

## The Office of Academic Accommodations and Accessibility

### Policy to Request Academic Accommodations

Benedictine University will make every effort to provide eligible students with reasonable accommodations based on individual learning needs and recommendations from Licensed Health Care Providers. In order to provide accommodations in a timely manner, the University requires reasonable notice (particularly in consideration of an auxiliary aid or service) of specific needs.

Academic Accommodations are not intended to substantially alter the course. Instead, Academic Accommodations as modifications to the student's environment, curriculum format, or equipment that allows a student with a disability to gain access to content and/or complete assigned tasks. Students are expected to meet all course requirements as listed on the syllabus and within their program of study. If the instructor believes the accommodations granted alter the nature of the course, the instructor should meet with the student and the Director of Academic Accommodations to discuss the situation.

#### **Four Steps to Receiving Academic Accommodations:**

1. To begin your request, a student needs to self-identify as a person with a disability to the Office of Academic Accommodations and Accessibility. We are located in Kindlon Hall, Room 310 in Lisle or we can be reached via email at [accommodations@ben.edu](mailto:accommodations@ben.edu) or at (630) 829-6041
2. Once identified, the student will be given:
  - 1.) The Self-Identification Form – this will be completed by the student.
  - 2.) The Verification Form – this will be completed by the Licensed Health Care Provider who has a history of treating the student's disability. Please make sure your Health Care Provider includes comprehensive information and descriptions for all relevant questions.
3. The student will submit both forms listed in Step 2 and **MUST** include corroborating evidence. For a complete list of documentation **REQUIRED**, based on type of disability, please see pages 2-5 of this Policy. To avoid lengthy delays caused by a lack of evidence, we highly recommend you share this information with your Health Care Provider.

Students who seek accommodations for **Neurological and Developmental, Emotional & Psycho-Educational Disorders (including Learning Disabilities and ADHD)**, **MUST** provide documentation showing a *formal psychological assessment* was used in your diagnosis and the results of an emotional and/or psychoeducational evaluation must be provided. **We request that you submit a formal evaluation from a licensed health care facility that specializes in Neuropsychological & Psychological Testing.**

*Please note: For all types of disabilities, an IEP or 504 Plan does NOT take the place of the other documentation. You MUST still provide the additional documentation (based on your type of disability) requested in the Policy, as well as the Self-Identification Form and Verification Form.*

4. Following a review of the Verification Form and documentation for appropriateness and completeness, a subsequent determination of one's eligibility for Academic Accommodations will be made.

If an accommodation request is approved, the student will be notified through their school email and provided details about next steps. If the request is denied, the student will be provided an explanation for the refusal, as well as guidance if specific documentation is needed. Students may also appeal the Committee's decision through the Academic Standing Committee.

**TYPES OF DISABILITIES AND EXAMPLES**

<p align="center"><b><u>Medical/Physical Disabilities</u></b></p> <p>Vocal</p> <p>Vision</p> <p>Hearing</p> <p>Mobility</p>	<p align="center"><b>Neurological and Developmental, Emotional and Psycho-educational Disorders/Disabilities</b></p> <p>Autism Spectrum Disorder</p> <p>ADHD</p> <p>Learning Disabilities</p> <p>Intellectual Disability</p>	
<p>Anatomical Loss</p> <p>Cancer and other diseases</p>	and/or	<p>Generalized Anxiety Disorder</p> <p>Panic Disorder</p>
<p>Neuro- muscular/ skeletal</p> <p>Heart</p> <p>AIDS</p> <p>Other Medical diagnosis</p>		<p>Other Psychiatric Diagnoses</p>
<p>*Medical/Physical Disabilities may be eligible for Temporary Academic Accommodations</p>		<p>*To be considered for Academic Accommodations for one or more of the disabilities in these categories, <i>including mental health disorders</i>, you must report: the corresponding ICD 10 code for that disorder on the Verification Form, as well as attach documentation and results from of a current, formal psychological assessment made with a reliable diagnostic instrument.</p>

**Documentation of Disabilities**

It is the responsibility of each student who seeks accommodations and services from Benedictine University to provide a comprehensive, written evaluation of their disability from a Licensed Clinical Professional/Care Provider. In order to verify the student’s eligibility under Federal, State, and University mandates, and to document his/her need for accommodations and services, this evaluation must meet specific requirements. Please note falsification of one’s disability status constitutes fraud.

