



Weill Cornell Medicine

Office of Student Affairs and Student Life

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Weill Cornell Medicine Office of Student Life

Disability is defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities." An individual may also qualify as disabled if they have had an impairment in the past or is seen as disabled based on a personal or group standard or norm. Such impairments may include physical, sensory, and cognitive or intellectual impairments. Mental disorders (also known as psychiatric or psychosocial disability) and various types of chronic disease may also be considered qualifying disabilities. A disability may occur during a person's lifetime or may be present from birth. Disability can be permanent or short-term.

Weill Cornell Medicine (which includes the Medical College and Graduate School of Medical Sciences) is dedicated to providing educational opportunities that are accessible, equitable, and inclusive for all individuals with disabilities. Federal law states that no qualified student will be excluded, denied participation, or subjected to discrimination from any program or activity.

Accommodation Requests and Review Process Guidelines

- The student must initiate a formal request for disability accommodations or services. The school's obligation to provide accommodations is not triggered until the individual with a disability makes their needs known.
 - Students in the Medical School:
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 - Students in the Graduate School:
Judith Cukor, PhD, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs: juc2010@med.cornell.edu, 212-746-4492
 - Students in the Medical and Graduate Schools:
Devin Sullivan, Student Accommodations Coordinator: des4014@med.cornell.edu
- The student will provide disability documentation supporting their need for accommodations or services from one or more of the following sources:

- A certified medical practitioner
 - A previously attended post-secondary institution
 - Testing agencies
- The Office of Institutional Equity has responsibility for determining the acceptability of documentation and reserves the right to require additional information. The school maintains the right to deny documentation that does not verify a student’s disability or justify the need for reasonable accommodations. Student disability documentation must sufficiently establish a direct link between the underlying condition and the requested accommodation(s). Documentation will not be accepted from family members. In certain cases, temporary accommodations or services may be granted while awaiting sufficient documentation. The school also maintains the option of seeking a second, professional opinion regarding documentation presented to verify disabilities.
 - Once the request has been reviewed and approved, the Student Accommodations Coordinator facilitates relevant aspects of the student’s curricular, academic and student affairs needs by working with the faculty and administrators necessary to enact or maintain such accommodations or services.
 - Approved need for accommodations or services is valid as long as a student is continuously enrolled at the school. However, if there is a break in the student's enrollment, the student may need to renew documentation or provide additional information. If a student submits documentation with an expiration date, they are responsible for renewing their application to continue or extend an accommodation. Students may request a review of accommodation decisions. (See “Accommodation Decision Review Process”)

Accommodation Decision Review Process

- Students who are not granted accommodations through this process may seek a review of the coordinator’s decision.
- If a request for an accommodation is denied, students will receive information about the review process with their denial decision letter.
- All requests for review are handled by the Director of the Office of Institutional Equity and the respective Student Affairs Dean(s). This decision is final.
- Students not approved for housing accommodations, or students whose accommodation denials are upheld following the review process, may apply for housing using the standard housing process. Students should contact the Director of Housing Programs, Timothy Moran (trm4003@med.cornell.edu) for detailed information about this process.

Confidentiality and maintenance of records

- Documentation is treated as confidential and kept separate from the academic record.
- Generally, no documentation is released by the Office of Institutional Equity without the student's informed and written consent.
- Documentation is protected under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA; <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/>), and will only be released from the student’s file in one of the following circumstances:
 - with written permission from the student
 - in the case of a court order
 - for purposes of legitimate educational interest.
 - In certain situations, disclosure of selected information about the student’s condition(s) to faculty or administration may be necessary to fulfill the required accommodations or services. Such disclosure would be agreed upon first between the Student Accommodations Coordinator and the student.

- Documentation is destroyed six years after the date of the last attendance.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- The student is responsible for initiating the request for disability accommodations or services as per the designated process.
- The student is responsible for providing the required supporting documentation meeting designated standards.
- The student is responsible for any costs or fees associated with obtaining the necessary documentation to support their claim.
- For housing requests, all requests for housing accommodations, along with all of the required documentation and forms, must be submitted no later than:
 - **July 15th** for students looking to move in the Fall semester, and
 - **December 15th** for students looking to move in the Spring semester.
 - While applications submitted after these dates will be accepted and considered, WCM cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet late applicants' accommodation needs, including any needs that develop during the semester.
- Once the accommodations or services are authorized and a plan for implementation has been determined, an accommodation notification letter will be sent to the student for use in communication with instructors or supervisors about the authorized accommodations or services, where relevant. If implementation requires the assistance of, or knowledge of, the student's instructor or supervisor, the student must communicate with the instructor or supervisor at least two (2) weeks in advance of the implementation of the needed accommodations or services.
- The student is responsible for notifying the Student Accommodations Coordinator immediately if they experience any barriers to receiving accommodations or services, or if the student has concerns about discrimination or unfair treatment as a result of the requested accommodations or services.

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