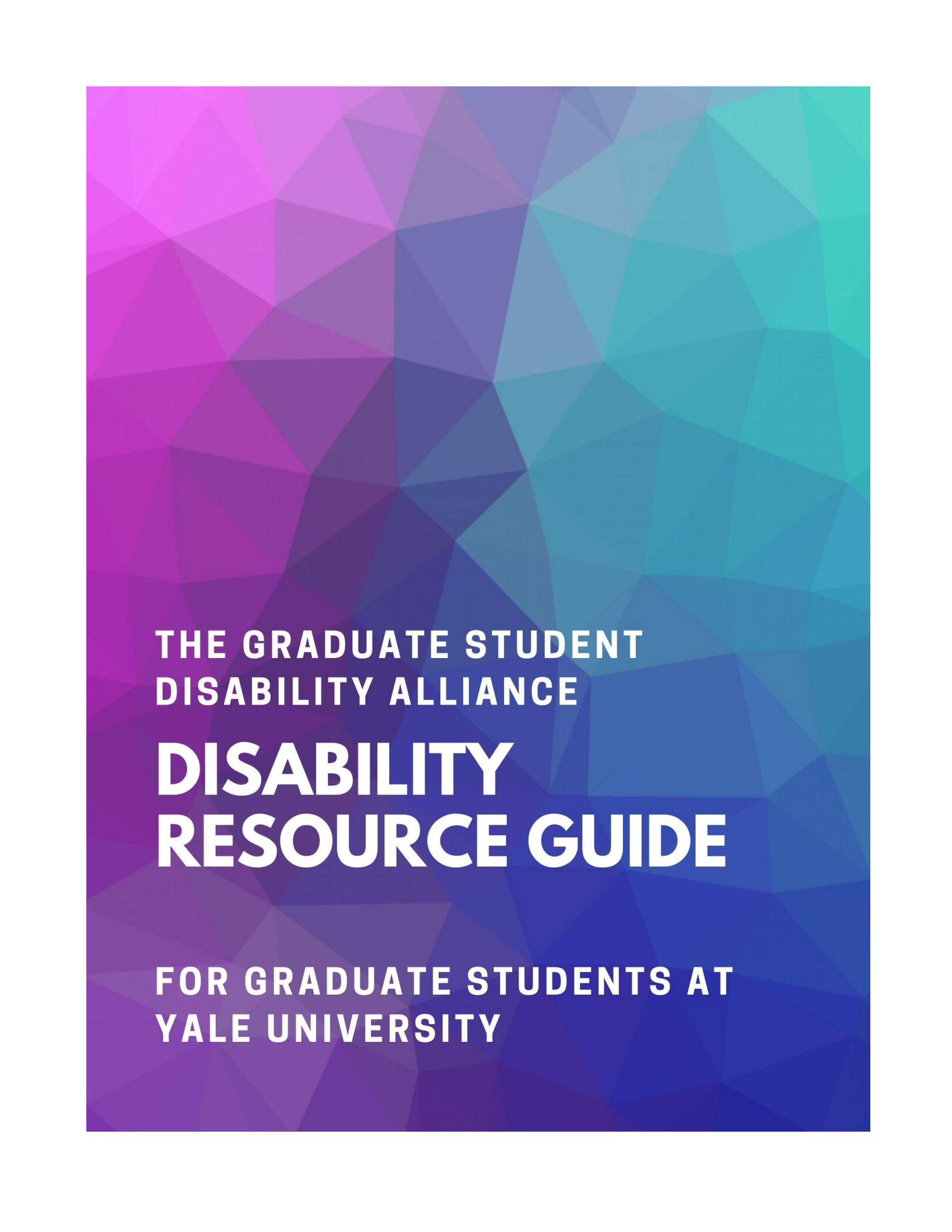




**THE GRADUATE STUDENT
DISABILITY ALLIANCE**

**DISABILITY
RESOURCE GUIDE**

**FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS AT
YALE UNIVERSITY**

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Disability Resource Guide for Yale graduate students, a guide written and maintained by members of the Graduate Student Disability Alliance. This guide was last updated on January 24, 2022.

