

# ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

## ACADEMIC AFFAIRS



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### **OVERVIEW**

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary provides equal access to its programs of graduate professional education for all qualified students with learning, physical, medical or psychological conditions. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (<https://www.disability.gov/rehabilitation-act-1973>) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (<http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/disability/ada.htm>) prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Accordingly, the seminary aims to provide reasonable accommodation(s) to ensure access to and participation in seminary programs.

There are three steps to apply for accommodations: 1) Review the policy and fill out the application; 2) Meet with Ms. Krista McNeil, director of academic studies and registrar; and 3) Submit current, relevant documentation about the condition/disability from a qualified health professional.<sup>1</sup>

### **GENERAL POLICIES**

1. Eligibility is determined on an individual basis based upon documented need.
2. Current students should petition as early as possible. Late submission of documentation may result in a delay in implementing accommodation.
3. Self-disclosure and the submission of documentation can be initiated any time during the year. However, reasonable time must be allowed before the student can expect accommodation(s) to be in place.
4. Academic Affairs staff will not disclose the condition or disability without the student's permission. They will only share the nature of the accommodations to professors. It is up to the student to decide if they want to self-disclose their condition to their professors.
5. All completed forms will be returned to the Academic Affairs Office.
6. Medical documentation must be reviewed and updated as needed.
7. Accommodation(s) cannot be retroactive. Accommodation(s) begins only after documentation is received and reasonable time for accommodation is development has been allowed.

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<sup>1</sup> These materials may be forwarded to an education consultant with special training in disabilities who will suggest appropriate action to the seminary.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality is extremely important to Academic Affairs staff.<sup>2</sup> In accordance with The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines, information regarding a student's condition is only shared with other seminary personnel if there is a legitimate reason to do so and with the student's written permission. For more information on FERPA see, <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>.

Faculty members are not told the specific nature of a student's condition, unless the student provides the Academic Affairs Office with written permission to do so. Faculty may not identify students as having a disability or disclose their accommodation(s) without the student's written permission. Students are encouraged to communicate openly with faculty regarding their accommodation(s).

## **MEDICAL AND TESTING DOCUMENTATION**

The seminary reserves the right to request additional documentation, if needed. *All costs for testing, assessment, and implementation are the responsibility of the student*, although testing costs may be reimbursed by health insurance companies. Educational consultant charges are the responsibility of the seminary. After receiving all documentation, the Registrar-in-Training, will recommend specific accommodations.

*Implementation expenses associated with the accommodation(s), if any, are the responsibility of the student.*

Appropriate documentation should include:

1. A description of the disability, including duration and severity.
2. Assessment of limitations and how they relate to the educational environment.
3. Test scores and interpretation, where relevant.
4. Recommendations concerning specific educational accommodation(s).
5. Information concerning prescribed medications and their potential side effects.

## **TEMPORARY (SHORT-TERM) DISABILITY/ILLNESS**

Students with temporary disabilities are encouraged to contact the Registrar's Office for information regarding services are available to them. Examples of temporary disabilities include: a broken arm/leg, recent surgery, a short-term illness, or an injury.

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<sup>2</sup> General information regarding Garrett-Evangelical's commitment to providing equal access to its programs of graduate professional education for all qualified students with learning, physical, medical or psychological conditions is detailed on page 80 of *Student Life Handbook* (available on MyGETS).

