



# Handbook for Students With Disabilities

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. POLICY STATEMENT .....	2
II. REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS .....	2
a. Classroom and Studying .....	2
b. Exams .....	2
c. Visiting Students .....	2
III. DOCUMENTATION .....	3
IV. ACCOMMODATIONS WITHIN THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM .....	3
a. Classroom and Studying .....	3
b. Exams .....	3
V. ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PHYSICAL ACCESS .....	4
VI. SERVICE ANIMAL POLICY .....	4
VII. TEMPORARY DISABILITY .....	4
VIII. CONFIDENTIALITY .....	5
IX. REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS FOR THE BAR EXAM .....	5
X. OFFICE OF ACADEMIC PLANNING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT .....	5
XI. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE .....	5
XII. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT POLICY: PREAMBLE .....	6
Request for Accommodations Form and Student Statement .....	7-13

## I. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of New York Law School (NYLS) to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and various state and local requirements regarding individuals with disabilities. The Law School works with individual students as needed to provide access to services, programs, and activities at the School. All decisions regarding accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis, are based on the individual student's documented disability, and are intended to make reasonable adjustments to enable students with disabilities to participate in the standard law school curriculum and to satisfy its requirements. The Law School does not provide accommodations that fundamentally alter its academic requirements.

## II. REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

After matriculation, it is the responsibility of the student to contact the Assistant Dean of Student Life to discuss accommodation requests. **The student must submit a *Request for Accommodations Form* (your completed form and the form from your health care professional(s) with all of the necessary information and supporting documentation) to the Office of Student Life for all accommodations requested. (See pages 7–13). The student must submit this form and the accompanying documentation even if the disability has been mentioned and documented in the admissions file.** While we have listed below suggested timeframes for submitting requests, we cannot predict the time it will take to process any particular request and recommend that requests and accompanying documentation be submitted at the earliest possible opportunity. All completed requests will be considered.

Students may be asked to meet with staff from the Office of Student Life or Academic Planning and Career Development to discuss their requests. A student wishing to make changes to their exam accommodations must file a new *Request for Accommodations Form* along with appropriate documentation.

Students who are granted accommodations must meet with the Assistant Dean of Student Life each year to review their accommodations. In some cases, additional documentation may be needed for accommodations to be renewed.

### a. Classroom and Studying:

The request form should be filled out as early as possible and **at least one month prior to the start of classes**. Students may be asked to meet with staff from the Office of Student Life to discuss their requests prior to the start of classes.

A student wishing to make changes to their classroom accommodations must file a new *Request for Accommodations Form* along with appropriate documentation.

### b. Exams:

Students requesting final exam accommodations must submit the *Request for Accommodations Form* and accompanying documentation to the Office of Student Life **at least one month prior to the end of classes**.

First-year students who wish to request accommodations for midterm exams must contact the Office of Student Life and submit the *Request for Accommodations Form* along with the appropriate documentation **no later than the end of the first week of classes**.

### c. Visiting Students:

Students visiting from another law school should complete section A of the *Request for Accommodations Form*. Visiting students must also provide a letter from their home school detailing the accommodations they currently receive.

### III. DOCUMENTATION

Documentation must be provided for any disability for which an accommodation is requested.

When requesting an accommodation, please provide substantive documentation of the disability(ies) and previous accommodations (if any) along with your completed *Request for Accommodations Form*. Accommodations are based upon an individual assessment of the current nature and impact of each student's impairment. Documentation is necessary to identify that the disability is related to a barrier at NYLS and to corroborate that the requested accommodation will mediate that connection.

Documentation sources include, but are not limited to

- Educational or medical records and reports
- Psychoeducational and/or neuropsychological evaluations:
  - Must include adult measures, test results and analysis, and diagnosis
- Academic/school records:
  - Standardized test scores/professor letter(s)/transcripts
  - Law School Admissions Test (LSAT)
  - Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) defining special education needs and services
- Section 504 Plan, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, identifying services
- Teacher reports and/or observations
- Narrative self-report

All testing and interpretation of results must be performed by a qualified, licensed professional.

Some disabilities may need verification each semester.

NYLS invites students who request reasonable accommodations to meet with the Assistant Dean of Student Life to discuss past use of accommodations and disability-related barriers they anticipate or are currently experiencing at the Law School.

Documentation relating to a request for accommodation will be reviewed by a consultant hired by New York Law School for the purpose of advising the Law School in its determination of appropriate accommodations.

### IV. ACCOMMODATIONS WITHIN THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

#### a. Classroom and Studying

For certain classroom accommodations (e.g., sitting near the front of the room), students may wish to contact the professor directly. Students may also ask the Assistant Dean of Student Life to assist them in contacting professors.

#### b. Exams

The format of the exam (multiple choice, closed book, or open book) may be taken into account to determine the appropriate accommodation. Accommodations for exams are made on a case-by-case basis and may vary from exam to exam and semester to semester. Documentation must be provided and in some cases may have to be updated each year or each semester.

The start and end times of exams for students who receive extra time as an accommodation may be different than the posted times for the class. Students taking evening exams will need to begin earlier than the posted time to allow for a reasonable end time.