Founded in 2019, the Graduate Student Disability Alliance (GSDA) is an affinity group for graduate and professional students who are situated within the broad Disability umbrella. This group includes, but is not limited to, Disabled students, neurodivergent students, Deaf/hard-of-hearing students, blind students, students with chronic illnesses, students with mental health conditions, and other students who receive or would like to receive accommodations. The primary function of the Graduate Student Disability Alliance is to create a sense of community among graduate students with disabilities, advocate for members of our community, foster a sense of belonging on campus, and support our members while they navigate graduate school and beyond. For more information about GSDA, please visit [our website](https://gsda.sites.yale.edu/),¹ email us at gsda.leadership@gmail.com, and/or [subscribe to our mailing list](#).²

This guide was inspired by and some sections were adapted from the undergraduate student organization Disability Empowerment for Yale (DEFY)'s [Disability @ Yale Resource Guide](#).³ Thank you to DEFY for creating and sharing this guide with the Yale community!

¹ <https://gsda.sites.yale.edu/>

² <https://mailman.yale.edu/mailman/listinfo/gsda>

³ <https://tinyurl.com/DisabilityAtYale>

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I get disability accommodations?

To receive accommodations, you will need to register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). To register with SAS, visit their [Get Started](#) page.⁴ You will need to:

- Complete the [Registration form](#).⁵
- Provide supporting documentation (see [Documentation Guidelines](#))⁶
- Meet with a SAS staff member to discuss your request and current situation, and to develop a plan for moving forward.

What if I don't consider myself "disabled" or only have a temporary disability?

There are many reasons people may not identify with the "disabled" label. Perhaps they have an "invisible" disability such as a chronic illness, are neuroatypical, have a mental illness, are only temporarily disabled, or do not consider themselves disabled because they do not require a mobility aid. For legal purposes, however, the ADA (the Americans with Disabilities Act) defines disability as "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities."⁷ Someone is classified as disabled if they are a "person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment."⁸ If you feel that this definition applies to you, regardless of whether you identify as disabled or your disability is temporary, then you would probably benefit from registering with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to receive accommodations. You may register and submit documentation to SAS at any time, regardless of whether you need to request accommodations at the time of registration. If you are unsure whether you would be eligible to register, you can always request a meeting with an SAS administrator to determine your eligibility status.

What counts as supporting documentation?

See the SAS [Documentation Guidelines](#) for further details.

According to SAS, supporting documentation should establish a clear link between the "functional limitations or impact" of the disability and the accommodations you are requesting. Documentation should ideally include some or all of the following:⁹

- Credentials: To be provided by an appropriately licensed or credentialed professional who has relevant experience and no personal relationship with you.
- Diagnosis: Includes a description of the diagnostic criteria, evaluation methods, and dates of administration, along with observation/clinical impression notes.
- Functional limitations: Should include the current impact of the disabling condition(s), and describe the severity and frequency of the condition on one or more major life activities.

⁴ <https://sas.yale.edu/get-started>

⁵ https://yale-accommodate.symplicity.com/public_accommodation/

⁶ <https://sas.yale.edu/get-started/documentation-guidelines>

⁷ "Introduction to the ADA" https://www.ada.gov/ada_intro.htm (accessed February 18, 2020).

⁸ "Introduction to the ADA." https://www.ada.gov/ada_intro.htm (accessed February 18, 2020).

⁹ This information is taken from the Documentation Guidelines on the SAS website. For further information, see: <https://sas.yale.edu/get-started/documentation-guidelines>

- Prognosis: Should clearly describe the chronic or episodic nature of the disability, outline conditions or situations that trigger reoccurrence.
- History and Recommendations: Should describe what accommodations have been helpful historically and suggest helpful accommodations for the future, including overall effectiveness.

Once I'm registered with SAS, how do I use my accommodations?

