

**WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY  
GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTATION OF EMPLOYEE DISABILITIES  
AND NEED FOR ACCOMMODATION\***

*Please provide these guidelines to your diagnosing/treating professional.*

**Introduction**

In order to fully evaluate your request for accommodation, W&L will need adequate documentation of your disability and your need for accommodation by virtue of the specific functional limitations of your disability. W&L has developed these guidelines to assist you in working with your diagnosing/treating professional(s) to prepare the documentation needed to support your accommodation request. The Executive Director of Human Resources (or designee) will maintain all such documentation received in a confidential file, separate from the remainder of your personnel record, and will disclose the documentation only in accordance with law or your consent.

**Definitions Applicable To All Employee Accommodation Requests**

- A "disability" is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Physical or mental impairments include, for example (but are not limited to), blindness and visual impairments, deafness and hearing impairments, mobility impairments, specific learning disabilities, emotional or mental illness, and some chronic illnesses such as asthma or diabetes. An impairment that is episodic or in remission can constitute a disability if it substantially limits an individual in a major life activity when it recurs.

- "Major life activities" include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating and working. A major life activity also includes the operation of a major bodily function, including but not limited to, functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine and reproductive functions.

- An impairment constitutes a disability when it prevents an individual from performing a major life activity that the average person in the general population can perform or when the individual is substantially limited as to the condition, manner or duration he/she can perform a particular major life activity as compared to the average person in the general population.

- A "qualified person with a disability" is a person with a disability who, with or without reasonable accommodations, can perform the essential functions of his/her position.

---

*\* Note: for employees requesting accommodation for cognitive disabilities, including, but not limited to, specific learning disabilities and ADHD, documentation should comply with the separate, specific guidelines for cognitive disabilities rather than these general guidelines. Cognitive disabilities are disabilities associated with thinking or conscious mental processes.*

- A "reasonable accommodation" is a reasonable modification or adjustment to a work position, or the provision of auxiliary aids/services, that allows a qualified employee with a disability to perform the essential functions of his/her position.

### **Guidelines For Documentation Of A Disability And Need For Accommodation**

Documentation should include as much of the following as the Executive Director of Human Resources believes is appropriate and relevant to the disability and requested accommodations:

1. A diagnostic statement identifying the nature and extent of the impairment(s), and the date of the current diagnostic evaluation.
2. A detailed description of the current functional impact of the impairment(s) in the unmitigated state (in other words, the current functional impact of the impairment(s) without any mitigating treatment, medication, etc.), as relevant to the current request for accommodations. The documentation should describe if/how the impairment(s) limit(s) one or more major life activities. If the impairment is one that is episodic or has been in remission, the Executive Director of Human Resources reserves the discretion to require documentation describing the functional impact of the impairment at the time it recurs.
3. A description of the expected progression or stability of the impact of the impairment(s) over time, along with a recommendation concerning the predictable need for reevaluation.
4. A description of specific accommodations recommended with a detailed explanation of why each recommended accommodation is necessary due to specific current functional limitations. Any prior accommodations should be referenced, including information about the specific situation in which the accommodation was used and whether or not it benefited the person. Any other current treatments, medications, assistive devices or self-accommodations should also be referenced, with an explanation of their effectiveness in accommodating the functional impact of the disability(ies), any significant side effects that may impact functional abilities, and whether/how any such current treatments, medications, assistive devices or self-accommodations bear on the specific accommodations being requested of W&L.
5. The credentials of the diagnosing professional. The type of professional specialist involved will obviously differ depending on the nature of the impairment(s). However, all professionals must have comprehensive relevant training and must hold a current license in the state in which they practice. Documentation must be on official letterhead from the offices of the diagnosing professional.

W&L reserves the right to request additional documentation as necessary to fully evaluate individual requests for accommodations.