

Disability Resource Center

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**Documentation Requirements for Disability Housing Requests**

Savannah State University’s Disability Resource Center is committed to working with students with disabilities to assess their needs and to assist with academic accommodations that may be necessary and appropriate due to their disability.

Services are available to students who:

1. Self-identify to the Coordinator of Disability Services

2. Participate in an intake interview with the Coordinator of Disability Services to determine needs and accommodations

3. Provide appropriate documentation of the disability (see below) that supports the accommodations being requested.

Accommodations are determined on an individual basis, based on the documentation provided and the interview with the student. Accommodations that are considered reasonable and do not fundamentally alter the nature of on campus residential life may be appropriate.

**Definition of Disability**

An individual must demonstrate that his/her condition meets the definition of a disability under the *Rehabilitation Act, 1973* and/or the *Americans with Disability Act (ADA), 1990*. The ADA defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

*Substantially limits* under ADA refer to significant restrictions as to the *condition, manner or duration* under which an individual can perform a particular major life activity as compared to most people.

 *Whether a condition is substantially limiting* to support an accommodation request is a decision made by qualified professional(s) based upon multiple sources of information.

A clinical diagnosis is not synonymous with a disability. The specific symptoms that are present should be stated in the documentation. Evidence that these symptoms are associated with substantial impairment in a major life activity is required for provision of accommodations. A detailed description of current substantial limitation in the academic environment is essential to identify appropriate accommodations and services. Specific requests for accommodations need to be linked to the student's current functional limitations, and the rationale for each recommendation clearly stated.

**General Documentation Guidelines**

In general, documentation for disability housing requests should include:

1. Documentation of the disabling condition or need that is the basis of the request.

\*Description of the history, current symptoms, and severity of the disorder.

\*Description of the expected progression or stability of the disorder.

\*Description of the current functional limitations resulting from the disorder.

2. A clear description of the needed housing configuration

3. An explanation of how the request relates to the impact of the disabling condition

4. Possible alternatives if the recommended configuration is not possible.

5. An indication of the level of need for the recommended configuration (and the consequences of not receiving).

Below is a summary of factors considered when evaluating disability housing requests:

Severity of the Condition:

Is impact of the condition life threatening?

Is there a negative health impact that may be permanent if the request is not met?

Is the request an integral component of a treatment plan for the condition in question?

What is the likely impact on academic performance if the request is not met?

What is the likely impact on social development if the request is not met?

What is the impact on the student’s level of comfort if the request is not met?

Timing of the Request:

Was the request made with initial housing request?

Was the request made before the deadline for housing requests for the semester in question?

Was the request made as soon as possible after identifying the need?( Based on date of diagnosis, receipt of housing assignment, change in status, etc)

Feasibility and Availability

Is space available that meets the student’s needs?

Can space be adapted to provide the requested configuration without creating a safety hazard

 (electrical load, emergency egress, etc?)

Are there other effective methods of housing configurations that would achieve similar benefits as the requested configuration?

How does meeting this request impact housing commitments to other students?

 If the Coordinator finds an appropriately documented disability need, a letter from the Coordinator requesting appropriate accommodations will be submitted to Residential Services and Programs.

**Students with special housing needs will be accommodated only if they submit their housing contract within the time limits established by Residential Services and Programs (4 months notice is requested) or if the waiting list for housing is able to serve them. Late requests for accommodations after housing assignments have been made may not be able to be fulfilled.**

For additional information, contact Tadisha Sams-Young, Coordinator of Disability

Services, at (912) 358 3115 or fax at 912 358 3616 or by email at youngt@savannahstate.edu