

Union College is mandated by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Union College is committed to providing individualized support to students based on their unique needs to ensure equitable access to education programs and activities.

I previously had an IEP. Is a 504 plan the same thing? If not, how are they different?

While similar, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and 504 plans are different. An IEP provides individualized special education and related services to meet a child's unique needs. Access to IEPs is governed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA Act) which is a federal special education law. IEPs create a blueprint for a child's special education experience. The IDEA Act only governs k-12 education and governs a limited number of disabilities.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal civil rights law to stop discrimination against people with disabilities. Section 504 has a broader definition of a disability than IDEA. (It says a disability must substantially limit one or more basic life activities. This can include learning, reading, communicating, and thinking.) That's why a student who did not qualify for an IEP might still be eligible for a 504 plan.

While an IEP identifies specific experiences unique to the needs of a child, the purpose of a 504 plan is to ensure services and changes to the learning environment to enable students to learn alongside their peers.

With an IEP, the law requires specific members of the educational team to engage and prepare the plan for the student based on their assessment. Under Section 504, students are responsible for self-identifying to the Accommodative Services Office and engaging in an interactive process.

To be eligible for accommodations at Union College, what criteria do I need to meet?

- You must be officially accepted to the College
- You must provide the required documentation
- You must give permission each term that your faculty be notified of your accommodations

Your responsibilities as a student with a disability:

- To meet and maintain the College's academic standards
- To identify yourself to the Accommodative Services Office
- To provide required documentation
- To maintain compliance with the College's documentation requirements
- To bear the cost of the evaluation(s) necessary to provide the documentation required by the College

- To request each term via Accommodative Services online portal that your faculty notification letters be sent.
- **To actively participate in the search for accommodation and auxiliary aids**
- To communicate with instructors about how accommodations will be implemented in each classroom, preferably during the first two weeks of classes. Please be advised that some faculty may require different communication periods.
- To notify instructors a minimum of 48 hours prior to the intended use of accommodations.
- To communicate with the Accommodative Services Office should your accommodative needs change or you have a concern.

What are the College's responsibilities to a student with a disability?

- To review documentation and activate reasonable accommodations in a timely manner
- To provide reasonable accommodations once they are activated (accommodations will **not** be provided retroactively)
- To request additional documentation if that which is provided is inadequate or outdated (this may result in delayed activation of accommodations)
- To share information regarding a student's accommodations only with those individuals involved in the assessment and implementation of their accommodations
- To make prudent effort to reasonably accommodate students with disabilities unless unreasonable notice, undue hardship, or fundamental alteration of a program is corroborated
- To, when feasible, assist temporarily injured and impaired students although not required by applicable law
- To provide students with information on their rights to file a complaint through the College's non-discrimination process if accommodations are denied after being implemented.
 - The College's Office of Title IX and Equal Opportunity oversees reports of allegations of discriminatory conduct, including discrimination on the basis of ability. The Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Harassment, Bias and Retaliation in Employment governs allegations against employees for engaging in discriminatory conduct.
 - Reports can be made in-person or via phone or email to the Director of Accommodative Services or a member of the Equal Opportunity Office.
 - Reports can be made via the College's [online reporting form](#).
 - Students reporting discriminatory conduct have the right to be protected from acts of retaliation by the College.
 - Reports of discriminatory conduct remain private to the extent possible to assure redress.

What are the College's documentation requirements

- All documentation must be on letterhead, dated, signed, and include the diagnosing professional's name, title, organization, license or certification.

- All documentation should be reflective of the current student experience and will be received for such appropriateness.
- Other specific documentation requirements may apply based on the nature of one's disability and individual circumstance and requested accommodations.
- Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) or previous 504 plans will **not** be accepted as the primary source of documentation; additional documentation may be required based on individual circumstances.
- Documentation prepared by a family member will **not** be accepted as the primary source of documentation
- All documentation must be provided via the Accommodative Services online portal found by visiting the following website:
 - www.union.edu/accommodative-services
 - Click "New Students - Registration Portal"

Based on my disability, what are the College's specific documentation requirements?

Learning Disabilities and/or Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders

- A psycho-educational or neuropsychological evaluation completed within the past three (3) years to include:
 - § A clearly stated diagnosis of a learning disability and/or AD/HD
 - § Scores from any psychological and/or educational testing
 - § Recommendations for accommodation

Physical/Medical/Neurological Disorders

- Documentation completed within the past three (3) years to include:
 - § A description of the nature of the disability and/or a clearly stated diagnosis
 - § Scores from any psychological and/or education testing
 - § Recommendations for accommodations

Psychiatric/Emotional/Behavioral Disorders

- Documentation completed within the past six (6) months* to include:
 - § A clearly stated diagnosis of a psychiatrist/emotional/behavioral disorder(s)
 - § Scores from any psychological and/or educational testing

§ Recommendations for accommodations

Temporary Disabilities

o Documentation completed within the past six (6) months to include:

§ A clearly stated diagnosis of temporary disability

§ Scores from any psychological and/or educational testing

§ Recommendations for accommodations

We're here to help!

If you have any questions or need additional information please contact the Office of Accommodative Services:

Shelly Harrington
Director of Accommodative Services
222 Schaffer Library
P: (518) 388-8785
E-mail: harrings@union.edu