Brandeis University: Process for Students with Medical/Disability Dietary Needs

Brandeis University’s goal with respect to students who have dietary concerns is to accommodate them, whenever possible, by providing appropriate foods, methods of preparation, and service in the dining halls.

Food allergies or other medical dietary needs may or may not fall under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Most individuals with medical/disability dietary needs can be provided for under customary operations in the dining halls (with proper signage, preparation, special stations.) These students can work successfully with the Dining Services management and/or dietitian.

Students who need more than available, customary operations are encouraged to engage in the Medical/Disability Dietary Needs process. This process includes both a review of medical documentation by our Health Center, and conversations between the university and the student regarding the potential accommodation agreement. The university’s obligation to meet a given request is dependent upon medical documentation sufficient to warrant an accommodation beyond customary operations and finding a reasonable and appropriate solution.

Step-by-Step:

1. Students should learn about available, customary operations by meeting directly with Dining Services (DS) management and/or dietitian:
   Steven Canario (Steven.Canario@sodexo.com)
   Randi Kates-Peirce (Randi.KatesPeirce@sodexo.com)
   Karen Jew (karen.jew@sodexo.com)
   If making use of customary operations in the dining halls is seen as sufficient, the student may choose to engage a written assessment and management plan with the Dining Services management.

2. A student who needs more than available, customary operations may choose to initiate a Medical/Disability Dietary Needs Process. If a student determines that Dining Services cannot meet their medical dietary needs adequately, DS management will provide a written account of the dietary plan that DS had offered. After a discussion with DS management, the student should initiate contact with the university’s Health Center, at (781)736-3677. This contact would be viewed as an initiation of a possible disability accommodation request.

3. Student provides medical documentation to the Health Center; this documentation becomes part of the student’s medical record and thus, falls under HIPPA guidelines. The student, also, provides a Release of Information (ROI) for the Brandeis Nutritionist to access student medical documentation. Student schedules appointment with the Brandeis Nutritionist by calling the Health Center.
4. The Brandeis Nutritionist and student discuss medical needs and potential solutions. The Medical Director determines whether the submitted documentation is considered adequate for evaluation. In general, new medical documentation must be provided each year.

5. If the student wishes to engage the formal process, the student signs ROI to share medical documentation with Dining Services management and Disabilities Services.

6. To determine if the student’s needs can be met in the dining halls, medical documentation and Brandeis Nutritionist’s recommendations are shared with DS management. As needed, the Brandeis Nutritionist, DS management, Disabilities Services staff, and the student will discuss and arrive at a written agreement that represents both the student’s responsibilities and the university’s obligation under the ADA. If the process has determined that it is necessary, this agreement may allow the student an exception to a required meal plan contract. The agreement will be signed by the student and other involved parties. The agreement will be in effect through the current academic year, although operational considerations should be reviewed each semester with Dining Services.

7. The written plan will include a provision that the parties to the agreement discuss the management plan with dining hall management and, if necessary, with food preparation staff.

8. A student may communicate a grievance or appeal by a written letter to the Director of Disabilities Services, MS 001, Usdan 130, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA 02454.

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