In this next section, we outline the required documentation needed to accurately assess the student’s need for academic accommodations, the severity and duration of the disability (whether chronic or acute; whether on-going or temporary), as well the Care Provider’s recommendations for academic accommodations. The professional(s) conducting the assessment and rendering diagnosis of specific disabilities must be qualified to do so and must be actively treating the student for the identified diagnosis. It is inappropriate for students to provide documentation from a licensed clinical professional who is a family member or a proxy for the actual care provider.

The documentation provided allows our staff to examine each student, individually, in order to develop the best possible academic accommodations for the student to be successful at Benedictine. Because we assess each case individually, if a student’s condition changes, we are always open to revision of their approved academic accommodations, with proper documentation.

## Documentation Needed Based on Type of Disability

**A. Learning Disabilities Documentation:** A comprehensive neuropsychological exam is REQUIRED for students seeking accommodations for a specific learning disability. Testing must be comprehensive and appropriately current within 3 years. It is not acceptable to administer only one test in making a diagnosis. Minimally, the domains to be addressed must include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Aptitude: All subtests, scaled, and standards scored must be included.
2. Achievement: The student's current levels in functioning in reading, mathematics, and written language must be addressed (standard scores). Additional formal and informal tests such as timed and untimed administration and a writing sample are recommended to corroborate underachievement in specific academic areas.
3. Information processing: Specific areas of information processing (for example, short- and long-term memory, reasoning, listening, sequential memory, auditory and visual processing, and processing speed) must be assessed (standard scores). Use of subtests from the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale – Revised and/or the cognitive report of the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Test Battery – Revised are acceptable. Additional testing designed to corroborate the existence of processing disorders as identified by Wechsler or the Woodcock-Johnson are recommended.
4. A summary of findings. If a student is found to have a disabling condition, the assessment summary should explain the relationship between this condition and the problems the student has been encountering in academic and other settings;
5. Recommendations about specific areas academic accommodations are needed.
6. Title, professional credentials, contact information, and signature of the licensed clinician.
7. A recent (within 3 years) IEP or 504 can be used if all three domains (aptitude, achievement, and information processing are included and discussed. The results from each of the tests performed to assess each of the three areas must be included.

**B. ADHD Documentation:** Diagnosis of attention deficit disorder should be made by a licensed professional(s). This documentation should be appropriately current, within 3 years. **The licensed professional(s) should have expertise in diagnosing attention deficit disorders in adults and in diagnosing other psychiatric disorders that might coexist with attention deficit disorder.** Symptoms of some medical disorders and some psychiatric disorders can resemble symptoms of ADHD. Therefore, the assessing professional(s) should make every effort to obtain relevant information about medical and psychological factors which may contribute to the student's disabling condition.

**An assessment for ADHD must include a formal neuropsychological assessment to include ALL of the following documentation provided by an appropriately licensed Clinician/Care Provider:**

1. Observation of the student's behavior; including interviews and questionnaires
2. Complete developmental, educational, and medical histories;

3. Diagnosis, date of diagnosis, and specification of the current DSM criteria on which the diagnosis was based;
4. Results of recognized, industry standard, cognitive tests;
5. A summary of findings. If a student is found to have a disabling condition, the assessment summary should explain the relationship between this condition and the problems the student has been encountering in academic and other settings;
6. An evaluation of the effectiveness of past and current medications if prescribed for relief of ADHD symptoms;
7. Recommendations about specific areas academic accommodations are needed.
8. Title, license, credentials, contact information, and signature of professional who has either diagnosed and/or currently treats the student for their disability.

