

# H A R V A R D L A W R E V I E W

## WRITING COMPETITION ACCOMMODATIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

The *Harvard Law Review* is firmly committed to providing accommodations for students with disabilities and handles requests on a case-by-case basis. The *Review* is an independent entity from Harvard Law School and thus has its own accommodations system separate from the School's Dean of Students Office. Details on the accommodations process for the Writing Competition can be found below.

If you have any questions, please reach out to us directly for further information, at [HLR-accommodations@harvardlawreview.org](mailto:HLR-accommodations@harvardlawreview.org).

### I. Overview

**How can I request accommodations for disabilities?** Please fill out the *Review's* [Accommodation Request Form](#). When submitting your request, you will use our [Level-4](#) secure Qualtrics form for all confidential materials. If you have questions or need help submitting, please reach out to Jennifer Heath at [HLR-accommodations@harvardlawreview.org](mailto:HLR-accommodations@harvardlawreview.org) or 617-495-7889.

**Does *HLR* provide accommodations for students who serve as editors of the *Law Review*?** Yes. *HLR* provides accommodations to enable students accepted as editors to complete their day-to-day *HLR* work and contribute fully as members of the *Law Review's* community.

**What is *HLR's* process for determining accommodations?** Students who would like an accommodation should submit [the accommodation request form](#) as described above between Monday, March 23rd and Friday, April 24th. *HLR* relies on testing accommodations expert Dr. Loring Brinckerhoff to review each student's submission and provide recommendations for accommodations that are tailored to *HLR's* Competition. Jennifer Heath, a permanent staff member who is not an HLS student, manages all requests, inquiries, and logistics related to accommodations for the Competition.

**When will I hear back if the accommodations I requested are approved?** You will hear from us within three weeks of submitting all the required materials. In some cases, we may invite you to meet with our consultant to discuss your accommodations options, although such a meeting would never be mandatory and is intended only to help us better understand a student's needs. We know that the process of applying for accommodations and the uncertainty while waiting to hear back can be stressful. As a result, we endeavor to get you a decision as soon as we can. We also encourage students to submit the completed accommodations request form as soon as possible to ensure a timely response.

## II. Accommodations and the Competition

**Does applying for an accommodation commit me to completing the Competition?** No. You can apply for an accommodation and subsequently choose not to take the Competition or choose not to use any approved accommodations.

**If I live on campus and receive extra time, will I be able to stay in my campus housing?** If your academic accommodation provides a modified exam schedule that impacts the end date of the Competition, you should contact [Accessibility Services Resources](#). Accessibility will suggest a new check-out date based on your academic accommodation to HLS Housing

**Will my accommodations-related information be kept confidential? Will my accommodation impact how my Competition entry is evaluated?** *HLR* strives to keep information regarding disabilities and accommodations as confidential as possible. Nothing about your accommodations application or your receipt of accommodations will be part of the Competition entry that is considered in the selection process. All Competition grading is doubly anonymized. Accommodations recommendations to *HLR* are made by our consultant, Dr. Loring Brinckerhoff.

As part of the holistic review statement, you will have an opportunity to identify any aspects of your identity you would like the *Law Review* to consider as part of its selection process. These disclosures are at your discretion and separate from any information you provide as part of the process of applying for accommodations. The Holistic Review statement is also considered separately from the grading process, so any information you provide regarding your identity will not impact Competition grading.

**What happens if something goes wrong?** If something goes wrong before or during the Competition, reach out to us immediately, at [HLR-accommodations@harvardlawreview.org](mailto:HLR-accommodations@harvardlawreview.org) and by phone, at 617-495-7889. Jennifer Heath, a non-student *HLR* staff member who manages the logistics related to our accommodations process, will work with you to resolve issues quickly and provide extended time or resources as appropriate.

Extended time or resources for major emergencies during the Competition will be assessed on a case- by-case basis, at the discretion of *HLR* and in consultation with our accommodations consultant. Our internal guidelines for decisions about extensions and other responses if emergencies arise is as follows:

1. In the event that a medically documented emergency prevents a student from completing some of the Competition, we will endeavor to provide a reasonable amount of extended time. Please get in touch with Jennifer Heath, a non-student *HLR* staff member, at [HLR-accommodations@harvardlawreview.org](mailto:HLR-accommodations@harvardlawreview.org) as soon as possible if a medical emergency or disability-related event prevents you from dedicating time to the Competition during the period provided.

