

OFFICE OF  
**STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES**  
**HANDBOOK**

For Touro University Undergraduate Division

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Effective 2019

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**TOURO COLLEGE**

*Where Knowledge and Values Meet*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The material included in this document is meant to serve as a resource for undergraduate students, faculty, and staff. However, please be aware, that a printed or online text, cannot replace face to face meetings (and telephone, email or Zoom communications) between a disabilities specialist and a student or faculty member. Whether in print or in a personalized meeting, the mission remains the same: to promote equal access to a Touro University education for qualified students with disabilities in an environment that respects and values them.

### **GENERAL STATEMENT ON STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Touro University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, which protects persons from discrimination based on physical or mental impairments for all educational and employment purposes. Reasonable Accommodations may be available for students who qualify.

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities who request accommodations in a timely and prescribed manner. The University has a centralized Office of Student Disability Services headed by an Executive Director who oversees Student Disability Services operations in the Undergraduate, Graduate, and Professional Divisions. Students with disabilities seeking reasonable accommodations should do so through the coordinators of the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS) in their respective schools. (See Appendix C) This Handbook may also be available in hard copy at each school's OSDS.

Verbal disclosure of a disability and request for accommodation is not sufficient and cannot substitute for required application and documentation. Students may apply for reasonable accommodations at any time. Students seeking reasonable accommodations must:

- 1) Complete the *Application for Accommodations & Services* (Appendix A).
- 2) Provide documentation as described in the *Guide to Documentation Requirements* (Appendix B).
- 3) Participate in an interactive dialogue with his/her OSDS coordinator. (Appendix C)

The confidential process, as described above, results in the issuance of a *Receipt of Accommodations* form ("Receipt"), either approving all, approving some or denying the request/s. If your request/s is/are approved you will receive a *Letter for Accommodations*. This Letter does not contain any confidential information, only lists approved accommodations. This Letter will be forwarded to your program and is to be shared with your professors to ensure the implementation of the approved accommodations.

## **STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Student Rights**

- Equal access to courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities available through the University.
- Reasonable and appropriate accommodations and/or academic adjustments as determined by the Director of OSDS.
- Appropriate confidentiality of all information pertaining to a student's disability, except where disclosure is required by law.
- Access to all services and support available to all Touro students with reasonable accommodations where necessary and appropriate.

### **Student Responsibilities**

- Identify himself or herself as an individual with a disability when seeking reasonable accommodations.
- Request reasonable accommodations as necessary and appropriate. (please note that the approval process takes some time, and as such students are urged to file their paperwork as soon as possible).
- Meet University and programmatic qualifications, technical, academic, and institutional standards set for all students.
- Provide documentation (i.e. diagnosis, diagnostic exam results, etc.) from an appropriate professional source(s) to verify the nature of the disability and functional limitations as related to the requested accommodation(s).
- Respond in a timely fashion to the Office of Student Disability Services' requests for additional information.
- Follow specific procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodations.
- Attend all classes for enrolled courses, unless otherwise medically excused.
- Immediately report to the OSDS coordinator if previously approved accommodations are not being made.
- Report to the OSDS coordinator if previously approved accommodations require modification, which will result in an interactive dialogue and may result in modifications to reasonable accommodations.
- Understand that accommodations are never provided on a retroactive basis.
- Understand that receiving reasonable accommodations is not a guarantee of academic success.
- Keep a copy of submitted documentation. Touro is not the custodian of the student's application or medical records.

### **Grievance Policy**

If a student feels that he/she has been discriminated against on the basis of their disability or disability status, he/she has the right to file a complaint through the grievance or student complaint mechanisms as stated in the University Catalog or Student Handbook. A similar procedure can be followed by a student to appeal the University's response to a request for reasonable accommodations.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

What follows are a series of questions frequently asked by students, parents, faculty, and staff along with the relevant answers for Touro University's Undergraduate Programs.

