

**Disability Services Office
Philosophy, Policies, and Procedures**

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I. Introduction

Emerson College is committed to providing qualified students with disabilities with equal access to the College's academic, residential, and social activities, while maintaining the high standards of achievement that are essential to the integrity of the College's programs and services. In advancing these dual aims, the College will ensure that its policies, practices, and procedures conform to federal and state statutes and regulations.

A. Governing Law (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990)

Two federal statutes govern the rights of individuals with disabilities, and apply to students with disabilities attending Emerson College. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) states that no "otherwise qualified person" with a disability can be excluded from, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity within an institution that receives federal financial aid. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a person with a disability as any individual who (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; (2) has a record of such an impairment; or (3) is perceived by others as having such an impairment. The ADA applies to Emerson College, both as a place of public accommodation and as an employer. Taken together, Section 504 and the ADA require institutions of higher education to provide equal access to educational opportunities to otherwise qualified persons with disabilities.

B. Rights and Responsibilities of Students with Disabilities

Emerson students with disabilities (as defined under the ADA) have the right to the following:

- Equal access to the College's programs, activities, and services;
- Reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services as may be needed to ensure equal access to the College's programs, activities, and services;
- Appropriate confidentiality of all information concerning their disability as required by federal and state law;
- Reasonably accessible and available information concerning the College's disability services.

Emerson students with disabilities have the responsibility to do the following:

- Meet the College's qualifications and maintain essential technical, academic, and institutional standards;
- Inform the College's Disability Services Office (DSO) if they require an accommodation to have equal access to any of the College's programs, activities, or services;
- Provide the DSO with appropriate documentation indicating how their disability limits their participation in any of the College's programs, activities, and services;

- Follow the specific procedures required for requesting and obtaining reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.

C. Rights and Responsibilities of the College

Emerson College has the right to do the following:

- Maintain the College's academic standards;
- Enforce the College's Code of Conduct;
- Request and receive appropriate documentation supporting students' requests for accommodation, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services;
- Defer action on a student's request for accommodation until the student provides appropriate documentation supporting the existence of his or her claimed disability and appropriateness of the requested accommodation;
- Offer students the most cost-effective accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services that are responsive to the students' particular needs;
- Decline to provide an accommodation that would require a waiver or alteration of an essential element of a course or program, provided that the appropriate academic officer or department chair first identifies the course or program's essential elements and concludes that the requested accommodation is incompatible with the essential elements of the course or program;
- Refuse to provide a requested accommodation, adjustment, and/or auxiliary aid and service, if providing the requested accommodation would impose an undue burden on the College.

Emerson College has the responsibility to do the following:

- Provide information to students concerning the resources and services available for students with disabilities and provide that information in accessible formats upon request;
- Ensure that the College's programs, activities, and services, when viewed in their entirety, are accessible to qualified students with disabilities in an integrated and appropriate setting;
- Work with students who request accommodations to identify reasonable and effective accommodations for each student's needs within the context of a particular course or program's essential elements;
- Respond to all requests for accommodation in a timely manner;
- Provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids for students with disabilities;
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of the student's documentation, records, and communications in accordance with federal and state law.

II. College Resources Available to Students with Disabilities

A. Disabilities Services Office (DSO)

The DSO is the office of the College charged with assessing and coordinating appropriate academic and housing accommodations for all students with documented disabilities. The mission of the DSO is to create an accessible environment at the College where students with disabilities can function independently and in a self-determined manner as they accomplish their educational and personal goals.

The DSO receives and maintains documents and communications concerning students' disability related requests, and is charged with both determining students' eligibility for reasonable accommodations and determining what, if any, reasonable accommodations the College will provide to students. In addition, the DSO oversees and administers the College's provision of reasonable accommodations. However, it is students' responsibility to seek and request assistance from the DSO in a timely manner and in advance of their needed accommodation(s).

B. Disability Services Coordinator (DSC)

The DSC serves as the College's designated Section 504 Officer and is the primary contact person for all students with disabilities. The DSC will make appropriate determinations of reasonable accommodations for students based on documentation provided to the College. The DSC may consult with appropriate professionals within or outside the College community, as needed, to make accommodation decisions.

In order to provide the most effective and knowledgeable advice to the community, the College charges the DSC with coordinating all communications concerning the student's requests for accommodation. Because even the most well informed members of the faculty and staff are unlikely to have an up-to-date understanding of disability laws and regulations, students are expected to make their requests for accommodation to the DSC and are advised not to make such requests directly to a faculty or staff member before consultation with the DSC. Similarly, faculty and staff of the College should not decide independently whether or not to grant an accommodation if a student reports a disability, but should refer all such requests to the DSC. Upon receiving a request for an accommodation, the DSC will facilitate the process of determining whether accommodations are necessary and reasonable. The DSC will also provide students and faculty with guidance concerning the College's available resources and obligations and will work with the faculty and student in working out reasonable accommodations intended to address the student's needs.

In addition to overseeing the DSO's services, the DSC also will cooperate with all of the College's institutional programs and units to assure that the full range of opportunities available to students at Emerson College are accessible to all qualified students regardless of disability. This includes assisting College employees (e.g., the staff of Admissions or Housing and Residence Life) with developing and implementing policies and procedures relating to students with disabilities. On request, the DSC also will consult with academic programs to assure that the programs' stated eligibility criteria and technical standards do not inadvertently discriminate against students with disabilities. Finally, on request, the DSC will assist professors in developing appropriate methods for fostering

the full inclusion of qualified students with disabilities within the curriculum and co-curriculum.

