

Meharry Medical College Student Disability Resource – Frequently Asked Questions

Meharry's goal is to provide and coordinate accommodations, support services and programs that enable students with disabilities to have equal access to all Meharry Medical College programs and activities. Services and accommodations are provided to students with a variety of disabilities including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders, blindness/low vision, deafness/hard of hearing, learning disabilities, mobility and chronic health, psychological disorders (including Autism Spectrum disorders) and other impairments in compliance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008.

What is Section 504 of the Disability Rehabilitation Act of 1973?

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities by all programs that receive federal funds, and requires the program to make activities accessible to everyone. As a recipient of federal funds, Meharry is required to meet the disability mandate of Section 504 and all subsequent applicable state and federal disability laws.

Both the ADA and Section 504 define a disabled individual as someone who has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or has a record of such impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment.

What is the process for requesting a reasonable accommodation?

To request a reasonable accommodation on the basis of any disability, whether physical, psychological or learning, a student must make a request to the ADA Coordinator. Meharry is not legally obligated to provide an academic adjustment until the ADA Coordinator has received all the proper documentation from the student. The ADA Coordinator will assist eligible students with any documentation needed regarding the disability of his or her condition and will work with students to identify and implement reasonable accommodations.

The student will be responsible for the following:

1. **Providing disability documentation** with sufficient information that substantiates the limitation on a major life activity as a result of the disability. The student will also be required to fill out an ADA Student Intake Form.
2. **Meeting with the ADA Coordinator** at the beginning of each semester for which they are requesting services and provide their class and exam schedule. The student may go directly to CEDS, call 615-327-6500, or email disabilityservices@mmc.edu to request a meeting. A reasonable amount of time is required to evaluate the documentation, review the request and determine the appropriate accommodation. The ADA Coordinator will provide the student with an accommodation letter describing the nature of the accommodation he/she requires as a result of the disability.
3. **Students should meet with his or her professor** at the beginning of each semester. The student should give the accommodation letter from the ADA Coordinator that verifies the student's disability and the recommended accommodations to the faculty or staff member with whom they meet.

Reasonable accommodation arrangements are not retroactive. For example, say a student chooses not to submit his or her accommodation letter to the instructor, then later changes his or her mind. The accommodation will not begin until the accommodation letter has been given to the instructor.

Will my disability information remain confidential?

Disability information provided by a student in order to receive accommodations cannot be used for any reason beyond the scope of this purpose without informing the student of the additional possible use of the information and obtaining their consent.

The Family Educational Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the privacy of and access to student educational records, including disability documentation. Section 504 and the ADA protect the student from discrimination with respect to the handling of medical records and disability documentation.

The information about a student's disability status and use of accommodations remains a confidential matter between the instructor, student, and those assisting the instructor with administering accommodations.

What type of documentation do I need?

There are specific guidelines concerning documentation that students need to follow depending on the disability. What is important to consider is that the documentation needs to be current, needs to show significant impact on at least one major life activity such as seeing, walking, hearing, thinking, learning etc. The documentation needs to include a report, summary of the findings, a diagnosis, and suggestions for accommodations.

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I received accommodations at my undergraduate institution, will I automatically receive them at Meharry Medical College?

No, simply because a student received an accommodation at an undergraduate institution or elsewhere does not automatically entitle the student to the same reasonable accommodation at Meharry. The ADA Coordinator will carefully review the disability being asserted and determine what accommodations are currently appropriate.

Is the school required to waive essential requirements of its program or its technical standards to accommodate students with disabilities?

No, the school is not required to waive essential requirements of its program or its technical standards to accommodate students with disabilities. Technical standards should

include those skills and abilities that are essential to the completion of the educational program. Skills and abilities required for admission should be tied directly to those required for graduation.

What types of accommodations does Meharry Medical College provide for students with disabilities?

Types of reasonable accommodations may include:

- Notetakers or access to class notes
- Readers and scribes
- Access to recorded textbooks and materials
- Exam accommodations such as a distraction free testing room or extended time
- Sign language interpreter
- Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART)
- Priority scheduling
- Access to adaptive technology computer equipment and software
- Phonic Ear FM systems (assisted amplification device) available for loan
- Guidance, counseling, referral, and advocacy services to students

It is important for students to understand that even though Meharry has provided the student a reasonable accommodation, the student may not receive an accommodation for Third Party Exam Agencies and Boards. It is the student's responsibility to request for accommodations on these exams and should be made by the student directly to the agency that administers the exam. The student will have to follow the guidelines set forth by the Boards in order to request a reasonable accommodation.

What if I decline the reasonable accommodation?

If the ADA Coordinator grants a reasonable accommodation by providing a reasonable accommodation letter and the student wishes to decline the reasonable accommodation, the student must provide the ADA Coordinator with a written statement expressing their desire to decline the reasonable accommodation.

How do I appeal an eligibility for accommodation decision?

Students who have any concerns regarding the determination of appropriate accommodations may request an appeal of the decision by sending written notice to ADA Coordinator within 5 days. If further action is required, the Office of Compliance and Risk Management should be notified.

How do I contact the ADA coordinator?

The ADA Coordinator at Meharry can be contacted by going directly to CEDS, calling 615-327-6500, or emailing disabilityservices@mmc.edu.