

Disability Services

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) as amended by the ADA Amendment Act of 2008 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion is committed to the admission of all qualified students without regard to disability. We further commit to provide accommodations to ensure that academic programs and support services are accessible to all students and that the academic programs and support services do not discriminate against or have the effect of discriminating against students. We provide reasonable accommodations to help facilitate academic success. Students with documented disabilities may receive assistance and support from our designated staff on each campus. Services are available for students with documented disabilities on a case-by-case basis according to individual needs.

National Disability Services Coordinator

One member of the HUC – JIR national administration will be designated by the Provost as the National Disability Services Coordinator. This administrator will in turn work with the campus staff members who are designated by their campus dean as the primary contacts for students with disabilities on their campuses. This national staff member will participate in training for new disability services staff members and remain up-to-date regarding Federal and state laws concerning persons with disabilities. This person may serve as a resource person for the National Office of Recruitment & Admission staff and for potential students. Additionally, s/he will be responsible for updating HUC-JIR disability policies and procedures, coordinating and documenting staff and faculty training, and keeping the College-Institute informed about disability services and policies. These duties may be handled in addition to the person's other administrative role.

The National Disability Services Coordinator can be contacted via Clyde Parrish in the National Registrar's Office: (513) 487-3202

Disability Services Staff Members for Each Campus

Each campus will have a Disability Services staff member, designated by the campus dean and the National Disability Services Coordinator, to assist students with disabilities. That staff member will be trained and familiar with the applicable state and Federal laws such as the 504 and ADA regulations from the US Department of Education, be well-versed in the relevant policies of the College-Institute, and should conduct the initial interview and follow-up with each student seeking disability accommodations. The staff member will also maintain a confidential file for each student, including the education plan/accommodations developed to aid that student. These duties may be handled in addition to the person's other administrative role.

The Disability Services staff member for your campus can be contacted at:

Cincinnati: Autumn Wheeler, Dean's Office, (513) 487-3231

Jerusalem: Dr. David S. Mendelsson, Year-in-Israel Program Director, 972-2-6203365

Los Angeles: Dr. Madelyn Katz, Associate Dean, (213) 765-2665

New York: Rabbi Renni Altman, Associate Dean, (212) 824-2230

Accommodations

Students who believe they will need academic accommodations to participate fully in the activities related to their academic program at HUC-JIR should make those needs known as early as possible, preferably as soon as they have received notification of acceptance.

Accommodations are adjustments made for students with disabilities in order to allow them to access the same educational experiences as their peers. Generally, a person with a disability is an individual who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Major life activities include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working.

Accommodations are equitable modifications of the learning environment that eliminate, as much as possible, physical or instructional barriers to learning encountered by the student with a disability. An accommodation is considered appropriate and reasonable if the accommodation is feasible and reasonable in its alternative method or format, and does not impose an undue burden or hardship on the school. Accommodations are individualized and dependent on the nature of the specific disability or disabilities.

Accommodations are provided on an individual basis according to documentation provided by the student, tailored to individual needs, and may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Notification letters to professors
2. Quiet room in which to take examinations.
3. Flexible deadlines for assignments
4. Extended time for reading assignments.
5. Extended time for examinations.
6. Alternate format textbooks.
 - o Pdf- or Word-formatted books
 - o E-books
7. In-class note taker. (Request is made in cooperation with professor.)
8. Oral reader for exams
9. Recording device in classroom

10. Computer in class
11. Preferred seating in the classroom.

Accommodation requests that (1) alter *requirements* that are *essential* to the program of instruction, (2) cause a fundamental alteration in the nature of a specific course or academic program, (3) impose *undue* financial or administrative burden, or (4) pose an appreciable threat to personal or public safety will not be granted.

HUC-JIR will assess on a case-by-case basis whether a particular accommodation request would cause undue hardship. An “undue hardship” is a significant difficulty or expense and focuses on the resources and circumstances of the school in relationship to the cost or difficulty of providing a specific accommodation. Undue hardship refers not only to financial difficulty, but to accommodation requests that are unduly extensive, substantial, or disruptive, or those that would fundamentally alter the nature or operation of a course or program of study.

Additionally, HUC-JIR commits itself to making its campuses accessible. The campus Disability Services staff member will work with the campus Operations Manager to ensure that the campus is physically accessible. Where applicable, handicap-accessible parking will be made available. Classes may be relocated to rooms that are physically accessible to meet student and faculty needs.

Alternative textbooks

Students who need alternative textbooks, such as textbooks in PDF format, should make this request as soon as their course syllabus is made available. Students should contact the Disability Services staff member on their campus.

E-books

Students may wish to purchase e-books, when possible, to use with their speech-to-text readers. Many publishers provide textbooks through third-party resources such as BookShare and Accessible Textbook Network (ATN.)

PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

Request for Services All students in need of disability services must notify the Disability Services staff member for their campus as soon as possible after the need for an accommodation becomes apparent. In order to begin the process of assessing potential accommodations as soon as possible, it is preferable that students notify the Disability Services staff member for their campus upon registration for classes of such need. The student will be assigned to meet with the Disability Services staff member to discuss his or her needs and recommendations.

