Accommodation Policy for Students with Disabilities

To ensure that its programs, activities, and services are accessible to all matriculating students, Bowdoin College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Documented disabilities may include a learning disability; attention deficit disorder; a visual, hearing, or mobility impairment; or a physical or mental illness. A reasonable accommodation is one that is consistent with the academic standards of the College and does not require substantial course or program alteration or result in the lowering of academic standards. Final authority for determining appropriate and effective accommodations rests with the College and is based on the nature of the course or program and the individual student's disability-related need. [It must be understood that arrangements for equipment, recorded text, interpreters, housing assignments, testing and other accommodations require advance notice.]

Since the laws guiding eligibility for accommodations in grades K-12 and post-secondary education differ, current documentation including recommendations which correspond with the demands of college will help to support your transition. If documentation is not current or sufficiently comprehensive, the College may require an updated evaluation, the cost of which will need to be borne by the family.

The information you provide will be kept confidential in accordance with state and federal law.

Students who wish to make a request for an accommodation based on a disability must:

1. Identify themselves to the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs and request accommodations following their acceptance of admission to Bowdoin. A student begins this process by completing the form entitled "Self-Identification and Request for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities and Other Special Needs." New students receive the form in their post-acceptance packet. Continuing students receive notification of the policy and form availability at the beginning of each semester. They may identify themselves at any time and should do so immediately following an injury or illness with permanent or long-term implications. The form will become part of the student's
personal file, which is maintained by the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs.

2. Provide, at the student's expense, current (i.e. typically within 1 to 3 years depending upon the nature of the disability) relevant documentation of a disability that substantially limits a major life activity or that meets one of the per se qualifying disabilities under the Maine Human Rights Act.¹ Documentation must be completed by a qualified, licensed professional. Upon receipt of required documentation, the director of accommodations for students with disabilities in the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs will consult with the student and other appropriate individuals in determining recommended reasonable accommodations.

Incoming students with documented disabilities who wish to seek accommodation need to register with the director of accommodations for students with disabilities in the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs. After consultation with the student, a review of the student's documentation, and any necessary consultation with outside specialists, the director of accommodations for students with disabilities will determine what accommodations may be appropriate and necessary. The director of accommodations for students with disabilities will communicate in writing with the instructor of the course involved regarding specific recommended accommodations. Faculty members play an important part in determining whether suggested accommodations are appropriate in the context of their course design and evaluation. The student should meet with the instructor during the first week of classes to discuss the accommodations. It is not uncommon for the instructor to fine tune the accommodation request with the student. If a student is dissatisfied with an instructor’s decision or the implementation of accommodations, it is the student’s responsibility to notify the director of accommodations for students with disabilities who can intervene to attempt to address a student’s concerns.

Students who experience academic or other difficulties that impact their educational experience and suspect an underlying disability are encouraged to identify themselves to the director of accommodations for students with disabilities in the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs. Referrals for testing by qualified individuals can be provided through the College Health and Counseling Centers. Notification of a disability to anyone other than the

¹ http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/5/title5sec4553-A.html
director of accommodations for students with disabilities is not sufficient. Information contained in a student’s application for admission to the College is not transferred to the director.

Students who feel they have been discriminated based on their disability should consult the Grievance Procedure for Student Complaints regarding Sex Discrimination and Discrimination on the Basis of Physical and Mental Disability to be informed of the steps that can be taken to address these concerns.