



Frequently Asked Questions  
for  
Students with Disabilities



**Department of Learning Services**  
Mount St. Mary's University  
16300 Old Emmitsburg Road  
Emmitsburg, MD 21727  
301-447-5006

**Question:** Does the Mount offer academic accommodations and support services for students with documented disabilities?

**Answer:** Yes, Mount Saint Mary's University provides support services to students with documented disabilities. These students are eligible for academic accommodations, as stipulated in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the ADAAA of 2008.

Types of disabilities that we routinely accommodate include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ADD/ADHD
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Learning Disabilities
- Chronic Health Conditions
- Physical Disabilities
- Mental Health Diagnoses
- Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- Blind or Low Vision

**Question:** What is the procedure for requesting and accessing accommodations?

**Answer:** In short, students who are seeking accommodations on the basis of a diagnosed disability must complete the [Request for Accommodation](#) form and return it to Learning Services along with a copy of your most recent documentation. This should be done AFTER the student has been accepted to the Mount.

The process for requesting and getting accommodations:

1. Send in a completed [Request for Accommodation](#) form with appropriate documentation (based on the specific diagnosis).
2. The request will be evaluated, and an Accommodation Packet will be written that will include the following:
  - List of academic accommodations for which the student is eligible.
  - Form regarding Academic Substitutions, if eligible.
  - A Release of Information form
3. The Accommodation Packet will be emailed to the student for review. We recommend that students share this information with parents. Please be sure to communicate with Learning Services if you have any questions about this information.
4. Once the student has reviewed the packet, and has had any questions answered, s/he signs the appropriate forms (electronic signatures are used) and returns the packet to Learning Services via email **OR** Print the Packet, sign the appropriate spaces and return it to Learning Services either by mail or scan it and email it back to us.

(continued on page 3)

(continued from page 2)

5. Once the signed packet is received, Learning Services will write the Accommodation Letter and send it to the student's Mount email address as a pdf file.

6. Students are responsible for forwarding this Accommodation Letter to their professors. Learning Services cannot legally send the Accommodation Letters to your professors for you. Please save your Accommodation Letter on your computer as you will need to send it out to your professors every semester.

---

**Question:** Should I send my documentation in to the Admissions Office with my application?

**Answer:** No. Do not send documentation of your disability in to the Admissions Office with your application materials. Information about your disability cannot legally be used as part of the admissions decision.

---

**Question:** Are there separate Admissions standards for students with documented disabilities?

**Answer:** No, all applicants to Mount St. Mary's University must meet the same standards for admission.

---

**Question:** What kind of documentation needs to be provided? How recent does it have to be?

**Answer:** Students who are requesting accommodations must provide documentation of disability. The specific type of the documentation needed depends on the nature of the disability (see below).

In general, appropriate documentation:

- Includes the diagnosis and outlines functional limitations
- Outlines strengths and weaknesses
- Includes test scores (such as WAIS scores)
- Reflects current level of functioning
- Includes a discussion of recommended accommodations
- Includes the name and credentials of evaluator

Please review the documentation guidelines below:

[ADD/ADHD](#)  
[Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)  
[Learning Disabilities](#)  
[Chronic Health Conditions](#)  
[Physical Disabilities](#)  
[Mental Health Diagnoses](#)  
[Deaf or Hard of Hearing](#)  
[Blind or Low Vision](#)

---

**Question: Are 504 Plans or IEPs (Individualized Education Plans) acceptable documentation? What about Summary of Performance (SOP) documents?**

**Answer:** It depends. 504 Plans and IEPs generally do not include the information that is necessary to evaluate the need for accommodations at the college level. Most often these documents contain a list of goals and objectives specific for classes in high school. These are helpful in that they give us information about the accommodations that the high school provided, but they are not sufficient as documentation by themselves. In order to assess strengths/weaknesses and accommodations, we need to have raw data – test scores. These are located in the psycho-educational evaluation that is usually conducted before the original IEP/504 Plan could be written – and every few years since that first IEP/504 Plan.

In some cases, these documents do contain information about diagnostic testing and scores (for example, WAIS scores). These are acceptable.

Summary of Performance (SOP) documents generally include test scores and, in these cases, are acceptable as documentation.

---

**Question: Will students who had accommodations in high school automatically receive accommodations in college?**

**Answer:** No. Federal law states that universities are required to provide reasonable academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities who request them. Students will not receive any accommodations without requesting them – every semester.

