



Figure 1 Monmouth College Logo

## Monmouth College Accessibility Services Policy

Monmouth College is committed to providing equitable access to educational opportunities to qualified students with physical or mental disabilities, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, as Amended Act (ADAAA).

### Disability Definition

In accordance with Federal law, the college is committed to assuring equal opportunity in all academic, programs, and activities for persons with disabilities and will take such steps as are necessary to achieve that goal.

The ADAAA defines a person with a disability who:

- has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual;
- a record of such impairment; or
- is regarded as having such an impairment.

Students with more than one disability should provide documentation for each diagnosed disability for which they wish to receive equal access. In some cases, a student may need to consult more than one set of documentation guidelines.

### Goals for Providing Services to Students with Disabilities

- Gather and evaluate documentation and requests to determine how best to provide equal access to students.
- Provide support for students with disabilities.
- Coordinate and facilitate access for students who may need reasonable accommodations and services.
- Recommend modifications to improve access to college facilities.
- Provide information and training on disability-related topics to college faculty and staff.
- Serve as a resource on disability information for the College community and visitors.

### Accommodation Overview

What is a “*reasonable accommodation*”?

A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a course, program, service, activity, or facility that enables a qualified student with a disability to obtain equal access. Equal access means an opportunity to attain the same level of performance or to enjoy equal benefits and privileges as are available to a similarly situated student without a disability. Only the peripheral requirements of courses, programs, and activities are subject to modification; essential elements of courses, programs, and activities must remain intact.

Reasonable accommodations are determined by examining:

- The barriers resulting from the interaction between the documented disability and the campus environment.
- The possible accommodations that might remove the barriers.
- Whether or not the student has access to the course, program, facility, service, or activity, without accommodations.
- Whether or not essential elements of the course, program, facility, service, or activity are compromised by the accommodations.

For qualified students needing academic access, the Accessibility Services Office may include, *but are not limited to*, the following:

- Extended time on exams and/or assignments.
- Limited distraction area for exams.
- Alternate location for exams.
- Note-taking assistance (including peer note takers, access to professor notes and/or PowerPoints, recorded lectures etc.)
- Use of a calculator.
- Moving classrooms to accessible locations.
- Housing accommodations.
- Access to audiobooks.

## **Documentation Guidelines**

Information on how the disabling condition currently impacts the individual provides useful information for both establishing a disability and identifying equal access. A combination of the results of formal evaluation procedures, a clinical narrative, and the individual's self-report is the most comprehensive approach to fully documenting the impact. The documentation must be thorough enough to demonstrate whether and how a major life activity is substantially limited by providing a clear sense of the severity, frequency, and pervasiveness of the condition.

Submitting information and documentation that is less than comprehensive is not in a student's best interest because doing so may cause unnecessary delays in decision-making related to the assessment of the disability and the provision of accommodations.

### **Provider Qualifications**

The provider must be a qualified licensed professional with experience and expertise in the area for which the request for access is being requested. Comprehensive training, certification, and relevant experience in differential diagnosis are essential.

Professionals conducting assessments, rendering diagnoses, and making recommendations for access must be licensed or otherwise credentialed professionals who have undergone appropriate and comprehensive training in the area which they are assessing. In some cases, it may be appropriate to use a clinical team approach consisting of a variety of educational, medical, and counseling professionals with training in evaluation of individuals with disabilities. The provider must be professionally qualified to conduct their particular assessments. Use of diagnostic terminology by someone whose qualifications, training, and experience are not in these fields will not

be persuasive. Also, documentation provided through a professional's evaluation of a family member will not be accepted.

The name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator--including information about license or certification as well as the area of specialization, employment, and state or province in which the individual practices--should be clearly stated in the documentation. All reports should be on letterhead and should be signed and dated. Documentation that is not clearly legible will not be considered.

### **Recency of Documentation**

Documentation must reflect the current functional impact the disability has on the student's learning or other major life activity and the degree to which it impacts the individual in the context (classroom, residential, etc.) for which access is requested. Documentation must therefore be recent. The college does not have a single standard for recency that applies to all disabilities. This is because the impact of some disabilities is predictably constant, while the impact of other disabilities is predictably variable over time. The age of acceptable documentation is dependent upon the disabling condition, the current status of the student and the student's request for access.

The college acknowledges that some disabilities (such as learning disabilities, pervasive developmental disorders, TBIs, visual and hearing impairments, and other impairments) carry across an individual's lifetime and that once an individual is diagnosed with a lifelong disability they are protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Although the disability may be ongoing, the severity and manifestations of the condition and the environment for which access is being requested may change over time. In order to assure that current needs are being made, in most cases it is recommended that documentation of a disability be no more than three (3) years old when submitted. Documentation of a disability with greater variability over time must reflect the student's current functional limitations, and be no more than six (6) months old when submitted. This applies, for example, to emotional/psychological/psychiatric disabilities. It also applies in situations where medication or changes in medication are likely to be influential factors. If a student has any question about what time period will apply in their case, the student is encouraged to contact the Student Access & Support Specialist at Monmouth College.

### **Comprehensiveness of the Documentation**

Documentation must be comprehensive to support the diagnosis of a disability. Documentation must include a clear diagnostic statement that describes how the condition was diagnosed, provides information on the functional limitations in the educational environment, and details the typical progression or prognosis of the condition.

Documentation is to include the following components:

- A specific diagnosis; relevant developmental, historical data.
- History of presenting symptoms.
- Duration and severity of the disability.

