

Deafness or Hearing Impaired

Documentation Guidelines for Deafness or Hearing Impairments

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, a "qualified individual with a disability is one who, with or without reasonable modification to rules, policies, or practices, the removal of architectural, communication, or transportation barriers, or the provisions of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or participation in programs or activities provided by a public entity". A person with a disability is anyone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of such major life activities as walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, caring for self, performing manual tasks, working or learning. Hearing impairments are considered disabilities under ADA if a major life activity is substantially limited. Physicians, including otolaryngologists and otologists are qualified to provide diagnosis and treatment for hearing disorders. Audiologists may also provide current audiograms. Documentation provided by family members, immediate or otherwise, is unacceptable.

The following guidelines are provided to assist the service provider in collaboration with each student to determine appropriate accommodations. Documentation from family members, immediate or otherwise, is not acceptable. Recommended documentation includes:

- Diagnostic statement of deafness or hearing loss, with a current audiogram (usually within three years, the age of acceptable documentation is dependent upon the condition, the current status of the student, and the student's request for accommodations);
- A statement identifying student's primary means of communication (oral, ASL, SEE, Cued Speech, etc.) and speech reading skills;
- A summary of assessment procedures and evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis and a narrative summary of evaluation results;
- Medical information relating to the student's needs and the status of the individual's hearing (static or changing) and its impact on the demands of the academic program.
- A statement regarding age of onset of impairment and how it impacted speech acquisition and communication skills;
- A statement regarding the use of hearing aids, including appropriateness, function, and effectiveness, and recommendations regarding the probable effectiveness of specific assistive listening devices in the academic setting.
- A statement of the functional impact or limitations of the hearing loss on learning or other major life activity and the degree to which it impacts the individual in the learning context for which accommodations are being requested.

Further assessment by an appropriate professional may be required if coexisting learning disabilities or other disabling conditions exist. Documentation must be submitted to the Accessibility Resources Office in person, by fax (434-395-2434), by email to accessibilityresources@longwood.edu, or by mail: Accessibility Resources, Longwood University, 201 W. High Street, Farmville, VA 23909.