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### **FAQ: OVERVIEW**

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1. **What is considered by the University to be a disability?**  
The University follows relevant legislation, which defines a disability as something that is categorized as a physiological or mental disorder that substantially limits an individual in a major life activity. Disabilities include but are not limited to hearing impairment, visual impairment, specific learning disabilities, autism, chronic illness, mental health disorder, orthopedic impairment, and addiction.
2. **Does my disability affect admission to the University and its programs?**  
No. Additionally, accommodations are available during the admissions process, if necessary.
3. **What are “reasonable accommodations?”**  
Reasonable accommodations are meant to “level the playing field.” Accommodations do not suggest that academic programs or procedures be fundamentally changed or waived, as that would be unfair discrimination against other students. Rather, accommodations are intended to allow disabled students to have access to a qualitatively equivalent educational opportunity as non-disabled students. The law ensures non-discriminatory access to university admission, specific courses, living arrangements, or employment opportunities.  
  
Academic requirements must be adhered to with or without accommodations.
4. **What is the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS)?**  
The Office of Student Disability Services is a unit within the Advisement and Counseling Service that ensures equal opportunity for students with disabilities by providing reasonable accommodations and support.
5. **What must a student do to request services?**  
A student must:
  - (a) Complete and submit an *Application for Accommodations & Services* (assistance is available from the OSDS)
  - (b) Provide required documentation along with the application. (guidance in this step is available from the OSDS)
  - (c) Schedule an interactive dialogue with the Coordinator of the Office of Student Disability Services at his/her particular school.
  - (d) Read and sign all required forms.
  - (e) Keep copies of all submitted applications and documentation.
6. **What about standardized tests that are required for program progression or upon completing the program?**  
Accommodations for standardized tests (for example, NCLEX; certification exams, licensure exams, etc.) are arranged by individual licensing bodies or test administrators. Each student is encouraged to apply directly and well in advance with that entity. Being approved for accommodations with Touro does not guarantee that a student will receive those accommodations on a standardized test.

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## FAQ: NOTIFICATION CONCERNS

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7. **What about confidentiality?**  
Students are not identified by OSDS to any outside person or office without the student's permission.
8. **Can I arrange with my instructor to provide extra time or other accommodations without contacting the OSDS?**  
No. Individual professors are not allowed to nor are they in a position to review documentation or provide independent accommodations. All reasonable accommodations requests must be reviewed by OSDS. This is done to ensure that proper procedures are followed when determining and implementing accommodations. You can see an academic adviser/counselor at your location. He/she will put you in touch with the OSDS. Alternatively, you can contact a member of the disability services staff directly.
9. **How are professors notified of accommodations?**  
When accommodations are approved you will receive a Letter for Accommodations from the OSDS. You are then to share this letter with your professors. Alternatively, you may request that the OSDS forward your Letter to your professors.
10. **Can I use approved accommodations in only some of my courses?**  
Yes.
11. **I just learned that I have an examination tomorrow. I have a disability. Can I see an advisor today and receive extra time for tomorrow's examination?**  
No. You need to provide the university with timely notification. OSDS must be provided with an adequate amount of time to process your request (i.e., up to 21 days), review the necessary documentation, conduct an interactive dialogue, and ultimately determine what reasonable accommodations, if any, are appropriate. Then, lastly, the OSDS needs time to make the necessary logistical arrangements. Please plan ahead.
12. **Is there a deadline for requesting accommodations?**  
No. However, please be advised that it may take up to 21 days for the process to be completed. *Accommodations are never provided retroactively.*
13. **I had accommodations in high school; do I automatically get accommodations in college?**  
No. The law treats high school and college students differently. Both legislation and the application of reasonable accommodations differ on the college level.
14. **What guidelines can you offer me in terms of documentation required by Touro?**  
While each case is evaluated independently, Touro's guidelines require that:  
a) Documentation be issued by a professional with the appropriate credentials, training and experience.  
b) The professional that issues the documentation should not have a personal relationship with the student.  
c) Reports provide clear evidence of a disability.  
d) Reports include the evaluator's recommendations, concerns, accommodation suggestions including how the accommodations are related to functional limitations.  
e) Reports be current and based on evaluations performed within the past three years.

Students must keep copies of all submitted applications and documentation.