A student previously diagnosed with a disability and who used academic accommodations in a prior educational setting must request that a copy of his/her test results and recommendations be sent to the Disability Services staff member for the student's campus.

If a student is seeking an accommodation for a learning disability for the first time and has not used an academic accommodation at a prior educational setting, the student must provide updated documentation of the student's disability. Documentation should be completed and signed by a professional familiar with the student and the student's disability such as a physician, psychologist or rehabilitation counselor. It should verify the disability and suggest appropriate accommodations.

The documentation required may include diagnostic test results, interpretations of test results, evaluation and assessments of the student demonstrating the need for accommodations due to a disability that substantially limits one or more major life activities; and information regarding the history of the disability and its impact on the student's ability to function. At a minimum, the documentation must be sufficient to apprise the College-Institute that the student currently has a disability that excludes the student from participation in, denies the student the benefits of, or otherwise subjects the student to discrimination in any program or activity.

The Disability Services staff member for the student's campus will review the documentation and any requested accommodations with the National Disability Services Coordinator. If necessary, the Disability Services staff member will discuss any alternative recommended accommodations with the student and the National Disability Services Coordinator. The Disability Services staff member will notify the student of the determination and, if appropriate, any accommodations to be implemented.

If the accommodation is to be used in a specific class(es), the student must notify the faculty member responsible for the class(es) as soon as the determination is reached.

Students receiving accommodations must meet with the Disability Services staff member for their campus at the beginning of each semester to review their status and, if necessary, update their records.

If a student feels that his/her accommodations are not being met, he/she must immediately notify the Disability Services staff member for the student's campus or the National Disability Services Coordinator.

NOTE: *HUC-JIR does not provide diagnosis of learning disabilities or differences or the educational therapies to address those disabilities or differences. Any expense a student incurs for testing and diagnosis of a disability is borne by the student. The College-Institute reserves the right to conduct its own independent evaluation if it so chooses.*

Confidentiality Notice

Except where necessary to further the purpose of this policy or where otherwise required by law, all Disability Services student information will be kept strictly confidential. Release of personal or disability information is at the discretion and instruction of the student. Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure, or distribution of disability documentation is prohibited. Notification to faculty of a student's need for accommodation will only be carried out upon the written permission of the student. No further information regarding the student's disability may be shared within the College-Institute unless the student authorizes the release of the information.

Even if a student registered with Disability Services openly discusses his/her disability, HUC-JIR staff and faculty are not permitted to discuss disclosed information with others.

Request for Reconsideration

In the event that a student's request for accommodation is denied or the student is otherwise dissatisfied with the result of his/her accommodation request, the student should request a meeting with the designated Disability Services staff member on his/her campus to present additional information and/or documentation and to discuss the nature of the issue or complaint. This meeting should be requested within 30 calendar days of the date that the conflict or issue arises. For concerns relating to denial of accommodations, the staff member may engage an outside consultant to review the documentation and provide recommendations to the Office. The staff member may contact faculty, administrators or professionals that can provide information pertinent to the case. If confidential information is to be released to or received by a third party not affiliated with the College-Institute, the student will be asked to sign a release of information form. Following the review of the request for reconsideration, the staff member will notify the student of the decision within 30 calendar days.

Review by the Provost: If the issue is not resolved through reconsideration, the student may request a review of the process by the Provost within 30 calendar days of receiving the decision on reconsideration. The student should submit a detailed written account of the issue and sign and date the document. The Provost will make an inquiry into the complaint and may contact faculty, administrators or professionals that can provide information pertinent to the case. Every effort will be made to resolve the grievance within 30 calendar days or as expeditiously as possible. The student will be contacted in writing with a final decision regarding the request.

Students are not required to use the internal reconsideration process and may contact the Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education in order to file a complaint. Information on filing a complaint is available on their website: www2.ed.gov/ocr

HUC-JIR prohibits retaliation against anyone who seeks reconsideration under this section or otherwise complains that he or she has been denied equal access in the form of appropriate accommodations or has suffered discriminatory harassment. This prohibition of retaliation similarly extends to anyone who assisted or participated in any manner in an investigation or proceeding relating to a complaint under this section.

In the event that HUC-JIR finds that any student has suffered discrimination or harassment relating to his or her disability, HUC-JIR will take immediate measures to remediate and/or correct the discrimination or harassment. Any individual who is subject to such discrimination or harassment will be notified of HUC-JIR's measures to remediate and/or correct such conduct.

TRAINING

Campus-Wide Faculty Training – All faculty, including adjuncts, must go through ADA training. This training must include the College-Institute's disability services policy and procedures as well as how to be helpful to students with disabilities. Additionally, faculty must be made aware of the range of accommodations that can be made by the College-Institute and who the disability services staff member is for their campus.

Administrators & Student Service Staff Training – Deans, Associate Deans, Academic Program Directors, and student services staff (Admissions, Financial Aid, Registrar, etc.) will also be trained regarding the College-Institute's disability services policies and procedures.

Training will be arranged by the HUC-JIR Coordinator for Disability Services. Occasional updates regarding changes to HUC-JIR, state, and Federal policies will also be provided as needed.