



Weill Cornell Medicine

Office of Student Life

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Weill Cornell Medicine Student Disability Services

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 he/she has 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.

The Student Disability Services of Weill Cornell Medicine (which includes the Medical College and Graduate School of Medical Sciences) are 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 disabled individual makes his or her needs known.
 - Students in the Medical School:
Janna Gordon-Elliott, MD, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs: jsg2005@med.cornell.edu, 212-746-1058
 - Students in the Graduate School:
Judith Cukor, PhD, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs: juc2010@med.cornell.edu, 212-746-4492
- The student will provide disability documentation supporting their need for accommodations or services from one or more of the following sources. Documentation is not accepted from family members.
 - a certified medical practitioner
 - a previously attended post-secondary institution
 - testing agencies
- The Student Disability Services 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. 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.

- Students may appeal accommodations decisions.
- Once the request has been reviewed and approved through the designated system, the Assistant Dean (Student Affairs) coordinates 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.

Confidentiality and maintenance of records

- Documentation is treated as confidential and kept separate from the academic record.
- Generally, no documentation is released by Student Disability Services without the student's informed and written consent. 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 Assistant Dean (Student Affairs) and the student.
- 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 Assistant Dean (Student Affairs) 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.
- Once the accommodations or services are authorized and a plan for implementation has been determined, an accommodations and services letter will be granted to the student to 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 two (2) weeks, or more, in advance of the implementation of the needed accommodations or services.
- The student is responsible for notifying the Assistant Dean (Student Affairs) immediately if any barriers to receiving accommodations or services are being experienced, or if the student has concerns about discrimination or unfair treatment as a result of the requested accommodations or services.