**C. Psychological Disability Documentation:** Diagnosis of psychological disabilities must be made by a licensed professional. Documentation must be comprehensive and be appropriately current, within 3 years. **Self-report testing will NOT be accepted.**

**A series of formal assessments for a psychological disability must include ALL of the following documentation provided by an appropriately licensed Clinician/Care Provider:**

1. Complete developmental, educational, and medical histories; including interviews and questionnaires to allow a student to describe current concerns and past problems;
2. Observations/insights of the student's behavior in an academic setting;
3. Diagnosis, date of diagnosis, specification of the current DSM criteria on which the diagnosis was based; tests performed, and results for each assessment must be provided by the Licensed Health Care Provider.
4. Information concerning any prescribed medication, including that used by the student during the assessment process, and its effect on the student and possible impact on academic success;
5. Approximate duration of the disorder;
6. A summary of findings. If a student is diagnosed with a disabling condition, the assessment summary should explain the relationship between this condition and the problems the student has been encountering in academic and other settings;
7. Recommendations about areas in which academic accommodations may be needed.
8. Title, license, credentials, contact information, and signature of professional who has either diagnosed and/or currently treats the student for their disability.

**D. Physical Disability Documentation:** Physical disabilities may be either on-going or temporary in nature.

For *on-going* physical disabilities, documentation must include ALL of the following from an appropriately **Medically Licensed Care Provider:**

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1. Current diagnosis on Care Provider's letterhead;
2. Manifestations/ effects and level of severity of the condition;
3. Information concerning any prescribed medication, and its effect on the student and possible impacts on academic success;
4. An assessment of functional limitations in an academic setting; and
5. Recommendations about areas in which academic accommodations may be needed.
6. Title, professional credentials, contact information, and signature.

For *temporary* physical disabilities, documentation must be current (within 30 days of incident) and must include ALL of the following from an appropriately **Medically Licensed Care Provider:**

1. Current diagnosis on Care Provider's letterhead;
2. Date of incident, expected length of disability, expected date of return to normal activities
3. Information about prescribed medication, and its effect on the student and possible impacts on academic success (if applicable);
4. An assessment of functional limitations in an academic setting (if applicable)
5. Title, professional credentials, contact information, and signature.

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Benedictine University complies with the definition of handicapped persons as found in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (PL 93-112) and subsequently stated in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (PL 101-336).

“Any person who (i) has a physical or mental disability which substantially limits one or more of such person’s major life activities, (ii) has a record of such an impairment, or (iii) is regarded as having such an impairment.”

## **Definition of Terms**

**Physical or Mental Disability** is defined as, but not limited to, the following:

-any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the body systems: neurological; musculoskeletal; specific sense organs; respiratory (including speech organs); cardiovascular; reproductive; digestive; genitourinary; hemic and lymphatic; and endocrine.

-any mental or psychological disorder, such as intellectual disability or developmental disabilities, organic brain syndrome or acquired brain injury, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.

-any contagious and non-contagious diseases and conditions such as orthopedic, visual, speech and hearing impairment; cerebral palsy; epilepsy; muscular dystrophy; multiple sclerosis; cancer, heart disease; diabetes; mental retardation; emotional illness; HIV diseases (whether symptomatic or asymptomatic) and tuberculosis.

**Major life activities** are defined as daily functions such as self-care, performance of manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, breathing, learning or working.

**Is regarded as having an impairment** is defined as having a physical or mental impairment that does not substantially limit major life activities as a result of the attitudes of others toward such an impairment; or has none of the impairments listed in the above definitions, but is treated as having such an impairment, such as persons with a limp or persons with disfiguring scars.

**Has a record of such impairment** is defined as having a history of, or has been incorrectly classified as having, a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

### **Exclusions:**

An individual with a disability does not include a person who is currently engaging in the illegal use of drugs. However, an individual who is currently participating in, or who has successfully completed, a supervised drug rehabilitation program and is not currently engaging in the illegal use of drugs, or who is otherwise no longer engaging in such us, shall be considered an individual with a disability if the individual otherwise fits the definition of a disabled person as described in the above definitions.

### **Information:**

For further information, the Office of Academic Accommodations and Accessibility is located in Kindlon Hall, Room 312, on the Lisle campus. Please call (630) 829-6041. Fax (630) 596-8440 You can also email us at [accommodations@ben.edu](mailto:accommodations@ben.edu)