C. Other Resources for Students with Disabilities at the College

Students with disabilities who wish to appeal the DSC's decisions concerning their requests for accommodation may file a grievance with the Director of Human Resources/Affirmative Action Coordinator. See Section X below for details.

III. Confidentiality and Release of Disability Related Information

A. Confidentiality of Information Maintained by the DSO

In accordance with the College's legal obligations, the DSO is committed to ensuring that all information contained in a student's DSO file is maintained as confidential. All information that the DSO receives concerning students is maintained in accordance with privacy laws and Emerson's established regulations. The information that the DSO will maintain as confidential includes all medical, psychiatric and psychological reports, including diagnoses, assessment reports, and test data. In addition, the DSO will keep confidential students' historical and biographical information as well as academic records, including performance reviews (e.g., midterm evaluations). Finally, the DSO will maintain as confidential the DSO's administrative records concerning students' disabilities, including case notes, and copies of correspondence received and sent. The DSC is the individual responsible for receiving, collecting, and maintaining specific student disability related information on behalf of the College.

Students have the right to review their own DSO files. Further, students may request to have information deleted from their DSO files by submitting a written request to the DSC. The DSC then will determine the necessity of retaining the specific information the student requests to have deleted.

B. The DSO Will Share Disability Related Information as Needed to Respond to Accommodation Requests

Ordinarily, only the DSO's professional staff will have access to a student's DSO file. However, the DSC may share limited information concerning a student's medical or psychological status with those essential College faculty and staff whose assistance is needed to respond to the student's request for accommodation. In addition, if College administrators express a need for certain disability related information, the DSC may provide such information to the College administrators, with the understanding that the administrators agree to appropriately guard the confidentiality of the student's disability related information.

C. Emerson Administrators' Handling of Disability Related Information

On occasion, other offices of the College (e.g., Financial Services, Office of the Registrar, Public Safety, Office of the Dean of Students, and Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs) may require copies of specific disability related documents concerning a student. When disability related documents are needed in these offices, the Administrator in charge of the office requesting the information shall ensure that the disability related documents are maintained in a separate file and not made part of the student's record. Students' disability related documents will be treated by the College as confidential in accordance with the College's privacy policy and applicable law. When a College office other than the DSO no longer needs a student's disability related documents, that office should not retain such documents, but should instead forward all copies of the documents to the DSO.

D. Releasing Student Disability Related Information Outside Emerson College

The DSO will not release confidential student information to non-College staff unless required to do so by federal or state law (e.g., pursuant to a court order or subpoena, in association with an investigation or report of physical, psychological, or sexual abuse) or if disclosing such information is necessary to prevent foreseeable danger to a student's life or safety.

IV. Procedures for Requesting and Receiving Academic Accommodations

A. Student Must Initiate a Timely Request for Accommodation

The process of obtaining reasonable accommodations is interactive in nature. The student must initiate the interactive process by disclosing his or her disability to the DSC and requesting reasonable accommodation(s). A student with a disability who requests consideration for services and/or accommodations consistent with the provisions of the ADA or Section 504 must contact the DSC in a timely fashion and must identify his or her disability, limitations and accommodation request.

Timeliness is key in receiving reasonable accommodations because certain accommodations may require considerable time to arrange (e.g., sign interpreters, Braille text, eText documents). Therefore, it is recommended that a student not wait until courses have begun to request reasonable accommodation(s), but initiate the accommodation process before courses begin or in anticipation of semester courses. The College cannot guarantee the availability of appropriate accommodations without ample time to make preparations or secure specific resources. Whenever a needed accommodation can be identified prior to the beginning of a course or activity, the student should give the DSC at least thirty days advance notice.

If a student is newly admitted to the College and expects that he or she may require accommodations for a known disability, he or she should contact the DSC as soon as

possible. The initial contact with the DSC can be made in either a written letter or a telephone conversation, and may be made before the student arrives on campus.

B. Student Must Provide Adequate Documentation Supporting Accommodation Request

Before the DSC will evaluate a student's request for an accommodation, the student must submit adequate documentation of his or her disability, including evaluations by appropriately credentialed professional(s). The documentation should be current, specify a diagnosis as well as severity of the disability, and describe the current functional consequences of the disability as it relates to the requested accommodation(s) and functioning within an academic or residential life setting. The DSC welcomes suggestions and recommendations concerning possible accommodations from professionals who have a history of working with the student. The College reserves the right to determine the adequacy of the documentation and may request additional assessments. Specific guidelines for preparing and submitting appropriate documentation to support an accommodation request are contained below in Section V.

C. Meeting with the Disability Services Coordinator (DSC)

As soon as is mutually convenient, the DSC and the student will meet to discuss the student's accommodation request(s). At that meeting, they will review the documentation submitted in support of the accommodation request, discuss whether the student indeed suffers from a disability that substantially limits a major life activity, discuss the student's need for accommodation(s), and discuss whether the requested accommodation(s) appropriately addresses the student's needs.

The goals of this interactive process between the student and the DSC are to ensure equality of access and opportunity for students with disabilities. The DSC need not recommend that the College provide the specific accommodation sought by the student. Rather, in reviewing the specific accommodation requested by the student or recommended by the student's evaluator(s), the DSC may conclude that while a recommendation is clinically supported, it is not the most appropriate accommodation given the requirements of a student's specific course work. Accordingly, the DSC may suggest accommodation(s) that are supported by the documentation data and would be appropriate for the student, but which neither the student nor the evaluator(s) have requested.

