FAQ’s about Disability Support for International Students at Tufts

Q: How do you define disability?

A: An individual with a disability is defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment. Some examples of common disabilities that are covered by the ADA are learning differences (ADD/ADHD, dyslexia) mental health diagnoses (depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder) chronic health conditions (Crohn’s disease, Lyme’s disease, migraines) or other mobility disabilities. There are many different conditions that can vary in severity and can be considered disabling. Any enrolled Tufts student that meets the above criteria can qualify for accommodations.

Q: What do you mean by “accommodations?”

A: Accommodations are academic, housing, or environmental adjustments that are put in place to guarantee equal access to a person with a disability. Common accommodations are extended test time on exams, specific housing placements or altered classroom locations based on accessibility. Accommodations are determined on an individual basis and only available to a student if they register with Student Accessibility Services.

Q: What information does a student need to register with Student Accessibility Services?

A: To register with Student Accessibility Services we ask for documentation supporting your disability and request for accommodations as well as a completed copy of our “Student Identification of Accommodation Needs Form” (available on our website) that gives the student an opportunity to discuss their disability and the accommodations they are seeking. Once this information is gathered we will invite the student in for an intake meeting with a representative from our office. We encourage any student interested in receiving accommodations to register with our office at the beginning of the semester, as accommodations cannot be used retroactively.

Q: What do you mean by “documentation”?

A: Documentation differs depending on the nature of your disability. For learning differences, typically colleges will ask for a neuropsychological report or a psychoeducation report with testing measures. If the disability you are seeking support for is mental or chronic health, most schools will ask for information from the medical provider you are working with the most closely and will usually provide
you with a form specific to their office for your doctor to complete. At Tufts, our forms are available on our website under the “New Registering Students” tab. If you do not have any documentation but are interested in pursuing testing for a suspected impairment, please contact our office. We can work with students and provide referrals for testing. Our office also serves as a referral point for other campus departments, such as Health Services or Counseling. We kindly ask that any medical information be provided to us in English, as we do not have the ability to translate documentation.

**Q: Do I need to be an American citizen to qualify for accommodations?**

A: No, any student that is enrolled and paying tuition at Tufts who qualifies as a person with a disability can receive support through Student Accessibility Services, regardless of citizenship status.

**Q: Can parents register on a student’s behalf?**

A: No. As students covered under the ADA are above the age of 18, legally we must work directly with the student for registration. Parents can support the registration process, however the details of registration will be discussed directly with the student.

**Q: Who will know about my disability?**

A: Student Accessibility Services is dedicated to upholding confidentiality for students registered with our office. Any staff member you are working with will not provide information to anyone without permission from the student. Only staff and faculty that need to work with our office in implementing accommodations will know that you are registered with our office, but they will not know the details of your diagnosis.

**Q: Do I have to register with Student Accessibility Services if I have a disability?**

A: No, you are not required to disclose to our office if you have a disability. However, if you want Tufts to provide specific accommodations you will need to register with our office.

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For any additional questions feel free to email us at accessibility@tufts.edu or give us a call at 617-627-4539