who may have information about the appeal, who need to know that an appeal has been made, or whose job responsibilities include arranging accommodations for students with disabilities.

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REQUEST FOR APPEAL AND AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE INFORMATION

I have been provided with a copy of the Hiram College Student Disability Appeals Procedures. I have received and understand these procedures.

I request implementation of these procedures as a possible means of resolving a denial of a request for academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services that I have explained in an attached description.

I have attached a written description that provides details of the circumstances leading me to appeal the denial of my request for academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services. It includes, with all possible accuracy, the date of request for accommodations and subsequent denials, as applicable.

I understand that the procedures may require the release of information about my appeal, including documents and other information relating to my disability, to various persons who may be involved in these procedures. I authorize Hiram College's Coordinator of Student Disability Services and others involved in the procedures to release such information for this purpose.

I understand that the decision regarding my appeal will be communicated to me in writing following due procedures.

STUDENT SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

STUDENT NAME (please print): _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ (CELL) _____
(HOME/DORM)

This completed form should be filed with Hiram College's Student Disability Services office.