If you are still in coursework, you may receive a letter from SAS that specifies the accommodations you need in your classes, depending on your school and program. For some programs, you as a student are responsible for distributing that letter to your professors. Please note that not every school or program has an accommodation letter and there are various ways to notify faculty of your accommodations. SAS can consult with you about the information relevant to your school or program. Beyond the coursework stage, you will need to specify the accommodations you require and relay those to the appropriate people. For instance, if you require ergonomic seating at your carrel, you would need to work with the library where your assigned carrel is located as well as with SAS in order to secure that accommodation. See our [Student Accessibility Services](#) and [Academics](#) sections for more information.

What if I don't have an official diagnosis?

You can always meet with SAS to discuss your eligibility for accommodations, even without an official diagnosis. You may also want to speak with your doctor(s) about entering a provisional diagnosis that will allow you to have the required credentials to seek disability accommodations. In general, it is a good idea to keep copies of your medical records for your own personal use and to document the progression of your disability or illness with SAS, so that they are aware of any repeated hospital visits and/or other obstacles you are facing while awaiting a diagnosis. In many cases, this is enough to seek disability accommodation.

How do I see doctors while at Yale?

As a graduate student, you can contact [Student Health](#)¹⁰ to set up an initial appointment with your assigned primary care provider (PCP). From there, you can ask for referrals to specialists in your specific condition(s).

You can sign up for [MyChart](#)¹¹ to contact your medical team and see your test results and visit notes. You may need to seek a referral or follow-up appointment from your PCP or another doctor you have seen. You can contact your doctor through [MyChart](#) by going to Messaging > Message Center. Also check out our sections on [Navigating Yale Health](#) and [Mental Health and Counseling](#).

How can I find a community of students who care about disability issues?

The Graduate Student Disability Alliance (GSDA) works to maintain a space where students with disabilities can build community and speak freely about their concerns. We also organize advocacy events and social events with other disability affinity groups on campus. See [our OrgSync page](#)¹² and [subscribe to our mailing list](#)¹³ for more information!

¹⁰ <https://yalehealth.yale.edu/directory/departments/student-health>

¹¹ <https://mychart.ynhhs.org/MyChart-PRD/>

¹² <https://orgsync.com/182731/chapter>

¹³ <https://mailman.yale.edu/mailman/listinfo/gsda>

Who can I speak with if I am having issues with my department, program, or advisor?

You have several options ranging from informal to formal advising if you are facing discrimination due to your disability. For informal peer advising, you can reach out to the Graduate Student Disability Alliance at gsda.leadership@gmail.com or [Graduate Fellows](#) at the Office of Graduate Student Development and Diversity. You can also make a counseling appointment at [Student Accessibility Services](#) to seek advice on your situation.

For formal advising, you can reach out to Dean Nearon (michelle.nearon@yale.edu) at the Office of Graduate Student Development and Diversity. You can also contact [the Office of Institutional Equity and Access](#) at equalopportunity@yale.edu.

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

What is Student Accessibility Services (SAS)?

SAS is the office overseeing accommodations for students with disabilities at Yale. This includes undergraduates as well as graduate students in both the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and the professional schools.

Contacting SAS

[Website](#)¹⁴

Address:

35 Broadway (rear), Room 222

P.O. Box 208305

New Haven, CT 06520-8305

Phone: 203-432-2324

Fax: 203-432-8250

Office hours: Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Call or email sas@yale.edu to schedule an appointment.

Director: Kimberly McKeown

Directions to SAS

There is a walkway heading west near the Hall of Graduate Studies (320 York St.) located between Toad's Place and Mory's. The building is the first on the left, set back with a blue awning indicating 35 Broadway. An elevator is located at the entrance of the building. The offices are on the second floor to the left as you leave the elevator, and you can check in at room 222.

Before you arrive

Make sure you have copies of your documentation ready to submit to SAS, and prepare to speak about your disability and why you are requesting accommodations. It may also be helpful to prepare a list of any questions.