During the DSC's meeting with the student to discuss the student's request for accommodation, the following topics will be discussed: What specific accommodations has the student received in the past? What accommodations are being requested and for which courses or activities do these accommodations apply? What is the rationale and supporting data for the student's request? Over what time period will these specific accommodations apply? Who will be responsible for providing these accommodations? What are the student's responsibilities with regard to these accommodations? What measures should the student take if he or she questions the adequacy or the

implementation of these accommodations? Please note that no accommodations will be provided until the DSC engages in this discussion with the student and the DSC reviews with the student the documentation submitted in support of the student's request.

After the meeting with the student, if the DSC has any remaining questions concerning the feasibility or reasonableness of a requested accommodation(s) in the context of a specific course or activity, the DSC will facilitate a meeting between the student and the member of the faculty or administration of the College, to discuss whether the requested accommodation(s) is feasible, and, if not, attempt to arrive at some other mutually acceptable solution.

D. DSC Decides to Grant or Deny Requested Accommodation

The DSC's ability to decide upon appropriate accommodations and services for a student requires an understanding of the student's functioning and functional needs. Therefore, only after reviewing a student's request for accommodation(s) and the supporting documentation, will the DSC decide whether or not the student is eligible to receive accommodation(s). If the DSC determines that a student's request for a reasonable accommodation is supported, the DSC will prepare a letter certifying that the student has a documented disability. The letter will specify what specific accommodation(s) the DSC has approved, who is responsible for providing the accommodation(s), when the accommodation will be provided, and how the accommodation will be provided. The letter(s) also invites faculty or administrators to contact the DSC if there are concerns or questions about the accommodations to be granted, including concerns that granting the specified accommodation(s) will compromise the essential requirements or standards of their course or program. The faculty is not expected to compromise the essential requirements, standards, or elements of academic courses or co-curricular activities. The faculty is, however, expected to cooperate and assist in providing accommodations that the DSC determines are necessary and reasonable to ensure equal access for the student with a disability.

Before providing the above letters to the student, so that the student can forward them to the relevant faculty or administrators, the DSC will review with the student the information in the letters. Following this review, the student will then be asked to sign a release form agreeing that he or she wishes to accept the accommodations specified in the letter, agrees with the information that is contained in the letter, and agrees to release these letters to the faculty.

If the DSC declines to grant a student a requested accommodation, the DSC will provide the student with a written explanation of why the request is denied.

E. Student is Responsible for Delivering Notice to Faculty or Administrators of the Accommodation(s)

Once the DSC decides to grant a student an accommodation, the student is expected to pick up the letter(s) mentioned above from the DSO and deliver the letter(s) to the specific faculty member or administrator who will be providing the granted

accommodations. The student should provide the letter of accommodation to the faculty member in a timely manner, preferably early in the semester or as soon as the need for accommodation is determined. If the faculty member or administrator fails to provide agreed on accommodations in a timely or effective manner, the student should immediately report the situation to the DSC. Students who believe they have experienced discrimination on the basis of their disability may file a grievance with the DSC or with the College's Director of Human Resources/Affirmative Action Administrator. The procedures for filing such a grievance are set forth below in Section X.

V. Guidelines for Documenting Disabilities

When a student requests accommodation(s) or auxiliary aids/services based on a disability, the College will need specific documentation of the disability in order to fully evaluate the request and determine an appropriate response. All appropriate documentation should be forwarded to the Disability Service Coordinator, Disability Services Office, 120 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116.

The DSC's goal is to ensure equality of access and opportunity for students with disabilities by providing reasonable and appropriate accommodations and services that will best assist the students in meeting the requirements of their academic programs, and achieving this goal requires that the student submit appropriate documentation. The DSC evaluates all requests for accommodation(s), auxiliary aids, and services using the documentation of disability information. Out of fairness to all Emerson students, the College will not grant special consideration to students who fail to demonstrate that they are entitled to such considerations. Therefore, it is in the student's best interest to provide current, complete, and appropriate documentation relevant to her or his needs within the postsecondary academic and/or residential environments. Incomplete or outdated assessment reports may not allow the DSC to assess accurately the student's current level of functioning and may result in the denial of a student's request.

The College reserves the right to determine whether the documentation provided by the student is adequate (e.g., recency of evaluation and completeness of information). Furthermore, the College may request that the student provide additional assessment(s) at the student's expense. Pending receipt of requested documentation, the DSC reserves the right to deny special services or accommodations to students who allege that they are disabled.

A. Documentation Required for All Accommodation Requests

1. Documentation of disabilities must address the degree of impairment the student experiences, as well as how the impairment substantially limits one or more of the student's major life activities. Documentation should be current, specify a diagnosis as well as the severity of the disability and describe the current functional consequences of the disability as it relates to the student's requested accommodation(s) and functioning within an academic or residential life setting. A student's IEP, 504 Plan, or Transitional

Plan does not constitute adequate documentation, but can be included as part of a comprehensive assessment file.

