

## Disability Services and Accommodations Overview

The students of Hobart and William Smith Colleges are protected from discrimination on the basis of disability by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and other applicable law. By such legislation, individuals with disabilities are guaranteed certain protections and rights of equal access to programs and services. Eligibility is based on the existence of an identified physical, mental, or health impairment and/or a disability that substantially limits a major life activity.

Not every impairment qualifies as a disability protected by the law, because not every impairment is substantially life limiting. This is why a determination of disability must be made on an individual, case-by-case basis. Whether a substantial limitation to a major life activity exists depends upon an analysis of: (1) the nature and severity of the impairment; (2) the duration of the impairment; (3) the permanent or long-term impact of impairment. Thus, the key factor in answering the question of whether there is a substantial limitation is the actual effect on the individual's life.

Hobart and William Smith Colleges recognize that some students with disabilities require accommodations. An HWS student, either incoming or enrolled, who believes that she/he may be eligible for disability related accommodations due to disability, must first establish eligibility by voluntarily disclosing the condition or disability and providing suitable evidence of disability to the Colleges. This is accomplished by registering with the Office of Disability Services in the Center for Teaching and Learning and submitting comprehensive documentation of disability that conforms to the Colleges *Documentation of Disability Guidelines* to that office. In order to receive accommodations, the registration and documentation processes must be completed.

Reasonable accommodation of disability is an effort on the part of the Colleges to provide students with disabilities access to its programs and services, while maintaining the Colleges' academic standards and the essential nature of its traditions and practices as a residential liberal arts college. Accommodations are determined on an individual basis as substantiated by diagnostic documentation, and are based on the impact to major life activities. Documentation review, accommodations, and student support are provided through various offices of the Colleges, and are coordinated through the Office of Disability Services in the Center for Teaching and Learning.

Once a disability has been documented, the materials included in the documentation will be reviewed with the student to determine appropriate disability related services and accommodations. Accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis and consider the limitations caused by the disability in relationship to the academic demands of residential education at HWS Colleges. Common academic accommodations include: extended time for

examinations, a less distracting setting for examinations; computer access for note taking and examinations; classroom peer note takers, recorded or digital texts; sign language interpreters, etc. Housing and dietary accommodations may also be made when supported by appropriate documentation.

Each semester students must formally request accommodations by meeting with the Coordinator of Disability Services, CTL, to determine appropriate accommodations for the semester. At that point, each student will be provided an accommodation letter to present to those professors from whom the student seeks accommodations. Along with the individualized letters to each student is expected to discuss with each professor the details about how accommodations will be handled for each course. The student will then ask the professor to sign the letter, and when all signatures are obtained, the letter will be returned to CTL. No accommodations will be provided until the signed letter is returned.

Hobart and William Smith Colleges does not provide or pay for testing for learning disabilities, specialized LD tutors, academic coaching or ongoing support with organizational and life tasks. Disability Services can sometimes help assist students to identify these resources in the community to the extent that they are available.

Additional documentation may be necessary to substantiate new requests for accommodations and to determine the continuing need of accommodations.

Documentation is not reviewed to assess the need for medical or clinical intervention or remedial educational services. Clinical consultation to address specific learning problems or remedial assistance is not provided or paid for by The Colleges.