Exams at NYLS are given on ExamSoft software. (Additional information regarding the software can be found on the portal, and the Offices of Student Life and Information Technology can assist as needed.)

## V. ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PHYSICAL ACCESS

The Law School is accessible to individuals in wheelchairs and those with mobility impairments. Students with access concerns should contact the Office of Student Life for information on the best access routes and, if necessary, to make arrangements for specific accommodations such as the removal of a stationary seat in a classroom or to obtain a more convenient locker location.

Accessible restroom locations are

- All restrooms in 185 West Broadway ("W" building)
- "E" building: second floor, sixth floor (women's room), and ninth floor (men's room)
- "C" building: lower level, third floor, fourth floor, and fifth floor

## VI. SERVICE ANIMAL POLICY

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, service animals are permitted in School facilities for persons with documented disabilities. A service animal is an animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. The service provided by the animal must be directly related to the functional limitation caused by the person's disability.

Faculty and staff should

- Allow a service animal to accompany the handler (student or visitor) at all times and everywhere on campus, except where service animals are specifically prohibited due to health, environmental, or safety hazards (e.g., mechanical rooms, custodial closets, areas where protective clothing is necessary, or areas where there is a danger to the animal).
- Always speak to the handler first; remember, this animal is working and is not a pet.
- Refrain from petting, feeding, or deliberately startling a service animal. Refrain from offering treats to the service animal.
- Immediately report any disruptive behavior of a service animal to NYLS Security. No attempt should be made to separate a handler from his or her service animal.
- Any questions regarding service animals or their handlers should be directed to the Office of Student Life (for students) or Human Resources (for faculty/staff).

Students seeking additional information about Service Animals, or who wish to fill out a *Service Animal Registration Form*, should contact the Assistant Dean of Student Life.

## VII. TEMPORARY DISABILITY

To receive accommodations, students with a temporary disability must provide documentation to the Office of Student Life that states the nature of the disability and its expected duration. Students requesting accommodations due to a temporary disability must follow the procedures explained above in Sections II and III (including submitting a *Request for Accommodations Form*).

## VIII. CONFIDENTIALITY

Information regarding a student's disability will not be released to anyone without the student's permission, except when necessary to conduct school business. The Law School reserves the right to consult with outside professionals regarding a student's disability when the School deems it appropriate. Professors will not be notified by the administration of a particular student's disability or of accommodations provided without the student's permission. Students should not reveal information regarding exam accommodations to their professors, as such notification might breach the policy regarding anonymity of the grading process. Without identifying the individual student, accommodation requests may be discussed with the faculty member teaching the course in order to determine if the recommended accommodation is appropriate. In some cases, it may be unavoidably apparent that a classroom accommodation is being provided. However, according to the New York Law School Faculty Rules, the exam grading process is anonymous. Students with confidentiality concerns should speak with the Assistant Dean of Student Life.

## IX. REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS FOR THE BAR EXAM

Students who need accommodations for the Bar Exam must apply directly to the Board of Bar Examiners for the particular state in which the exam will be taken. Please note that receiving accommodations during law school does not guarantee you will receive accommodations for the Bar Exam. In general, the following steps may be helpful:

- Keep records of all previous testing and results.
- Keep records of all accommodations allowed in the past (high school, college, Law School Admission Council, and law school).
- Start the application process as early as possible (but not until your final year of law school).

## X. OFFICE OF ACADEMIC PLANNING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Members of the Office of Academic Planning and Career Development are available to meet with any student to discuss disability concerns as they relate to job searches and employment (such as issues of disclosure and selecting appropriate job settings). The facilities of the Office of Career Development are available only to employers whose practices are consistent with New York Law School's Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy. Students are encouraged to discuss any concerns related to employer compliance with the policy with the Assistant Dean of Academic Planning and Career Development.

## XI. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Students who are not satisfied with the accommodations provided should state their concerns in writing to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Student Life. The Associate Dean may consult with members of the faculty, the Dean, other administrators, and outside professionals in addressing the grievance. The Associate Dean will communicate the Law School's decision in writing to the student.

## **XII. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT POLICY: PREAMBLE**

Discrimination and harassment interfere with the educational purpose of New York Law School and negatively affect all members of the Law School community. Faculty, staff, and students have a right to be free from discrimination and harassment, as defined below. Discrimination or harassment directed at any member of the Law School community within the context of the Law School or Law School-sponsored activities will not be permitted, and complaints will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. New York Law School is proud of its policy of maintaining a work, academic and residential environment that encourages tolerance and respect for the dignity of each individual.

Nothing in this policy shall abridge academic freedom or New York Law School's educational mission. Prohibitions against discrimination and harassment do not extend to statements or written materials that are relevant and appropriately related to the subject matter of courses.

You can read New York Law School's Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy in its entirety at [www.nyls.edu](http://www.nyls.edu).