## **SEMINARY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Identify and establish essential functions, abilities, skills, knowledge, standards and criteria for courses, programs, services, and activities.
2. Request and receive current documentation from an appropriate licensed professional source that supports accommodation(s) requests.
3. Deny a request for accommodation(s), academic adjustment and/or auxiliary aids and services in consultation with a student with a documented disability if:
  - a. Documentation does not meet the seminary's guidelines and demonstrate that the request is warranted.
  - b. The student fails to provide appropriate documentation.
4. Refuse to provide an accommodation, adjustment and/or auxiliary aid or service that is ineffective or unreasonable, including any that:
  - a. Pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others.
  - b. Fundamentally alter courses, programs, services or activities.
  - c. Pose undue financial or administrative burden.
5. Provide information regarding policies and procedures to faculty, staff, students, and guests with disabilities and assure this information is available in accessible formats upon request.
6. Ensure that courses, programs, services, and activities, when viewed in their entirety, are available and usable in the most integrated and appropriate settings.
7. Evaluate students and applicants on their abilities and potentials, not their disabilities.
8. Provide or arrange for effective, appropriate and reasonable accommodation(s), academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services for students with identified disabilities in courses, programs, services, and activities.
9. Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records.
10. No waivers will be made of admissions policies or regulations regarding acceptable behavior or course objectives and requirements, *including the attendance policy*.

## **STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. All requests for accommodation(s) must be made through the Registrar's Office.
2. The student must request accommodation(s) and provide appropriate written documentation of the disability.
3. For any semester that the student requests accommodation(s), the student must request accommodation before the semester begins, or the student should expect delays.
4. The student must request accommodation(s) in a timely manner, allowing for sufficient time to make appropriate arrangements.
5. Housing accommodation(s) are made through the Residential Ministries Office. Contact: 847.866.3939.
6. The Registrar's Office is not responsible for problems in accommodation(s) which are not brought to the Registrar-in-Training in a timely manner.
7. The student must abide by all seminary rules and academic standards in the Academic Handbook and the Student Life Handbook.

## ACCOMMODATIONS GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Garrett-Evangelical provides procedures for resolving disputes related to services for students with disabilities, including complaints that a student has been discriminated against because of his or her disability.

If a student believes another Garrett-Evangelical student has engaged in discriminatory conduct toward them because of their disability, the student may file an incident report with the Office of Student Life. Information about how to file such an incident report and the procedures used to resolve such complaints may be obtained from the Office of Student Life.

Any complaint that a student has been discriminated against by an administrator, faculty member, staff member, or other employee relating to disability services, because of his or her disability, may utilize the following procedures:

1. Students are encouraged, but are not required, to make a sincere attempt to resolve the problem through discussions with the other party.
2. If the student is unable to resolve the problem with the other party or has opted not to make such an attempt, then the student should meet with the Registrar-in-Training, to discuss the problem and possible ways to resolve the problem. *The student should schedule this meeting within fourteen days of the event leading to the dispute.*
3. If the Registrar-in-Training and the student are unable to resolve the problem, the student may file a written complaint with the Academic Affairs office. The written complaint must specify the nature of the dispute, any prior attempts to resolve the matter and how the student wishes for the matter to be resolved. *The written complaint should be filed within fourteen days of the meeting with the Registrar-in-Training.* The Academic Dean will conduct an investigation. As part of that investigation, the Academic Dean will ask the student and the other party to identify any witnesses and to submit any other evidence they wish the Academic Dean to consider. The Academic Dean will complete the investigation within thirty days of receiving the written complaint from the student, if practicable. The Academic Dean will notify the parties of the disposition of the matter to the extent permissible by law.
4. If the student is dissatisfied with the disposition, the student may file a written appeal with the Office of the President. *The appeal must be filed within fourteen days of being notified of the Academic Dean's disposition* and contain all the information and documentation that the student wishes to be considered as part of the appeal. The Office of the President will notify all parties of his or her decision within thirty days after receiving the appeal if practicable, to the extent permitted by law.
5. If the student's dispute is with the Registrar-in-Training, the student should notify the Academic Dean, who will appoint an impartial person to meet with the student or conduct the investigation as applicable. If the dispute is with the Academic Dean, the student should notify the Office of the President, who will appoint an impartial person to meet with the student, conduct the investigation or handle the appeal as applicable.

In any situation where it is found that discrimination occurred because of the student's disability, Garrett-Evangelical will take appropriate steps to prevent the recurrence of such discrimination and will attempt to correct any discriminatory effects on the student and others if appropriate. Retaliation against any person for complaining about what he or she believes to be discriminatory conduct or for cooperating in any investigation of such a complaint is prohibited.