2. The assessor(s) preparing documentation must be appropriately credentialed as independent and unbiased professional(s) (not a family member or friend of the student making the accommodation request). The assessor must be qualified by professional preparation, certification or license, and/or practice to diagnose and treat the impairment leading to the disability described.
3. Reports must be typed or word-processed and printed on the letterhead of the practitioner or agency hosting the practice, and must be signed and dated. Handwritten notes on prescription pads or clinical notes are not acceptable documentation.
4. Assessments should use professionally accepted and standardized assessment measures consistent with the age of the student at the time of testing and the nature of the presenting problem. Diagnostic methods and selection of assessment instruments and procedures should be congruent with the disability and current professional practices within the field. A diagnostic statement identifying the student's disability, its severity and symptoms should be included. Professionals are encouraged to use the most common diagnostic reference systems such as the DSM or ICD.
5. Assessments should contain the names of the scales, instruments, and procedures used in assessing, ascertaining and identifying a student's disability. The specific results of the assessment should be detailed in the report. The date of the current diagnostic evaluation as well as the date of the original diagnosis also should be included.
6. Reports should specify what treatments, medications, assistive devices and services are currently prescribed for, and/or used by the student as well as their estimated effectiveness in lessening the consequences of the student's disability. Treatment and medication side effects should be explained, especially as these might influence sensory, motor, cognitive, linguistic, physical or behavioral functioning.
7. It is critical that reports describe the current functional consequences of the student's disability on his or her sensory, motor, cognitive, linguistic, physical or behavioral functioning. This formulation of functional consequences is essential to assist the staff in accurately assessing the student's current level of functioning and determining on that basis the most reasonable accommodations and services to assist the student in meeting the requirements of his or her residential, academic, or co-curricular programs. The recency of testing will be evaluated on the typical progression of the disability, its interaction with development across the life span, whether any significant events have occurred since the date of the evaluation that would have consequences on the student's current functioning and need for accommodations. Since some disabilities are known to be stable throughout an individual's life, exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis to the general expectation that evaluations be recent. However, in order to assess whether a report is sufficiently recent, the report(s) should contain a discussion of the expected progression or stability of the disability over time.

8. Professionals who have worked closely with the student and know the student well are encouraged to provide any additional information they believe might assist the DSC during the review process. Clinicians may include suggestions for specific accommodations, adaptive devices, assistive technology and or specific strategies that may lessen the functional consequence of the disability and provide a fuller access for the student. As appropriate, suggestions for collateral educational, medical, or psychological support services that would be beneficial also may be included. The DSC will consider all relevant information provided by an assessor when evaluating a student's request for accommodation and/or auxiliary aids.

B. Additional Documentation Required for Specific Disabilities

All students wishing to receive academic or residential life accommodations need to follow the general guidelines for documenting disabilities, as outlined above. In addition, more specific documentation is required for specific disabilities, and this additional information is included in subsequent sections.

1. Psychological or Psychiatric Disability.

Students with psychological or psychiatric disabilities who wish to receive academic or residential life accommodations must submit appropriate documentation prepared by a licensed psychiatrist, psychologist, neuropsychologist or other qualified and licensed mental health or medical practitioner. Documentation of a psychological or psychiatric disability must provide confirmation of the diagnosis and the severity of the condition as well as describe how the student's psychological or psychiatric condition significantly limits the student's functioning in the academic or residential setting. Documentation should be no more than one year old; in some instances more recent documentation may be needed (e.g., following a hospitalization or substantial change in mental status).

The documentation should be in the form of a narrative summary and contain and address the following:

- a. medical, developmental, and psychological/psychiatric histories;
- b. results of mental status assessment;
- c. medical and neurological assessment results, as appropriate;
- d. presenting symptoms and behaviors;
- e. diagnosis and severity of the condition;
- f. prognosis and approximate duration of the condition;
- g. recommended treatments, including medications and the side effects on the students ability to meet the demands of the academic or residential environment;
- h. discussion of how the student's psychological or psychiatric condition substantially limits his or her performance in academic settings and/or residential life;
- i. any additional information that may assist the DSC in understanding the student's psychological or psychiatric status;
- j. any recommendations that may assist the DSC in determining appropriate accommodations or interventions.

Professionals who are documenting a student's psychological or psychiatric disability are encouraged to include a DSM or ICD diagnosis. Recommendations for educational compensation strategies should be included, as appropriate. Recommendations for accommodations must be specific and the rationale for each specified. All documentation must be signed and dated.

2. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Students with attentional disabilities (ADD/ADHD) who wish to receive academic accommodations must submit appropriate documentation prepared by a professional who is qualified by area of study and experience to make differential diagnoses of adolescents and adults with attentional disorders; an appropriate evaluator might be a licensed psychiatrist, psychologist, neuropsychologist or other qualified medical doctor.

Documentation must provide confirmation of the diagnosis, describe the severity of the student's attentional disability, and explain how the condition significantly limits the student's functioning in an academic setting. Documentation should be current and updated documentation may be needed under certain circumstances (e.g., following changes in behavior and symptoms, or changes in medication use and side effects from medication that can influence performance in the academic setting).

Documentation should be in the form of a narrative summary and should contain and address the following:

- a. medical, developmental, and educational histories;
- b. results of interviews, attention rating scales and psychoeducational assessments;
- c. medical and neurological assessment results (as appropriate);
- d. presenting symptoms and behaviors;
- e. diagnosis and severity of the condition;
- f. prognosis of the condition;
- g. recommended treatments, including medications and any anticipated side effects the treatment may have on the student's ability to meet the demands of the academic environment;
- h. discussion of how the attentional disorder substantially limits the student's performance in the academic setting (e.g., taking of examinations);
- i. any additional information that may assist the DSC in understanding the student's attentional issues, especially in relationship to his or her functioning within an academic setting;
- j. any additional recommendations that may assist the DSC in determining appropriate accommodations or interventions.

