Information for Lasell College Students with Documented Learning Disabilities

Is there a separate admissions procedure at Lasell College for students with disabilities?

No. Disability status is never a consideration in any admissions decisions. All students that apply for admission to Lasell College are subject to the same admissions process and criteria.

Do incoming students send their disability documentation along with their application?

Disability documentation may be submitted with the application, though this is not a requirement. The submission is voluntary, and any documentation is immediately forwarded to the Academic Achievement Center (AAC) Director and kept confidential in accordance with FERPA and Lasell College Policy.

Does Lasell College provide accommodations for students with disabilities?

Yes. Lasell College, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, provides reasonable accommodations for eligible students with documented disabilities to afford equal access to educational programs and services. Accommodations are determined on an individual basis, facilitated by the Director of AAC, using comprehensive disability documentation as well as confidential consultation with the student.

What is Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 protects the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal funds. Section 504 (as amended, 29 U.S.C. 794) states: “No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability. According to this law, disability is defined as "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity."

Relevance to Lasell College Students: Students who graduate from high school, or who reach the age of 22, are protected from discrimination on the basis of disability by Section 504 as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Under 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 or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity.
What is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides special education and related services for those students in public schools in the primary and secondary levels who meet the criteria for eligibility in a number of distinct categories of disability, each of which has its own criteria. Some students who are not eligible for services under IDEA may receive protection and reasonable accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 while they attend school.

However, when students with disabilities graduate or reach the age of 22, they are no longer eligible for services under IDEA. Students who were eligible for services at the secondary level may not necessarily be eligible for services or accommodations at the postsecondary level.

Since IDEA includes transition to postsecondary education in transition planning services [20 U.S.C. § 1401 (30)] and requires reevaluation if the student's parent requests it [20 U.S.C. § 1414 (a)(2)(A)], these guidelines are intended to support that planning.

Will students who have been diagnosed with a disorder be automatically provided accommodations?

No. Documentation submitted to the AAC regarding learning disabilities must be current and comprehensive, and will be reviewed by the AAC Director as part of the case-by-case process. Comprehensive documentation must contain evaluations that include:

- Evidence of current impairment
- Background information
- Relevant testing
- Specific diagnosis
- An integrated summary

Is the eligibility process to qualify for accommodations the same as in high school?

No. Eligibility guidelines and accommodations in Post Secondary Institutions differ from those at the Primary/Secondary level. An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan alone is not sufficient documentation to justify need for accommodation.

Who at Lasell College will know about the disability if a student meets with the AAC about a disability?

Lasell College ensures FERPA compliance, and therefore all documentation submitted to AAC will remain confidential. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate contact with AAC regarding any learning disability, and it is up to the student to continue the accommodation process by communicating his/her needs to the faculty. Lasell College recognizes the right of the student to determine who receives disability-related information, as well as the right to confidentiality.
What are some specific documentation guidelines?

The following are guidelines for acceptable disability documentation, based on information from the U.S. Department of Education, the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD), and the U.S. Office for Civil Rights (OCR):

- **Qualifications of Testing Evaluator(s):**
  - The name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator must be clearly stated in the documentation (including information about license or certification, area of specialization, state/province in which the individual practices)

- **Current Documentation:**
  - Students must provide recent and appropriate documentation, as eligibility for academic adjustment/services under the provisions of ADA is based on the current impact of the disability. A diagnostic evaluation, therefore, must have been completed within the past 3-5 years.
  - If the available documentation is not sufficient and/or does not address the student's current level of functioning and need for academic adjustment, a reevaluation may be necessary. The updated evaluation should include:
    - A detailed assessment of the current impact of the disability
    - A rationale for ongoing services and academic adjustments
    - A summary of previous diagnostic information

