



# BELLARMINE UNIVERSITY

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## **Disability Services**

Enhancing abilities, supporting success

General Information for Prospective Students

### **Our Mission:**

Disability Services is committed to achieving equal opportunities, access, and full participation for people with disabilities in all campus activities, programs, and events. Disability Services respects the intrinsic value of our students and recognizes the importance of an individualized approach when considering reasonable accommodations. We strive to help students see that their disability contributes to their strengths and resiliency and grants them a unique perspective when faced with obstacles. These qualities contribute to a diverse campus and enrich the educational environment.

We are dedicated to removing the instructional, physical, and attitudinal barriers our students face during their higher education journey. Disability Services strives to guide students to become strong self-advocates in getting their accommodation needs met in college and beyond.

### **Accommodations and Support Services:**

Bellarmino offers a range of accommodations designed to remove barriers within the classroom or housing environment. Each student's situation is different, therefore accommodations are determined on a case-by-case, individualized basis.

Some commonly used accommodations include, but are not limited to:

- Extended testing time
- Distraction reduced testing environment
- Readers and scribes for tests
- Note takers
- Textbooks in an accessible format
- Supplemental academic advising
- Alternative assignments
- Priority Registration
- Accessible housing and parking

- Skill building; time management, anxiety management, study skills, and test taking skills
- Communication with faculty and advisor regarding the student's needs
- Information and referral for additional services

Additional accommodations may be offer based on documented needs. The accommodations listed above are free to students with appropriate documentation on file.

### **Eligibility for Accommodations:**

To receive disability-related accommodations, appropriate documentation of a student's disability is required. This information will remain in a confidential file with Disability Services. Accommodations are approved on a case-by-case, individualized basis.

Documentation guides the accommodation process by:

- Establishing a student's eligibility for services,
- Defining the impact of a student's condition(s) in an academic environment, and
- Identifying appropriate strategies and reasonable accommodations to facilitate equal access.

Appropriate documentation typically consists of:

- Documentation of the disability from a qualified evaluator, professional, or physician.
- The student's self-report.
- The Director of Disability Service's direct observation and interaction with the student.

Documentation from a qualified professional consists of copy of a psycho-educational assessment, written verification by a licensed mental health professional, physician or other appropriate treatment provided qualified to treat and/or diagnosed the specific disability.

The assessment information should:

- Be typed on letterhead, dated, and signed by a qualified professional.
- Contain the official diagnosis.
- Include the method of diagnosis (interview, personality assessment, mental health instruments, physical exam, etc.)
- Identify the substantial limitation on a major life activity presented by the disability, and a description of the current functional impact of the disability in a college setting. The assessment should validate the needs for services based on the impact of the student's disability and level of functioning in an educational setting.
- Describe the expected duration, progression, and stability of a condition
- Include the treatment plans (on-going therapy, medication prescribed, physical therapy, etc.)

- Have suggested accommodations and/or academic adjustments, with an explanation supporting the need for each accommodation to achieve equal access.
- List the names and titles of the evaluators, as well as the date(s) of the testing.

For more detailed information on specific disability-type see:

<https://www.bellarmino.edu/studentaffairs/disabilityservices/doc/>

## **How to Prepare for College:**

### **Know yourself**

Students transitioning to college should feel comfortable talking about their educational needs and should understand how their disability impacts them in the classroom. Students should be thinking about the following questions:

- What is the name of the disability?
- What areas of achievement are impacted?
- What are the specific impacts in each area?
- What are your strengths?
- What strategies, interventions, and accommodations best support your learning?
- What self-management skills do you struggle with at times?

### **Know the law**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are civil rights legislation that protects people with disabilities. These laws ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against on the basis of their disability. Section 504 and the ADA require that higher education institutions provide appropriate academic accommodations, as well as accessible programming, events, and activities on campus. Universities ensure equal access to success and failure. It is also important to note that it is the *student's responsibility* to seek disability-related accommodations.