If no existing diagnosis

Even if you do not yet have a diagnosis, please do not let this intimidate you from seeking accommodation or simply requesting more information. It may be helpful to set up a conversation with SAS to discuss your options, or to see if your current condition—even without a diagnosis—would still qualify as a disability.

Your first meeting

Your first meeting will typically be a conversation with a member of SAS about the nature of your disability, what sort of accommodations you need, and how you will manage your workload going forward. It's a good idea to have a statement in mind as to how your disability directly connects to the

¹⁴ <https://sas.yale.edu>

type of accommodation you need. For instance, if you are having trouble typing due to your disability, you can request special dictation software and a headset to make writing easier.

Renewing accommodations for each semester

Depending on the nature of your disability, it may be necessary to renew your accommodations each semester. If you are already registered with SAS, you need to [activate](https://sas.yale.edu/already-registered) your accommodations online each semester.¹⁵

Accommodations provided

Accommodations can vary widely depending on your specific disability. Accommodations are intended to minimize disability-related barriers and provide access. Only you will know which accommodations you feel are necessary, and you will need to approach SAS about providing them. For instance, if you have a vision-related disability, you may need a large-print exam and more time to complete the exam. Before the exam, you would need to request these accommodations and clear them with both SAS and either your department or the professor overseeing the exam.

SAS tends to be more sympathetic to your claim if you can prove that there is a clear link between your disability and the requested accommodation. An example of this might be requesting additional time on an assignment or exam due to a learning disability. However, in many students' experience, SAS will not grant accommodations if they believe your disability is somehow "manageable" or "unrelated" to the accommodation you are seeking. For instance, difficulty breathing due to a respiratory condition does not qualify you to receive extra time on an exam.

Confidentiality

Your medical information and any information you reveal to SAS regarding your disability is completely confidential. **You have the right not to reveal any specific information about your disability to your department.** Your department, in addition to other spaces in which you operate professionally (for instance, a classroom that you teach in that is not located within your department, or the library carrel where you work), **MUST** provide the requested accommodation that SAS has specified, regardless of whether you disclose your disability to them. As you move forward in your graduate career and think ahead to the job market, remember that you **do not have to disclose** your disability to anyone you work with or to your future or current employer.

¹⁵ <https://sas.yale.edu/already-registered>

ACADEMICS

Examples of available accommodations

Accommodations vary widely based on individual needs, so some of the more common accommodations are listed below. Note that most of the standard accommodations that SAS offers to graduate students are related to coursework. For non-coursework related accommodations or nonstandard accommodations, you have the best chance of being approved if you come to your meeting with a very detailed idea of what you want and are prepared to advocate for yourself and your needs.

Please note that you are still able to request accommodations as a graduate student in the post-coursework phase of your degree. If you anticipate needing accommodations during your qualifying exam, committee meetings, dissertation writing, lab research, as a teaching fellow, etc., we recommend discussing options with SAS as early as possible. If you would like help advocating for yourself and your accommodations, the GSDA is happy to help you come up with a plan and strategize for your meetings.

- **Testing accommodations:** Some disabilities may affect students in a testing environment. In these cases, an alternative testing environment or adjustments to exam timing can be arranged. For instance, a student with a learning disability may require 1.5x exam length, or another student may require time for breaks during the exam. Other students may need to use a computer for writing exams. It is best to speak with SAS early in the semester to establish these needs. We recommend you send an email to SAS about a week out from any exam just to ensure that your arrangements have been made.
- **Note-takers:** Some students' disabilities may prevent them from effectively taking notes during their classes. In these cases, SAS can provide assistive technology for note-taking assistance.
- **Library access and screen readers:** Fortunately, the libraries at Yale have both physical assistance and adaptive technology available to assist students with disabilities. Their services include paging books from stacks and shelf areas, ensuring access to adaptive technology, wheelchair accessible printers, screen readers, and more. To learn more about their services, visit the [Library Assistance for Persons with Disabilities](https://web.library.yale.edu/services-persons-disabilities) page of the Yale University Library website.¹⁶ If you have any questions about services at a particular library, you can contact that library's representative listed on the above webpage.
- **Class attendance:** Some students' disabilities (for example, chronic pain or fatigue) may affect their ability to attend class. SAS can suggest to professors to be more flexible with their attendance requirements, but the professor makes the ultimate decision regarding attendance.