- **Comprehensive Documentation:**
  - Disability documentation must verify the nature and extent of the disability, as the need for specific academic adjustments must be clearly substantiated. Documentation should confirm the need for services based on the individual's current level of academic functioning.
  - Comprehensive documentation should generally include the following:
    - Evidence of current impairment
    - Background information
    - Relevant testing
    - Specific diagnosis
    - An integrated summary

- **Rationale for Recommended Accommodations/Academic Adjustments:**
  - Accommodation needs can change over time and are not always identified through an initial diagnostic process.
  - The diagnostic report should include specific recommendations for accommodations that are reasonable. A detailed explanation should be provided for why specific accommodations are recommended. The accommodations should be correlated with the student’s specific functional limitations determined through the testing and observation.
  - Although prior documentation may have been useful in determining appropriate accommodations in the past, the current documentation should validate the need for services on the postsecondary level based on the student's present levels of functioning.
What are some more detailed documentation guidelines, specifically regarding Learning Disabilities?

- More specifically, documentation for students with learning disabilities must include:
  - A complete assessment of intellectual (cognitive) functioning/aptitude as measured by acceptable testing batteries
  - A comprehensive academic achievement battery that measures current levels of functioning in reading, math and oral/written language
  - Assessment of specific areas of information processing (e.g., short/long term memory, auditory and visual perception/processing, processing speed, executive functioning, etc.).
  - Diagnosis of a specific learning disability

What are some examples of acceptable standardized testing batteries to include in comprehensive disability documentation?

- Examples of testing batteries include (but are not limited to):
  - **Cognitive Assessments:**
    - Weschler Adult Intelligence Scale-III (WAIS-III)
    - Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-III NU (WJ-III NU), Tests of Cognitive Abilities
    - Stanford Binet-Intelligence Scales 5th Edition (SBS-V)
    - Kaufman Adolescent and Adult Intelligence Test
  - **Academic Achievement Assessments:**
    - Woodcock-Johnson-III NU: Tests of Achievement (General and Extended batteries including fluency measures)
    - Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT II) with reading rate measure
    - Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, 2nd (KTEA-II)
    - Test of Written Language III (TOWL III)
  - **Tests used to measure academic achievement in a timed setting:**
    - Nelson Denny Reading Test, with standard time and extended time measures
    - Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (SDRT)
    - Stanford Diagnostic Math Test (SDMT)
    - Woodcock-Johnson III Fluency Measures
    - Test of Written Language-Third Edition (TOWL-3)

Is there a deadline for submitting disability documentation?

Students should submit documentation before the beginning of the academic semester in order to
ensure that each student’s needs are met appropriately and in a timely manner. Disability documentation is, however, accepted by the AAC Director at any time.

What happens after disability documentation is approved?

Students must meet with the AAC Director to discuss the use of reasonable accommodations, sign appropriate forms and communicate with faculty each semester.

What accommodations and services can students be eligible for?

Lasell College provides appropriate and reasonable accommodations to ensure that no student is discriminated against on the basis of his/her disability. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the College provides accommodations for eligible students with documented disabilities to afford equal access to educational programs and services.

Accommodations are determined on an individual basis, facilitated by the AAC Director, making use of submitted comprehensive disability documentation as well as confidential consultation with the student. The determined accommodations may differ from those previously provided to a student, as the accommodations must appropriately address the current impact of the disability on the student’s performance in a collegiate setting.

References

Association on Higher Education And Disability (AHEAD):

- AHEAD, 107 Commerce Center Drive, Suite 204, Huntersville, NC 28078 USA
  work voice and text: (704) 947-7779 work fax: (704) 948-7779 ahead@ahead.org

Connecticut Association on Higher Education and Disability (CTAHEAD):

- [http://www.ahead.org/ctahead/](http://www.ahead.org/ctahead/)
- Office of AccessAbility Services, Eastern Connecticut State University, 83 Windham Street, SSC 252 Willimantic, CT 06226-2295; (860) 465-5573

U.S. Department of Education (DOE):


U.S. Office for Civil Rights (OCR):

- [http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/)