Professionals who are documenting a student's attentional disability are encouraged to identify which of the DSM criteria for attention deficit syndrome are present in the student. Recommendations for educational compensation strategies should be included, as appropriate. Recommendations for accommodations must be specific and the rationale for each specified. All documentation must be signed and dated.

3. Learning Disability

Students with learning disabilities who wish to receive academic accommodations must submit documentation prepared by a professional who is qualified by area of study and experience to make differential diagnoses of adolescents and adults with learning disabilities. An appropriate evaluator might be a licensed psychologist, school psychologist, or neuropsychologist or other qualified professionals formally trained and experienced in assessment of this condition.

Documentation must provide confirmation of the diagnosis and the severity of the learning disability as well as provide evidence that the condition significantly limits the student's functioning in an academic setting. Documentation should be current and include all relevant test scores, including raw scores and standard scores, either in the text of the report or in an attached summary of test scores. The evaluation should use widely recognized and standardized adult normed tests (e.g., the WAIS and the Woodcock Johnson Psychoeducational Battery, the Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults, etc.).

Documentation should be in the form of a narrative summary and should contain and address the following:

- a. medical, developmental, and educational histories;
- b. results of interviews as well as cognitive, linguistics, and literacy evaluations, including psychoeducational assessments standardized for the age of the student at the time of testing;
- c. medical and neurological assessment results (as appropriate);
- d. presenting symptoms and behaviors;
- e. the nature, diagnosis, and severity of the condition;
- f. prognosis of the condition;
- g. recommended treatments;
- h. discussion of the extent to which the learning disability substantially limits the student's performance in the academic setting (e.g., taking of examinations);
- i. any additional information that may assist the DSC in understanding the student's learning disabilities, especially in relationship to functioning within an academic setting;
- j. any additional recommendations that may assist the DSC in determining appropriate accommodations or interventions.

Recommendations for accommodations must be specific and should specify the rationale for each requested accommodation. Recommendations for educational compensation strategies should be included, as appropriate. All documentation must be signed and dated.

4. Physical Disability

Students with physical disabilities who wish to receive academic, architectural, or residential life accommodations must submit documentation prepared by a qualified evaluator of the physical disability, such as a primary care physician or medical specialist. Students should also submit relevant additional information from allied health

providers (e.g., physical therapist, occupational therapist, speech-language pathologist, etc.).

Documentation must confirm the diagnosis and the severity of the student's condition, as well as provide appropriate medical reports, relevant medical history, and other medical data demonstrating how the physical disability significantly limits the student's functioning in an academic or residential setting. Ordinarily, documentation should be no more than one year old; in some instances more recent documentation may be needed (e.g., following a change in medical/physical status). However, since some physical disabilities are known to be stable throughout an individual's life, exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis to the general expectation that evaluations be recent.

Documentation should be in the form of a narrative summary and should contain and address the following:

- a. medical, developmental, and educational histories;
- b. general description of student's physical condition and the results of any specific tests or procedures used in assessing the student's condition, especially as such information may assist the DSC in understanding the student's need for accommodation;
- c. the nature, diagnosis, and severity of the student's condition, including a discussion of how the physical disability substantially limits the student's performance in the academic setting or impedes his or her full access and participation in a residential setting;
- d. prognosis of the student's condition with an emphasis on how the student's physical disability might be expected to substantially limit the student in the academic or residential setting;
- e. specific recommendations for accommodations and services that would facilitate the student's reasonable and appropriate access to the College's academic programs and residential life settings;
- f. any additional recommendations that may assist the DSC in determining appropriate accommodations.

Recommendations for accommodations must be specific and the rationale for each specified. All documentation must be signed and dated.

5. Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired

Students who are blind or have visual disabilities and who wish to receive academic, architectural, or residential life accommodations must submit documentation prepared by a qualified professional, and must include a letter from an ophthalmologist. The documentation must include a statement describing the student's condition, including an explanation of the extent of the student's visual fields, the degree of his or her visual acuity, and a statement of whether his or her condition is stable or progressive. Finally, the documentation must include whether visual aids are recommended, and a statement of the student's functional limitations with and without the recommended aids. Additional information also should be provided by an educator of the blind or visually impaired who

can speak directly to the student's learning challenges and preferred methods of learning, mobility, etc.

6. Students who are Deaf or Hearing Impaired

Students who are deaf or hearing impaired and who wish to receive academic, architectural, or residential life accommodations must submit documentation prepared by qualified professionals that can include a physician, an otolaryngologist, an audiologist, and a teacher of the deaf and hearing impaired. Documentation must include a statement describing the student's hearing status, degree of hearing loss, whether the condition is stable or progressive, and whether the condition benefits from amplification. Finally, the documentation must include recommendations concerning accommodations, and a statement of the functional limitations.

VI. Requests for Course Substitutions and Academic Waivers

As a general policy, the College will not grant students course substitutions or waivers for essential program or course requirements. For example, mathematics and world language are essential courses within the College's General Education requirements. These courses are considered an integral part of the degree requirements and are considered consistent with and fundamental to an education at Emerson College. Consequently, these course requirements will not be waived or substituted for students in the General Education curriculum.

