



DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS THAT ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

University of Vermont students who seek accommodations based on deafness/hearing loss are responsible for completing a [Getting Started with SAS Form](https://myaccess.uvm.edu/ClockWork/user/intake/default.aspx) (<https://myaccess.uvm.edu/ClockWork/user/intake/default.aspx>) and for providing appropriate supporting documentation. A student who seeks accommodations on the basis of a deafness/hearing loss is responsible for obtaining the needed documentation, and for initiating contact with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). University of Vermont approaches requests for accommodations with the belief that each student's circumstance is unique and that a flexible approach is the right way to determine appropriate accommodations.

By itself, a medical diagnosis does not establish a need or an entitlement to accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or the Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended (ADA-AA). Another way of saying this is that having any disorder or condition does not, by itself, lead to any conclusion under Section 504 or the ADA. Therefore, the documentation required by University of Vermont extends beyond the medical diagnosis and encompasses the four key elements of a person's functional limitations under Section 504 and the ADA. Those key elements are that:

- the student has a physical or mental impairment
- the impairment limits the student's participation in a major life activity*
- the degree of limitation is substantial and
- there is something that the college can do that would be reasonable, needed, and predictably effective in responding to the impairment.

Documentation that substantiates each of these four areas serves as a foundation that legitimizes a student's request for appropriate accommodations. If a student seeks accommodations on the basis of more than one functional limitation, then more than one professional may need to be involved in developing the diagnoses and other documentation.

SAS will review the documentation and collaborate with the student to determine reasonable and appropriate academic accommodations. Students will be contacted and encouraged to schedule a conversation with the SAS as soon as possible after submitting documentation.

The accommodations afforded to each student will be determined on an individual basis and will be based on the documentation provided.

The Disability Documentation Form, list examples of a "major life activity" as defined under the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. According to the ADA, "A major life activity also includes the operating of a major bodily function, including, but not limited to, functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions."

Acceptable documentation for deafness or hearing loss must meet the following requirements:

- **The diagnosis must meet the criteria of deafness/hearing loss and must be made by a qualified professional.**

The diagnostician must be an impartial individual who is not a family member of the student.

- **Include relevant educational, developmental, and medical history.**

- **Reflect and describe the current functional limitation the deafness/hearing loss has on the student's learning or other major life activity and the degree to which it impacts the individual in the academic context.**

The age of acceptable documentation is dependent upon whether the disabling condition is static or changing, and the student's request for accommodations.

- **The diagnosis is supported by appropriate assessments and presents current symptoms.**

Include an audiological evaluation and/or audiogram administered by an otorhinolaryngologist, otologist, or licensed audiologist, and an interpretation of the functional implications of the diagnostic data and hearing aid evaluation, when appropriate.

Suggestions on how the functionally limiting manifestations of the disabling condition (s) may be accommodated. If the audiological report does not include recommendations for accommodations, an audiologist should be consulted - an educational audiologist is preferable.

- **Include specific recommendations for accommodations with accompanying rationale.**

A connection must be established between the requested accommodations and the functional limitations on the student in the academic environment.

- **The report must be type-written on official letterhead and signed and dated by the evaluator, noting his or her credentials.**

SAS uses the [Disability Documentation Guidelines](https://edgecastcdn.net/006FDC/AU/PDF/AHEAD_Supporting-Accommodation-Requests%5B2%5D.pdf) recommended by AHEAD (the Association of Higher Education and Disability): https://edgecastcdn.net/006FDC/AU/PDF/AHEAD_Supporting-Accommodation-Requests%5B2%5D.pdf

Deafness/hearing loss documentation should be sent to Student Accessibility Services in one of the following ways:

Email: access@uvm.edu

Fax: 802-656-0739

Mail: Student Accessibility Services, UVM, 633 Main Street, A170 Living/Learning, Burlington VT 05405

Questions? Call (802) 656-7753 Our office hours are Monday-Friday 8:30am - 4:30pm