

# **Disability Services at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary**

## **Policy and Procedures Statement**

(Updated July 8, 2010)

### **Introduction**

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Midwestern Baptist College, SBC, is subject to Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This Act requires that no qualified individual with a disability will, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, its services, programs, or activities or be subjected to discrimination by any such entity. Similar obligations are found in Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Midwestern is committed to complying with federal and state law. The definitions of terms used in this document are intended to be consistent with the definitions set forth by the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act.

### **General Policy on Academic Accommodations**

Students with disabilities are expected to master the fundamental skills and knowledge that are required for their course of study. Students should not expect Midwestern to excuse them from requirements that are difficult, but rather should take the necessary steps to ensure that they are getting the help they need to enable them to meet the program's requirements.

### **Definitions**

**Disability** - Federal law defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual, a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment.

**Qualified Individual with a Disability** - The term "qualified individual with a disability" means an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable modifications to rules, policies, or practices, the removal of architectural, communication, or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by a public entity. Throughout the rest of this document, the term "student" is assumed to mean "qualified student".

### **FAQ's**

#### ***What does 'adequate documentation of a disability' mean?***

Documentation of a disability means providing information about the person's disability from a qualified professional and it has two purposes:

- To verify that the individual has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more life functions.
- To substantiate that the impairment/condition currently requires modifications, academic adjustments or services in order to compensate for or accommodate the disability.

***Who can provide the documentation?***

Documentation must be from a professional source who is qualified to diagnose or make determinations about the disability. For example, hearing impairment generally requires a copy of an audiogram from a licensed audiologist. Learning disabilities generally require a recent psychological evaluation by a psychologist; however, additional information from a reputable recognized expert source would also be a possibility. Documentation of Attention Deficit Disorder from a medical doctor may not be sufficient. Students are responsible for providing current adequate documentation. Midwestern has the right to request further information from the student if what is presented is insufficient. Documentation must be on professional letterhead, and include the diagnosis and current status of the disability as well as the professional's name and credentials.

***What are the essential elements of disability documentation?***

1. The Credentials of the Evaluator: Documentation should be provided by a licensed or otherwise properly credentialed professional who has undergone appropriate and comprehensive training, has relevant experience, and has no personal relationship with the individual being evaluated. The professional diagnosing the disability/condition must be qualified to make the diagnosis of the disability/condition. (e.g., an orthopedic limitation might be documented by a physician, but not a licensed psychologist).
2. A Diagnostic Statement Identifying the Disability: Documentation should include:
  - a. a clear diagnostic statement that describes how the condition was diagnosed,
  - b. information on the functional impact,
  - c. the typical progression or prognosis of the condition, and
  - d. the necessary information to support the need for accommodations.

## **Procedures for Requesting Academic Accommodations**

If a student is seeking effective auxiliary aids for a current disability, the student is responsible for providing the Student Development Office with timely and adequate documentation of the student's disability. Acceptable documentation is a necessary prerequisite for proper evaluation of the reasonableness of a proposed accommodation or proposed modification to the rules, policies, and practices of MBTS and MBC. The Student Development Office can provide the student with guidelines for acceptable documentation of a disability.

Once the proper documentation is received, Midwestern will verify that the individual has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more life functions and then substantiate that the impairment/condition currently requires modifications, academic adjustments or services in order to compensate for or accommodate the disability.

It is the student's responsibility to initiate consideration for accommodations relating to course or degree requirements. The student needs to discuss any problems they are having with requirements (degree or course) with the Student Development Office. Based on appropriate documentation and discussion with the student regarding past experiences, the Student

Development office will decide if accommodations are warranted and what accommodations should be recommended.

**Sources:** <http://www.ius.edu/ASC/disabilityservices/Policies.cfm#62>

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**Brochure Available:** A three-panel brochure, also entitled *Disability Services at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary: Policy and Procedures Statement*, consisting of the same content as this Policy and Procedures statement, is available in the Student Development Office.