Communicating with professors: Letters

SAS creates Letters for your professors explaining that you need certain accommodations due to a medical condition. In order to protect your confidentiality, they do not disclose your disability/condition. A link for filling out letter information is posted on SAS's website and the instructions can be found [here](https://sas.yale.edu/already-registered).¹⁷ Students are responsible for delivering/sending the Letters to their professors.

¹⁶ <https://web.library.yale.edu/services-persons-disabilities>

¹⁷ <https://sas.yale.edu/already-registered>

Some professors are more proactive about making their courses accessible and accommodating students with disabilities than are others. Often the best approach is to contact professors early in the semester to introduce yourself and your needs. Remember that you are legally protected with regards to disability, and you are not required to disclose your specific condition(s) or why you need your accommodations. In most cases, the professor should be willing to work with you in order to accommodate your needs. Should you encounter any backlash or reluctance on the part of the professor, inform SAS so that they can intervene.

You are able to send Letters to any faculty you work with, even if they are not teaching a class you are enrolled in. These faculty may include your thesis advisor and/or your PI, and the members of your committee.

Useful apps/ software

Some useful apps and software are listed below. Please note that technology constantly changes and evolves, and SAS actively researches new technology that they could provide, so there may be other options available than those listed.

- Sensus Access is a service (provided by SAS) that will take documents unable to be read by computer software/ assistive technology and create readable versions.
- Apple's Voice Control and built-in dictation software, including Siri, are now highly accurate and can often dictate better than third-party apps.
 - Voice Control can be used in any application, and works well in Word and other word-processing programs. Check out [How to Use Voice Control on Your Mac](#).¹⁸ For mobile devices (iPad, iPhone, etc), check out [this page](#).¹⁹
- Apple's [Preview](#) is a powerful app that can be used to sign, edit, and fill out PDF forms.²⁰ This will come in handy for any form that requires a signature.
- Combine PDFs, extract PDF text, and extract annotations easily with Apple's [Automator](#) software.²¹
- [Scannable](#) is an app that works with Evernote to scan documents from your phone. All you need to do is take a picture of the document, and it will produce a high-quality scan.²²
- [My Health Teams](#) is a social-networking website and mobile app for people who are dealing with various health conditions or are neuroatypical.²³ They currently support 34 conditions including autism, MS, RA, lupus, epilepsy, psoriasis, and more.

¹⁸ <https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT210539>

¹⁹ <https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT210417>

²⁰ <https://support.apple.com/guide/preview/welcome/mac>

²¹ <https://www.macworld.com/article/2042365/automator-workflow-of-the-month-powerful-pdf-tricks.html>

²² <https://evernote.com/products/scannable>

²³ <https://www.myhealthteams.com/>

FUNDING

Stipend Payments

As a new Ph.D. student, you will receive your first stipend payment on August 31. You will receive a total of 25 semi-monthly stipend payments in your first year, two per month: one on the 15th and the other on the last day of the month (or the Friday before the last day, if it falls on a weekend or holiday). To determine the amount you will receive in each payment, divide the stipend amount from your admission letter by 25.²⁴

Dean's Emergency Fund

The Dean's Emergency Fund helps Ph.D. students with unexpected one-time expenses, including medical expenses such as emergency dental surgery. The fund does not cover recurring expenses; instead, it is intended for Ph.D. students who cannot reasonably resolve their immediate financial difficulty through fellowships, loans, or personal resources. The funding is up to \$2,000, and the award does not require repayment. To discuss your situation and eligibility for the fund, contact Associate Dean Allegra di Bonaventura at allegra.dibonaventura@yale.edu.