15. **How do I get the required documentation?**  
Students should request documentation directly from the appropriate licensed professional, e.g., a licensed medical healthcare provider. (Please see Appendix B for General Guidelines)
16. **Can the University perform the necessary evaluation for documentation of learning disabilities?**  
No. However, Touro University reserves the right to perform an independent evaluation after receipt of a complete application packet, including a student's medical documentation.
17. **Will accommodations allow me to alter or waive an essential part of any course, program, or degree?**  
No. The University does not waive essential degree requirements.
18. **Why would a student with a disability not contact OSDS for reasonable accommodations?**  
Some students may have developed sufficient coping strategies that their disability no longer impacts their ability to learn. Students are not required to disclose a disability or to request reasonable accommodations for that disability.

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## **FAQ: STUDENT CONCERNS**

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19. **What should I do if I believe my approved accommodation needs are not being met?**  
Immediately report the issue to your school's OSDS Coordinator.
20. **If I declare my disability to one program in Touro University, will this information be shared within the Touro system?**  
No. Touro University cannot release information about your disability without your written permission. If a student enrolls in another program in Touro, they must reapply for reasonable accommodations in that program.
21. **What is FERPA?**  
The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) is a federal law that regulates disclosure of student records without prior written consent by the student. Under FERPA, certain information can only be shared with school officials who have "legitimate education interest" in viewing such information. FERPA also allows students to view and review their files maintained by the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities.

## APPENDIX A

### APPLICATION FOR ACCOMMODATIONS & SERVICES

Please allow up to 21 days for the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS) to review your application and supporting documentation. **Please note that your application cannot be reviewed until documentation is received.** After OSDS has reviewed your application, you will be contacted via e-mail or by phone so that we may engage you in an interactive dialogue relative to your application. Please contact OSDS if you have questions regarding the OSDS application process.

#### **Section I: Student Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title (Mr., Mrs., etc.) \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ cp; \_\_\_\_\_ hp Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent Address: Street & Apt.# \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Local Address: Street & Apt.# \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Touro University School/Program: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Touro Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Other Email \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated Graduation Date: \_\_\_\_\_ First Semester at Touro: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Section II: Disability Related Information**

Please answer the following questions regarding your disability and how it impacts your ability to learn, attend, or participate in University life.

##### **1. Please indicate your disability category(ies). Check all that apply:**

- Specific Learning Disability
- Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Communication/Speech
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Motor: Developmental coordination disorder; tic disorders
- Blindness
- Low Vision
- Deafness
- Hard of Hearing
- Mental Health
- Basic Chronic Medical Condition
- Mobility
- Orthopedic
- Alcohol/Substance Addiction and Recovery
- Complex Chronic Medical Condition
- Traumatic Brain Injury



- Temporary Disability(ies)

**2. As best you can, specify the diagnosis or type of your disability based on the category above:**

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**3. Please identify what major life activity(ies) is(are) affected by your condition(s):**

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**4. What mitigating measures have you used to address your condition(s). Mitigating measures are any device, treatment or medication, assistive technology, reasonable accommodations, and/or compensatory strategy that reduces the impact of disability.**

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**5. Please check all that apply:**

- I have difficulty reading the blackboard.
- I have difficulty taking notes in class.
- I have difficulty writing.
- I have difficulty standing for long periods of time.
- I tire easily when I walk distances.
- I have difficulty walking up/downstairs.
- I need to read lips of instructors.
- I wear a hearing aid.

Please describe any other mobility or disability related difficulties you are currently experiencing:

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**6. Are you currently taking any medication related to your disability or medical condition?**

\_\_\_ Yes    \_\_\_ No            If yes, please list all the medications you are taking: \_\_\_\_\_

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If yes, please also list any side-effects of the medications that you are taking and their positive and negative impact on your academic/cognitive abilities and/or other activities:

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**7. Please check all the reasonable accommodations that you are requesting:**

- Testing Accommodations: Please specify \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Classroom Accommodations: Please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Communication Accommodations: Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other Accommodations: Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Briefly describe why you are requesting the above accommodations: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Please list any services/accommodations you received as an undergraduate or at any previously attended school: (Please note that while such services do not necessarily carry over to your current program, the information is helpful to give OSDS background information on your disability-related needs.)