Recognizing that there may be highly unique circumstances surrounding the needs of a specific student with a disability, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, in consultation with the Disability Services Coordinator, will consider in individual cases whether an exception will be made to this rule.

VII. Requests for Reduced Course Load

If a student with a documented disability requests to take a reduced academic course load, the following procedure will be followed:

A. A student requesting a reduced course load should make every effort to file his or her request with the DSC prior to the beginning of the semester during which the student seeks to take the reduced academic course load. When this is not possible, the student must submit his or her request before the conclusion of the Add/Drop period.

B. A student requesting a reduced course load must provide the DSC with a written accommodation request, accompanied by supporting documentation. Adequate supporting documentation must provide the rationale for the student's request for a reduced course load and should consist of a diagnostic assessment(s) from an appropriate qualified professional. The assessment must be sufficiently current so as to allow the evaluator to specify the functional consequences of the student's disability on the student's ability to maintain a full academic load.

C. The DSC will evaluate the student's request and supporting documentation. Specifically, the DSC will consider the influence of the student's disability on his or her ability to function with a full academic course load. The DSC may review the request with the appropriate undergraduate or graduate Dean or academic program chair to clarify the potential consequences that granting the request would have on the individual's progress toward completion of academic requirements and/or graduation. The DSC also may consult with the Director of Financial Aid or Director of Student Accounts to determine if granting the request for a reduced course load would have an effect on the student's financial aid and financial obligations.

D. If the DSC approves the student's request for a reduced course load, the DSC will review with the student the consequences such a reduction might have on the student's completion of his or her course of study, graduation, and financial obligations. The DSC will explain the parameters of the approved reduced course load and seek the student's acceptance of this reduced course load. This acceptance is an agreement that the student must maintain this minimum credit load for full-time equivalency status for the semester. Should the student drop below this agreed credit load, he or she will jeopardize his or her full-time status. Once the student's reduced credit load is granted by the DSC and agreed to by the student and/or the responsible academic office of the College, the student will be considered full time and entitled to all of the services, benefits, rights, and privileges of full-time status.

E. A student who is granted a reduced course load may receive tuition adjustments to his or her bill on a per credit charge and should contact the Student Accounts Office with any questions concerning his or her bill. Students receiving permission to take a reduced course load are not entitled to any adjustments or credits for charges other than tuition. Examples of fees for which the student on a reduced course load will not receive adjustments include, but are not limited to, activity fees, health services, insurance, room and board costs, and commencement fees.

F. When the student's request for a reduced course load is approved, the Director of Financial Assistance will review the student's financial aid status to ensure that the student receives the appropriate financial assistance for a full-time equivalent student of the College, consistent with the guidelines and limits of Federal financial aid regulations.

G. If a student's reduced course load request is approved, the DSC, the student, and the appropriate Dean or academic program director will sign the reduced course load approval form. Copies of the form will be sent to the student's academic advisor, the Dean of Students, the Director of Financial Assistance, the Director of Student Accounts and the appropriate academic offices.

H. If the College denies a student's request for a reduced course load, the student has the right to appeal the College's decision through the College's grievance procedures (See Section X).

VIII. Requests for Housing and Residence Life Accommodations

A. The College Has Uniform Housing and Residence Life Policies

Pursuant to College policy, first year students at the College are given preference for the College's limited on-campus housing pending the meeting of established deadlines. Upper class students participate in a housing lottery and through that process may be offered on-campus housing in the residence halls. However, at the present time, the College does not have sufficient on-campus housing for all students who may desire to live on campus. The College's Office of Housing and Residence Life seeks to make housing assignments in a fair and equitable manner, taking into account the student's expressed preferences and the College's limited available housing. Further information concerning the Housing and Residence Life Policies may be obtained from the Office of Housing and Residence Life.

B. Applying for Housing and Residence Life Accommodations

The College's housing and residence life programs are central to the Emerson experience. Requests for housing or residence life accommodations will be granted only if these requests are reasonable and are supported by the student's documented medical, psychological, or disability related needs. Housing and residence life accommodations will not be granted based on students' financial need or other factors unrelated to disability. Many students find it challenging to learn to live within a community and share space with other students. Accordingly, requests for a single room or specific on-campus housing based solely on a student's preferences, rather than on his or her documented medical, psychological, or disability related needs, will not be granted.

C. Process for Requesting Housing and Residence Life Accommodations

A student seeking housing and residence life accommodations should request a Housing and Residence Life Accommodation Request Form from the Office of Housing and Residence Life. The student must complete this form and return it to the Disability Services Coordinator (DSC) in the College's Disability Services Office (DSO). The student should then make an appointment to meet with the DSC to discuss the request and the College's process of evaluating that request.

Newly enrolled students who have yet to arrive on campus should contact the Office of Housing and Residence Life and request an Accommodation Form as soon as they determine that they might need a housing and residence life accommodation. The student should then send the completed form to the DSC, who will contact the student to review the student's request and discuss with the student the College's process of evaluating the request.