To apply, provide a brief description of the emergency situation and the amount of funding requested, including a listing of your anticipated or incurred emergency expenses. Application materials should be submitted to GSASadministrativedean@yale.edu.²⁵

²⁴ This information is taken from the Yale Graduate School of Arts and Sciences website. For more information, see: <https://gsas.yale.edu/resources-students/finances-fellowships/stipend-payments>

²⁵ This information is taken from the Yale Graduate School of Arts and Sciences website. For more information, see: <https://gsas.yale.edu/resources-students/finances-fellowships/funding-phd-students/deans-emergency-fund>

HOUSING AND TRANSIT

HOUSING

There are many options for housing as a graduate student in New Haven, ranging from on-campus housing, to Yale-owned off-campus housing, to privately-owned off-campus housing.²⁶ We recommend looking for housing as early as possible, as it can be difficult to find accessible housing in New Haven.

On-campus Housing

[Yale Graduate Housing Dorms and Apartments](#) provide on-campus housing in historic or modern dorms and varied apartments, with Yale wifi and activities to build community.²⁷ On-campus housing is only for full-time degree-seeking graduate and professional school students and their families. New students should apply through the Yale Housing website in mid-April. It is recommended to apply as soon as the application becomes available online, as on-campus housing is limited and not guaranteed.

- New first-year students in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences are given highest priority in housing assignments at 272 Elm Street. Leases in this building are for a period of one academic year only (August – May) and are non-renewable. Most other on campus Yale graduate dorms or apartments generally do not have an occupancy time limit.
- Graduate Apartment leases are for 12 months (11 months the first year, usually, due to the August start date). Graduate Dormitory contracts are for the academic year (August-May), with summer occupancy options in some buildings. You must continue to be a registered student to live in graduate housing.
- Yale does not have temporary or short term housing on campus.
- There are no graduate Residential Assistant (RA) or regular live-in positions in the undergraduate residential colleges available to graduate students.
- Please note that not every on-campus graduate housing building has accessible housing options. Yale Graduate Housing collaborates closely with Student Accessibility Services to work with individual graduate students, but does not provide accessibility information for all of the graduate housing buildings upon request.²⁸ We recommend contacting Student Accessibility Services if you are requesting graduate housing and have specific accessibility needs so that they can work with you and Yale Graduate Housing for your needs to be met.

Off-campus Housing

- [Elm Campus Partners](#) oversees University-owned off-campus units in the Broadway, Dwight/Chapel or Gym areas and on Mansfield and Prospect streets in Science Hill/Upper Prospect Hill.²⁹ They are only rented to Yale-affiliated students, staff, and faculty, and are leased and managed by the private firm Elm Campus. Apply between March and June for year-long rentals starting in the summer. Subletting for the summer may be possible.

²⁶ The information in this section is taken from the Yale Graduate School of Arts and Sciences website. For more information, see: <https://gsas.yale.edu/resources-students/housing-life-new-haven>

²⁷ <https://housing.yale.edu/>

²⁸ Email from George Longyear at Yale Graduate Housing on July 6, 2020

²⁹ <https://elmcampus.com/>

- [Off-Campus Living](#) is a site provided for the Yale community where landlords and student subletters list privately-owned apartments, homes and house shares.³⁰ These facilities are not owned, inspected, or endorsed by Yale, so be sure to do your research. Landlord ratings on this site can allow you to read other students' ratings and post your own for off-campus apartments.
- [Yale Roommate Search Site](#) can help students to find roommates in the Yale community.³¹

CT Tenant rights

The Connecticut Judicial Branch provides a document outlining the [rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants](#) in the state of Connecticut.³² It is illegal for landlords to discriminate against any person on the basis of disability.

TRANSIT

Yale offers several options for campus transit, including a free shuttle service available to all Yale members as well as a Special Services Van, which requires an application to access. For more information, see below.