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_ Years Attended: \_\_\_\_\_

Accommodation(s) Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_ Years Attended: \_\_\_\_\_

Accommodation(s) Received \_\_\_\_\_

**Section III: Agency Information**

Do you receive services from any of the following agencies?

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

• Specify State and Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Veterans Administration (VA)

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please provide the following information:

Counselor's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Address or Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Services currently receiving from Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, certify that the foregoing statements are complete, accurate and true to the best of my knowledge.

*I understand that Touro University requires supporting documentation to accompany this application. General Guidelines for Documentation may be found in Appendix B and additional guidelines are available from the OSDS.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OR DISCLOSURE  
OF HEALTH INFORMATION TO TOURO UNIVERSITY**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (student), give Touro University permission to contact  
\_\_\_\_\_ (health care provider) and have executed a NYS HIPAA  
form.

I understand the reason for this contact is to advise Touro University about my educational needs and functional abilities and limitations in relation to my educational goals and functions. I understand that the University will provide \_\_\_\_\_ (health care provider) with specific information about the program, including the essential functions and specific requirements. All information obtained from student medical examinations and inquiries will be educational-related necessity. All information obtained will be maintained and used in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 confidentiality requirements, and all other applicable State and Federal laws.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## APPENDIX B

### **GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR DISABILITY DOCUMENTATION**

Students diagnosed with physical and/or mental impairments qualify as persons with disabilities when their conditions are documented to substantially limit them in one or more life activities. Touro University provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities with consultation from their academic programs. In order to ensure that students' needs are directly linked to these accommodations, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) allow higher education institutions to require disability documentation to verify disability status and the need for reasonable accommodations. The Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS) has established the following disability documentation guidelines: Documentation must:

- I. Be recent enough in order to assess the current impact on learning or a major life activity. Please see disability-specific guidelines for more information. Please note that students requesting accommodations due to a chronic medical condition, psychological and/or psychiatric disorders must submit documentation dated within 6 months, and annually updated documentation may be required as well.
2. Be sufficient to establish a direct link between the underlying impairment and the requested accommodations.
3. Include a description of what mitigating measures the student has used and if, with such use, the student may still require accommodation to access university programs, activities and services.
5. Be issued by a medical or other qualified, licensed professional, unrelated to the student by marriage or affinity, printed on letterhead, dated, signed, and including the professional's licensing information. The University reserves the right to require that a certified copy of the report be transmitted directly from the evaluator to the University.

#### Documentation also must include:

1. The student's history of receiving reasonable accommodations and academic adjustments, if such history exists.
2. Specific recommendations for accommodations as well as an explanation as to why each is recommended as necessary.

#### **Please also note:**

The student must bear any cost incurred in obtaining additional information. A limited list of possible testing sites/centers for psychoeducational evaluations is available from OSDS. Please refer to specific documentation guidelines for each type of disability (Available from the OSDS). If the original documentation is incomplete or inadequate to determine the extent of the disability or reasonable accommodation(s), OSDS has the discretion to require additional documentation.

Copies of the submitted application and documentation must be retained by the student. Touro is not the custodian of the student's medical and/or psychoeducational records.

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**APPENDIX C**

**OFFICE OF STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES (OSDS)**

**COORDINATOR CONTACT LIST**

Executive Director, OSDS	Nicole Barnett	Nicole.barnett@touro.edu
Dean of Undergraduate Advisement and Counseling	Avery Horowitz	Avery.Horowitz@touro.edu
Director, Undergraduate OSDS	Joel Dickstein	Joel.Dickstein@touro.edu
Coordinator, NYSCAS OSDS	Rachel Baror	Rachel.Baror@touro.edu
Coordinator, LCW OSDS	Ditza Berger	Ditza.Berger2@touro.edu
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Coordinator, LCM	Aryeh Manheim	Aryeh.Manheim@touro.edu
Coordinator, IPS OSDS	Joseph Shimonov	Joseph.Shimonov@touro.edu

## APPENDIX D

### OFFICE OF STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES

#### FLOW CHART