D. The DSC's Evaluation of the Accommodation Request

The DSC will require and consider the following information when evaluating requests for housing and residence life accommodations:

1. Documentation of the student's disability is required; a qualified professional who has direct knowledge of the student and his or her condition (e.g., physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, etc.) must prepare this documentation. The documentation must meet the guidelines that are detailed above in Section V.
2. A statement by a qualified professional clearly describing the relationship between the student's medical condition or disability and his or her requested housing configuration or accommodation.
3. A statement by a qualified professional offering his or her opinion of the medical or psychological consequences to the student if his or her accommodation request is denied.
4. Possible alternatives for addressing the student's needs in housing and residence life, since the student's preferred accommodation may not be readily available or possible.

After reviewing all the above information, the DSC will discuss the student's request for a specific housing configuration or accommodation with members of the Housing and Residence Life Committee (HRLA Committee) and will consider the student's requests and concerns. In addition to the DSC, the HRLA Committee consists of representatives from the College's Counseling Center, Health and Wellness Center, and Office of Housing and Residence Life. The members of the HRLA Committee may consult with additional individuals from time to time (e.g., facilities, auxiliary services, etc.) in order to assess the feasibility of granting the student's request. The Committee will meet to review requests only four times per year, unless there is an urgent situation that arises and could not be foreseen.

In their deliberation, the Committee will consider some or all of the following factors:

- a. Timing of the Request
 1. Was the request made with the initial housing application?
 2. Was the request made before the deadline for housing requests for the semester in question?
 3. Was the request made as soon as possible after the need was identified?
- b. Feasibility and Availability of Requested Accommodation
 1. Is space available in the residence hall that meets the student's request and documented need?
 2. Can space be appropriately adapted to provide the requested housing configuration without creating a safety hazard (e.g., electrical load, egress, etc.)?
 3. Could other available options besides the student's preferred accommodation satisfy the student's needs?
 4. Will granting the student's request have consequences on the College's ability to meet the needs of other students?
- c. Consequences of Denying the Student's Request

1. Will the student suffer adverse health consequences if his or her request is not met?
2. Will the student likely suffer a permanent negative health consequence if his or her request is not met?
3. Is the student's request an integral component of his or her medical or psychological treatment plan?
4. Will denying the request pose foreseeable consequences on the student's academic or social performance?
5. Are there other possible negative consequences for the student if his or her request is denied?

The DSC will write to the Associate Dean for Housing and Residence Life and advise him or her of the Committee's decision to grant or deny the student's request. The student will be informed by the Associate Dean in writing of the College's decision and has the right to appeal through the standard grievance process (see Section X).

IX. Requests to Terminate or Modify Housing Contracts or Meal Plans

Once the academic year has begun, a student wishing to be released from his or her housing and/or meal plan contract due to a medical, psychological or disability related condition must follow the procedures set forth below.

1. The student should contact the Office of Housing and Residence Life and request a petition form for Release from the Housing and Meal Plan Contracts. This form should be completed by the student and returned to the DSC.
2. Along with his or her petition form, the student must submit to the DSC documentation of the disability that gives rise to his or her petition. The documentation must include a medical, psychological or disability related report from a qualified professional (e.g., physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, etc.) that follows the guidelines for adequate documentation detailed above in Section V. Along with describing the student's medical, psychological and disability related status, the report should explain the relationship between the condition and the student's request for release from the housing and/or meal plan contract. The report should indicate the reasons why moving the student to a different location on campus and/or providing adjustments to the meal plan are not feasible alternatives.
3. The student should make an appointment with the DSC to review the student's petition and supporting documentation. During this appointment, the DSC will outline for the student the process that will be followed in evaluating the student's petition.
4. After meeting with the student and considering his or her petition, the DSC will compile the petition and all pertinent supporting documentation and present the student's request to the Housing and Residence Life Committee (HRLA Committee) which will engage in a deliberative process of discussing the student's petition. The HRLA

Committee will meet to review petitions only four times per year, unless an urgent situation arises that could not be foreseen.

5. The DSC will inform the Associate Dean for Housing and Residence Life of the Committee's decision. The Associate Dean will then inform the student in writing of the Committee's decision. The student has the right to appeal that decision through the standard grievance process (see Section X).

X. Grievance Procedure

A. The DSC has the responsibility for determining whether a student has demonstrated a need for accommodation, and for arranging appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. If a student who has followed the College's specified procedures for requesting an accommodation believes that he or she has been denied an appropriate, reasonable, or effective accommodation, he or she should abide by the following grievance procedure:

(If at any time during the grievance process, the student requires an accommodation to participate in the grievance procedures, the student should communicate that need to the Office of Human Resources.)

1. The student should contact the Director of Human Resources/Affirmative Action Coordinator in the College's Office of Human Resources to set up an appointment to discuss his or her grievance. Other College staff may also be requested to attend the meeting, if appropriate.

2. If the student is not satisfied with the results of the meeting, the student must complete an ADA Grievance form and return the form to the Director of Human Resources ("Director") within (5) five working days of the date of the aforementioned meeting.

3. Upon receiving the student's completed ADA Grievance form, the Director will promptly conduct a review of the student's grievance. The Director has discretion to investigate the student's grievance as he or she deems necessary. For example, in reviewing the student's grievance, the Director may forward a copy of the student's grievance to the person(s) whose actions are the subject of said grievance, and request a written response from that person(s). The Director may also meet with concerned parties and witnesses, and may make any necessary inquiries to gather information directly related to the grievance.

4. If, during the review of the student's grievance, the College and the student reach an agreement to retain the original accommodation or change to another accommodation, the Director will prepare an agreement to be signed by the student and appropriate College staff.