### **Know the procedures for receiving accommodations**

Prospective Bellarmine students apply for accommodations through [Accommodate](#), a web-based platform for students to initiate and manage accommodation needs.

#### **First Time Applicants:**

After committing to Bellarmine University you will receive a Bellarmine email address and password. At this point you will be able to apply for accommodations by following the steps below:

#### **1. Fill out the Accommodation Request form:**

Link: [https://bellarmine-accommodate.symphlicity.com/public\\_accommodation/](https://bellarmine-accommodate.symphlicity.com/public_accommodation/)

- Complete the application,

- Scan, and upload disability-related documentation, including psychological, neurological, or other test results, previous accommodations received, and relevant information from your treating professional (see section II, C; Eligibility for Accommodations). This documentation is only visible to Disability Services (see section I, C; Confidentiality). These supporting documents can also be brought to your first meeting with Disability Services.
  - Make sure select **Submit** at the bottom of the screen to complete the initial application process.
2. **Schedule Meeting with Disability Services:** Once the application is submitted, Disability Services will email students with instructions on how to access our calendar and select an appointment time. All students must meet with Disability Services before they can receive accommodations. If additional help is required, contact the Director of Disability Services via telephone (502.272.8490) or email [rpurdy@bellarmine.edu](mailto:rpurdy@bellarmine.edu) .
  3. **Meet with Instructors:** After meeting with Disability Services, and accommodation letters are emailed to instructors, it is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with all instructors. They should set up a brief appointment with instructors to review the accommodation letter and discuss student/faculty responsibilities. **It is essential that students communicate with instructors about accommodation needs.** The implementation of academic accommodations is a *shared responsibility* between the student, the instructor, and Disability Services. Students and instructors discuss each requested accommodation and how it will be implemented so that it is appropriate to both the student's needs and the format of the course.

**NOTE: Accommodations must be renewed EACH Semester:** Students must meet with Disability Services at the beginning of each semester. It will not be necessary to provide new documentation each semester (unless your condition and needs change), but you do need to make an appointment (through **Accommodate**) to review your accommodations or to start the accommodation process. Accommodations do not carry over to a new semester, even if you have had a professor in the past.

### **Know your resources**

Bellarmine University has resources on campus which impact students academically, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. For a list of these resources please see the **Additional Resources** tab on the Disability Services website.

### **For Parents:**

Things to keep in mind:

- Encourage the development and use of self-advocacy skills
- Help your son/daughter understand their disability
  - Talk about it comfortably
  - Review class schedule

- Discuss how strengths/weaknesses will be effected by each class and the types of services they may need
- Listen and ask questions when you sense a problem
- Realize the coursework will be more difficult and time consuming than during high school
- Direct them to their resources
- FERPA- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

Detailed information on FERPA-

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them.

Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

**Disability information is never a part of any directory information released.**

In order for the Disability Services staff to discuss student information with staff, faculty members or parents, a registered student must present a FERPA waiver or a release signed by the student. The student must name the parties to whom the information may be released. A FERPA form or the release section of the student's "Request for Accommodation Form" may be used for such purposes. Each semester students are to complete a new "Request for Accommodation Form"; therefore, at the end of each term the faculty's authorization to discuss the student's accommodations and disability is terminated. A new release/waiver must be in place before discussions may resume for the current semester.

The University discloses education records without a student's prior written consent under the FERPA exception for disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the University in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom the University has contracted as its agent to provide a service instead of using University employees or officials (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in

performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities for the University.

**Next Steps:**

We encourage you to navigate the Disability Services' webpages for more detailed information regarding housing accommodations, the full Student/Faculty Handbook, and additional resources available to all Bellarmine students.

The Director of Disability Services, Ronda Purdy is available to meet with prospective students and their families for informational meetings. To set up an appointment please call or email at [rpurdy@bellarmine.edu](mailto:rpurdy@bellarmine.edu) or 502.272.8490.