## Request for Accommodations Form

1. To initiate the request, please complete all pages of Section A and the Student Statement and return the forms to the Office of Student Life, New York Law School, 185 West Broadway, New York, NY 10013. You may email the forms to [studentlife@nyls.edu](mailto:studentlife@nyls.edu). If you do not receive a confirmation from a Student Life staff member within 24 hours, you should call 212.431.2851 to confirm they were received.
2. Please provide a copy of all documentation relating to your disability (including tests and test scores).
3. Have your health care professional(s) complete Section B and return it to the Office of Student Life. If there is more than one health care professional responding on your behalf, each must complete a separate form.
4. Please be aware that your request cannot be considered until the Law School has received your completed form and the form from your health care professional(s) with all of the necessary information and supporting documentation.
5. You are urged to submit all of the completed forms and documents as soon as possible, as the review process can extend more than 30 days. If you would like to be considered for in-class accommodations, your documentation should be in as early as possible and **at least one month prior to the start of classes**. If you would like to be considered for midterm accommodations, your documentation should be in **no later than the first week of classes**. If you would like to be considered for final exam accommodations, your documentation should be in **at least one month prior to the end of classes**.
6. Please be aware that New York Law School will review every request with our independent evaluator before granting or extending a request for a reasonable accommodation. The Law School reserves the right to deny any request if the accommodation sought is not supported by the data or fundamentally alters its academic requirements in the assessment or documentation.
7. All students who are granted accommodations are required to meet in person with the Assistant Dean of Student Life each year.

### Section A. Student Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Check one:     Full-time day student     Part-time evening student

1st Year     2nd Year     3rd Year     4th Year     Visitor

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

A1. Disability Documentation (number of pages attached): \_\_\_\_\_

A2. Nature of Disability:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

A3. Accommodation(s) requested: Please describe the accommodation(s) you are requesting and your reasons for the request. Also describe alternative suitable accommodations. You may attach additional pages if necessary.

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A4. Authorization and Release: By signing this form, I authorize staff from the Office of Student Life to speak with and seek additional documentation from the following individuals concerning my disability and my requested accommodation: *(Please write name(s) of professional(s) from your documentation.)*

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



**Section B. Evaluation and Recommendations of Health Care Professional(s)**

1. Please complete all questions and return the form to the Office of Student Life, New York Law School, 185 West Broadway, New York, NY 10013. You may email the forms to [studentlife@nyls.edu](mailto:studentlife@nyls.edu). If you do not receive a confirmation from a Student Life staff member within 24 hours, you should call 212.431.2851 to confirm they were received. The accommodations request will not be considered until the Law School receives this form. You are urged to submit the completed form as soon as possible as the review process can extend more than 30 days. Students who wish to be considered for in-class accommodations should have all documentation in two weeks prior to the start of classes.
2. Please be advised that your assessment should support the request for any accommodations; be specific as to why a particular accommodation will compensate for the student's disability. The Law School will review every request with an independent evaluator and reserves the right to deny a request if the accommodation sought is not supported by the data in the assessment or documentation or fundamentally alters its academic requirements.
3. The following information is required. (You may also submit additional information):

Name of health care professional \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Street address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

State of license \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of health care professional \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Professional license number \_\_\_\_\_

Name of student \_\_\_\_\_

B1. Please note the first date you evaluated and/or treated this student for the condition(s):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

B2. Please note the most recent date you evaluated this student for the condition(s) for which the accommodation is being requested:

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B3. Please describe in detail the student's disability(ies) and their effect on the student's ability to meet the requirements of the Law School curriculum. (If necessary, attach a separate sheet.)

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B4. What is the expected duration of the disability (ies)?

Permanent?  Yes  No

If no, from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

B5. Describe your medical recommendations and state

- a. Why and how the proposed accommodations(s) will offset the effect of the disability.
- b. Whether any other accommodations would have a similar effect. (If necessary, attach a separate sheet.)

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**STUDENT STATEMENT**

1. Please write a brief summary of your life experiences with your disability.

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2. Explain your educational history as impacted by the disability.

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3. When were symptoms first noticed? What was done at that time? How have you been diagnosed or treated for these symptoms?

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4. Explain any history of accommodations provided—whether formally or informally granted, when accommodations started (grade), issues that promoted need for accommodation, and the effectiveness of each accommodation.

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5. Which accommodations were you granted in college? How effective were they? If you received accommodations, attach a letter from your undergraduate's Disability Services Office listing the accommodations you were granted and the dates.

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6. Did you have accommodations for the LSAT? If so, which accommodations? If you received accommodations on the LSAT, attach the letter you received from LSAC listing the accommodations you were granted.

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7. Explain how the disability impacts you as a law school student in comparison with your college performance.

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8. How has the disability impacted your functioning in employment/relationships/life? How have the symptoms changed over time?

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9. If you are requesting extra exam time, how was the amount of additional time determined?

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10. Explain any "triggers" that exacerbate the symptoms in different situations.

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11. What measures of self-accommodation have you initiated? How effective are they?

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12. Please provide other information explaining the impact of these conditions on your functioning in multiple domains and your attempts to ameliorate the symptoms.

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13. Have you been diagnosed with any other physical or mental health conditions? Which? When? What has been the impact on studying and learning?

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