- Relevant medical and medication history, including the individual's current medication or treatment regimen compliance (including therapy), side effects, and response to medication or treatment, if applicable.
- A description of the current functional limitations in the academic environment as well as across other settings (learning, residential, etc.).
- A specific request for accommodations with accompanying rationale. When applicable, documentation should include discussion of both current and past medications, auxiliary aids, assistive devices, support services, and accommodations, including their effectiveness in ameliorating functional impacts of the disability. Documentation should also include a discussion of any significant side effects from current medications or therapies that may impact physical, perceptual, behavioral or cognitive performance across the academic setting (learning, residential, etc.).

**A plan used in high school such as an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) or a Section 504 service agreement is useful, but that history does not in itself establish the current need for equal access.**

### **Diagnostic Methodology Used**

Documentation is to include a summary of the diagnostic criteria, such as clinical tools, evaluation instruments, assessment procedures, tests and dates of administration, as well as a clinical narrative, observation, and specific results. Where appropriate to the nature of the disability, documentation should include summary data and specific test scores (with standardized scores and norming population identified) within the report.

Methods may include formal instruments, medical examinations, structured interview protocols, performance observations, and unstructured interviews. If results from informal, non-standardized, or less common methods of evaluation are reported, an explanation of their role and significance in the diagnostic process will strengthen the documentation in providing useful information.

For learning disabilities, documentation must minimally address: aptitude (such as through an IQ score), achievement (in reading, math, and written expression), and processing (such as visual processing and auditory processing). A narrative or descriptive text providing both quantitative and qualitative information about the student's abilities might be helpful in understanding the student's profile, including functional limitations.

### **Multiple Diagnoses**

If a student wants the college to take into account more than one impairment, the student's documentation must meet the requirements for each impairment. A student may present documentation from more than one provider.

### **Accommodation(s) Recommended**

Documentation must include specific recommendations or requests for accommodations that are realistic and that are appropriate at the postsecondary level. A detailed explanation as to why each accommodation is recommended must be provided, and should correlate with specific functional limitations on the student in the

college environment (learning, residential, etc.) as determined through interview, observations, and/or testing.

If the requested accommodation(s) are not clearly identified in the documentation, the [Student Access & Support Specialist](#) at Monmouth College will seek clarification and, if necessary, more information from the provider. The Student Access & Support Specialist will consult collaboratively with the student to determine how the student will have equal access; once the final determination of whether appropriate and reasonable accommodations are warranted and can be provided to the individual.

## **Requests for housing accommodations (e.g. single room, service animal or ESA)**

Students must read the steps and complete the [Disclosure for New Accommodation Form](#).

### **Requests for Service Animal or Emotional Support Animals (ESAs)**

Students should first read the [Service Animal or Emotional Support Animal Policy](#) and then must complete the [Disclosure for New Accommodation Form](#). The [Student Access & Support Specialist](#) will then be in contact with next steps.

When applicable, the diagnostic criteria in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, 5th Edition (DSM-5) and the International Classification of Diseases Manual, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) are generally accepted as constituting the collective body of classifications of physical and mental impairments.

#### *Documentation NOT accepted:*

- A brief note from a doctor that simply requests an accommodation.
- Information or notes written on prescription pads.
- Copy of after-care instructions.
- Documentation of learning disabilities which is not comprehensive or which identifies “*learning problems*” or “*learning challenges*” but does not specifically diagnose a learning disability.
- The provider may not be related to the student.

## **Obtaining Equal Access**

To obtain an equal access request both incoming students and returning students should:

- Self-identify to the Accessibility Services Office about their need for equal access (e.g. academic, housing, service animal or emotional support animal) by reading and completing the [Disclosure for New Accommodations Form](#).
- Once the Accessibility Services Office has received your completed request, the [Student Access & Support Specialist](#) we will be in contact with you about next steps and additional required documentation based on the type of accommodations you are requesting. *Note: accommodations cannot be retroactive.*

## Deadlines

Although we do accept documentation at any time during the year, to ensure time to implement the requested accommodations prior to the term below.

- **Incoming new and transfer students:** All documentation for incoming new and transfer students starting in fall semester should be received by July 17 and by December 1 for students starting in spring semester.
- **Returning students:** All housing documentation for returning students requesting a housing accommodation for the following year must be submitted by March 1 prior to the room selection process for the following year.
- **Missed deadlines:** The equal access request of students who miss the deadline or submit incomplete information *may not be able to be met* during the requested semester. If need for a housing accommodation arises when an individual is already residing in housing, they should reach out to the [Student Access & Support Specialist](#) and submit the [Disclosure for New Accommodations Form](#) as soon as possible. The Accessibility Services Office will be in contact with next appropriate steps, *though cannot guarantee* that accommodation needs will be able to be met during the semester in which the request was made.

## Confidentiality of Student Records

Monmouth College implements the federal law that gives students a large measure of control over the release of student records. (This law is the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act -- FERPA.) The law defines “*student records*” broadly; those records include any student-specific information provided as part of the disability documentation process. The college will not provide any such records to any parties beyond those who have a legitimate educational interest in the information, or a legitimate health or safety interest, unless consent is given.

*All student files are managed electronically. Any records sent through the mail or dropped off will be scanned into the student’s file and shredded.*

## Disability Grievance Policy/Procedure

A student wishing to bring a complaint against the college or a faculty member or administration based upon a violation of this policy or any other failure to properly respond to a disability as a characteristic protected by law under the Americans with Disabilities Act, as Amended Act (ADAAA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 should refer to the college’s Grievance Policy by contacting our [Equity Coordinator](#).

Sources: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Association of Higher Education and Disabilities (AHEAD), and University of Connecticut.