---

**Question: Will the accommodations in college be exactly the same as those I received in high school?**

**Answer:** The accommodations in place at the university must work to alleviate the functional limitations of the disability in the university setting. These accommodations will most likely be a little different from those provided to you by your high school.

For example, a student with an auditory processing learning disability who is eligible to receive class notes in high school will most likely receive a copy of the teacher’s lecture notes. At the university level, the student would be provided with peer notes. In our experience, peer notes are much more complete than notes from a professor who has been teaching for a while and who uses a rough outline as notes during lecture. The student is getting what is needed – notes – but in a different (Dare we say better?) way.

---

**Question:** What kinds of accommodations are provided at the Mount?

**Answer:** We provide accommodations based on the documented needs of each individual student. Accommodations are allowed as long as they do not change the essential nature and function of the course and/or assignment and as long as they do not pose an undue hardship on the professor or the university.

*We cannot predict your needs without seeing your documentation first.*

Accommodations that we often provide include:

- Extended time on tests and quizzes
- Alternate location (quieter space) for tests and quizzes
- The use of a computer for tests and quizzes.
- Note takers in classes
- Screen reader programs (such as Kurzweil) for reading textbooks and tests.
- Course substitutions for required foreign language and math classes

It is also important to know that there are some accommodations that are provided by high schools that are inappropriate for the university setting.

In most cases, these high school accommodations are not provided at the college level:

- Word banks
- Teacher notes
- Formula sheets and note card use on tests/quizzes
- Calculators (depends on the class)
- Reduced academic load
- Reduced assignments
- Extended time on assignments

**Question:** Does the Mount offer support for students who need help organizing school work - including class notes and everything that ends up in the bottom of backpacks?

**Answer:** Yes, students who need assistance with organization can work on these skills one-on-one with a Learning Services staff member. Most often, students keep a weekly appointment where they work on these skills and any others. Students are responsible for setting up and showing up for their appointments.

**Question:** Does the Mount offer support for students who struggle with time management? How do they access these services?

**Answer:** Yes, students who need assistance with time management can work on these skills one-on-one with a Learning Services staff member. Most often, students keep a weekly appointment where they work on these skills and any others. Students are responsible for setting up and showing up for their appointments.

**Question:** Are there any specific accommodations in place for students who, because of a documented learning disability, did not take a foreign language in high school or took a modified foreign language course?

**Answer:** Yes. Students whose disability, supported by clear and strong documented need, severely impacts foreign language learning MAY be eligible for a Foreign Language Accommodation.

These include:

- Taking Spanish, French, German, Italian or Latin classes at the 101 and 102 level, but taking them pass/fail. The student's transcript would show a "P" as long as the student passes the courses. Grades of "P" are not calculated into the student's GPA.
- Those students who have severe weaknesses, based on documentation, in auditory processing and or have a language-based learning disability MAY be eligible to take American Sign Language in place of the spoken foreign language courses. Students taking ASL 101 and 102 would take the courses, without any modification to the grading system.
- Students who have severe auditory processing weaknesses or who have language-based learning disabilities that significantly impact the ability to learn a foreign language MAY take two Global Encounters courses in place of the language courses. These students need to take a total of three Global Encounters courses – 1 that is a Veritas requirement for all students and 2 others to replace the Foreign Language courses.

ALL students who are interested in applying for a Foreign Language Accommodation must fill out the [Academic Substitution Request](#) form and return it to Learning Services. No alteration to the Foreign Language requirement will be made until a student fills out the request form.

**Question:** How do students with documented disabilities access testing accommodations?

**Answer:** Testing accommodations need to be requested for every test. Students wishing to use their testing accommodations must fill out a [Test Request Form](#), get it signed by the professor and turn it in to Learning Services at least two business days before each test. On the day of the test, students come to Learning Services instead of their classroom. Learning Services proctors the tests and makes sure that they are returned to the professors when completed.

**Question:** Do students with documented disabilities receive priority scheduling?

**Answer:** No, students will be scheduled for classes at the same time as their classmates. We do offer registration assistance for all students with disabilities. *Freshman Only*- Please complete the [Registration Assistance Form](#) and return it to Learning Services with your documentation.

**Question:** How do students with documented disabilities access campus housing accommodations?

**Answer:** All requests for special housing accommodations (single rooms, first floor living, air conditioned room) must be made directly to the [Office of Residence Life](#).