2. In the event that a serious administrative problem — due solely to errors from *HLR* and through no fault of your own — prevents you from taking the Competition, we will endeavor to provide a reasonable time extension. To be considered for extra time in response to administrative problems — including issues accessing electronic files as part of an accommodation — you must get in touch with Jennifer Heath, a non-student *HLR* staff member, at [HLR-accommodations@harvardlawreview.org](mailto:HLR-accommodations@harvardlawreview.org) or 617-495-7889 as soon as you become aware of the error and work with *HLR* to rectify the problem.

### III. Accommodation Request Details

**What accommodations does *HLR* provide for Competition-takers?** *HLR* endeavors to provide reasonable accommodations designed to reflect the unique needs of individual Competition takers.

We work with a nationally renowned testing accommodations expert to make decisions about specific accommodations on a case-by-case basis using the information submitted by each applicant. Some students applying for accommodations may receive different accommodations for the *HLR* Writing Competition than they might receive with respect to their law school exams due to differences between *HLR*'s six-day Competition and the time limits of in-class and take-home tests. In the past, accommodations have included extended time to complete the Competition and electronic documents compatible with screen reading software. We have provided accommodations to students with a wide range of disabilities, including physical, psychiatric, sensory, mental, and learning disabilities.

**What documentation does *HLR* require?** Our Accommodation Request Registration Form asks students to describe their disabilities, their accommodations history, and how they anticipate their disabilities will affect their experience of the Competition. In addition, we ask for the following documentation:

- *Learning Disabilities: Psychoeducational or neuropsychological evaluation*
- *Attention Deficit Disorders: Psychoeducational or neuropsychological evaluation*
- *Hearing Impairments: Audiogram and [Statement from Medical Provider form](#)*
- *Visual Impairments: Acuity Report and [Statement from Medical Provider form](#)*
- *Physical Impairments: Letter from a treating practitioner or [Statement from Medical Provider form](#)*
- *Psychiatric Disorders: Letter from a treating practitioner or [Statement from Medical Provider form](#)*

**How current must the documentation be?** To ensure that we can provide you with the optimal accommodations to meet your needs, we request up-to-date documentation in line with our peer institutions.

If a diagnostic report for mobility, hearing, and visual disabilities is more than three years old, we ask that you submit a letter from a qualified professional that provides an update of the diagnosis. This letter should describe the ongoing impact of the disability in a testing setting, its effect on

major life activities, and rationale for each of the requested testing accommodations. In some cases, an updated letter from a qualified professional may simply address why older documents or reports continue to be relevant.

Similarly, if a diagnostic report for Learning Disabilities (LD), Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders (ADHD), or Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) is more than five years old, we require a letter from a qualified professional addressing why older documents or reports still apply.

Students seeking accommodations for mental health conditions and psychiatric disorders should provide recent documentation (within the last six months) from a qualified professional. An updated letter may address why older documentation and reports may continue to be relevant.

For each of these categories of documentation, a history of prior accommodations alone is not sufficient to support a request for accommodations. A qualified professional's recommendation is needed. If you have any questions about the longevity of documentation, please contact [HLR-accommodations@harvardlawreview.org](mailto:HLR-accommodations@harvardlawreview.org).

**How can I learn more about the Writing Competition and *Harvard Law Review*?** You can attend our tips session, review our website and scholarship, and reach out for a coffee chat. If you'd like to talk to someone about the accommodations process in particular, please reach out to Jennifer Heath, a non-student *HLR* staff member who manages the logistics related to our accommodations process, at [HLR-accommodations@harvardlawreview.org](mailto:HLR-accommodations@harvardlawreview.org) or 617-495-7889. For more information about life on the *Review*, please reach out to our Vice President of Coordination, Diversity, and Outreach, Cindy Guo, at [hlr-vp-outreach@harvardlawreview.org](mailto:hlr-vp-outreach@harvardlawreview.org).