5. If no agreement is reached during the review, the Director will issue a final determination in writing, within ten business days, to the student, DSC and appropriate staff, concerning the student's grievance.

ADA GRIEVANCE FORM

Date: _____

Name: _____

A. Allegation of Discrimination on Basis of Disability

I believe that I have been subjected to discrimination on the basis of my disability, in violation of Emerson College policy. The basis for my allegation is as follows (attach additional pages as necessary):

B. Grievance Concerning Denial of Requested Accommodation

I have requested an accommodation through Emerson College's Disability Services Office, in accordance with Emerson College's procedure for requesting disability accommodations, and believe that I have been denied a reasonable, appropriate or effective accommodation

The accommodation requested is attach additional pages as necessary):

The accommodation provided is: (attach additional pages as necessary)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Received by the Office of Human Resources/Affirmative Action

By: _____ Date: _____

Appendices

1. Instructions for extended exam time

**EMERSON
COLLEGE**

LEARNING ASSISTANCE CENTER (LAC)

**216 Tremont Street
Fifth Floor
617-824-7874**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR EXTENDED EXAM TIME

Instructions for the instructor

Students who are eligible to receive extended time for an exam and to take exams in the Learning Assistance Center (LAC) must provide their instructors with a letter of verification from the Disability Services Coordinator (DSC). Instructors should not independently grant or deny students' requests for accommodations, including extended exam time, but should instead refer such requests to the DSC.

Instructors, once you are informed that the DSC has approved your student's request for extended exam time in writing, please ensure that your examination (and bluebooks, if needed) are delivered to the Staff Assistant in the LAC the day before the scheduled exam time. For reasons of confidentiality and timeliness, please do not use Campus Mail or email to send an examination.

Please note that examinations are administered only in the LAC between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. If your class meeting is at 3:00 p.m. or later please notify the Staff Assistant in the LAC (Extension 7874) to make alternative arrangements (e.g., to administer the examination earlier in the day or schedule it for another day and time). Students are responsible for making all testing arrangements with the LAC (see instructions for the student below).

Students who take exams in the LAC will be monitored during the exam and any indications of cheating will be reported to you immediately. If, as the instructor, you have special instructions concerning the administration of your exam (e.g., open book exam, notes allowed, etc.) please provide that information in writing when you deliver the exam to the LAC. A staff member from the LAC will collect the exam from the student, and deliver it sealed to your office or faculty mailbox; should you prefer a different arrangement, please let us know.

Instructions for the Student

In order to receive extended time as an accommodation, you must meet with the Disability Services Coordinator (DSC) at least two weeks prior to your examination schedule, provide the DSC with adequate documentation to support your need for extended time, and receive a letter from the DSC to give to your professor noting the approval of your request for extended time.

If your request for extended time (time and one half) is granted, you are responsible for making all arrangements for taking your examination in the LAC. You must make such arrangements well in advance of the scheduled examination to reserve a space. You can make a reservation by speaking with the Staff Assistant of the LAC. Examinations will be administered only between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. If your examination starts at 3:00 p.m. or after, you must ask your instructor for permission to take the exam earlier in the day at the LAC or we will work with you and your instructor to make other arrangements. **No drop-in exams are administered. All test arrangements must be made at least one day in advance of the desired time.** Unless otherwise specified by the instructor, you may not bring into the examination room any textbooks, notes, or any other written or electronically stored material. If the student does not keep the appointment for the exam, the exam will be returned to the professor and the professor may treat your failure to appear as he or she would treat any student's failure to appear for an examination. It is the student's responsibility to contact the professor to seek permission to reschedule the exam.

2. Policy and Procedures with regard to Audiotaping of Class Lectures

**EMERSON
COLLEGE**

Disability Services Office

**120 Boylston Street
Boston, MA 02116
617-824-8415
dso@emerson.edu**

Policy and Procedures with regard to Audiotaping of Class Lectures

The Disability Services Office may recommend that a student with a qualified disability be permitted to audiotape class lectures. This permission to audiotape class lectures is subject to the following conditions:

1. Audiotapes of class lectures are only for the student's personal use as a support for the study of class content and as preparation for projects, quizzes and/or examinations.
2. The sharing or sale of these audiotapes or of the information derived from the audiotapes, such as lecture notes or class outlines, is not permitted.
3. The student acknowledges that the audiotapes are sources of academic information and as such the use of this information is subject to the rules governing academic and student conduct at the College. The student acknowledges that his or her failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action.
4. Each time the class is audiotaped, the instructor must inform all individuals present that the class is being audiotaped. The instructor must also indicate that students may request that their comments not be recorded. This is consistent with legal mandates within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. At the request of any other student who wishes not to have their comments recorded, the student who is audiotaping the lecture will stop the recorder until the comments are completed.
5. The student agrees to destroy these audiotapes at the end of the semester when these tapes are no longer needed for academic work or fulfilling course requirements.

Students who are granted permission to audiotape a class lecture as a reasonable academic accommodation, agree in writing to abide by each of these provisions and are subject to disciplinary action or revocation of this accommodation for failure to do so.

Students are required to sign the following agreement.

The Disability Services Office has recommended that I

_____ am permitted to audiotape class lectures in _____ taught by _____. This is granted as a form of reasonable academic accommodation related to a qualified disability. As a condition of using this accommodation, I hereby agree to abide by these policies and procedures. I understand that I may be subject to disciplinary action or revocation of this accommodation for failure to do so.

Name

Date