Campus Transit

There is a regular shuttle service available for free to all students, faculty, and staff. The Yale University Shuttle provides transportation between the University, the East Rock neighborhood, and the New Haven train stations. The service runs year-round with the exception of the following University Holidays: New Years Eve, New Years Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving and the following Friday, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. For more information about the shuttle routes and schedule, see Yale Parking and Transit > [Shuttle webpage](#).³³

Special Services

Yale Transit operates a Special Services Van which transports members of the Yale community, including those who are permanently or temporarily disabled. The service runs 24 hours a day Monday through Friday and on Saturday and Sunday from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. Passengers are picked up upon request and transported within the boundaries.

To access [Special Services](#)³⁴ through Yale Health, you will need proof of physical disability. This can include anything from needing to use a wheelchair or other mobility aid to not being able to walk long distances due to an injury or chronic illness. You will need your doctor or healthcare practitioner to complete the [Request for Special Van Transportation Application](#).³⁵ Once you are registered with Special Services, you can request a ride by calling dispatch at 203-432-2788 (24 hours), or using the [TapRide](#) app³⁶ and setting up an account with your NetID. TapRide works similarly to rideshare apps like Uber, and will show you a map and the ETA (estimated time of arrival) for your vehicle. When booking a ride, select Yale University from the drop-down menu.

³⁰ <https://your.yale.edu/work-yale/campus-services/campus-living>

³¹ <http://yale.roommategateway.com/user/>

³² <https://jud.ct.gov/publications/hm031.pdf>

³³ <https://your.yale.edu/work-yale/campus-services/parking-and-transit/shuttle>

³⁴ <https://your.yale.edu/work-yale/campus-services/parking-and-transit/shuttle/special-services-van>

³⁵ <https://your.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/StudentRequestformforSpecialServicesVanTransportation.pdf>

³⁶ <http://www.tapridemobile.com/>

You can also request use of Special Services through SAS. If there is a connection between your disability and the request, SAS is able to sign up students for Special Services transportation directly.

NAVIGATING YALE HEALTH

Yale Student Health Contact and Hours

Phone: 203-432-0312

Fax: 203-432-0707

Hours: 8:30 am-5:00 pm

Location: 55 Lock St, New Haven, CT 06511

Coverage

All students enrolled at least half-time in a degree-seeking program receive Yale Health Basic Coverage at no charge. Yale Health Basic Coverage includes services in the following departments at the Yale Health Center: Student Health, Gynecology, Acute Care, Mental Health & Counseling, Laboratory, Inpatient Care, and Nutrition. For more details about Basic Coverage, see the Yale Student Handbook.

Dates of Coverage

Coverage begins on the first day of orientation and ends on July 31 in the case of a spring graduation and January 31 in the case of a winter graduation.³⁷

Seeing Doctors

As a graduate student, you will primarily see doctors within Yale Health. First of all, you will want to meet your primary care physician (PCP) at Student Health. Be aware that most practitioners at Student Health are Nurse Practitioners or APRNs. While many of them are extremely knowledgeable, they sometimes do not have the same admitting or prescribing privileges as MDs and DOs, depending on how long they have been practicing. They may also be less aware of specialists they might refer you to. If you are dealing with a chronic illness or other condition that requires frequent medical intervention, it may be advantageous to see an MD or DO as your primary care provider. You can switch your assigned PCP by contacting [Member Services](#).³⁸ The Member Services desk is located on the first floor of Yale Health.

Obtaining an Insurance Card

Although an insurance card is not required for service at Yale Health, other practice groups, such as Yale-New Haven Hospital (YNHH), may require a copy of the card. We recommend requesting a card from [Member Services](#)³⁹ in case of emergency, as students do not automatically receive a card.

Urgent and Emergency Care

If you need prompt care, visit [Acute Care](#) (located at Yale Health) for non-life-threatening emergencies.

⁴⁰ Acute Care is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year on the first floor of the Yale Student Health building, located at 55 Lock St.

³⁷ <https://yalehealth.yale.edu/more/coverage-start-dates-and-end-dates>

³⁸ <https://yalehealth.yale.edu/directory/departments/member-services>

³⁹ <https://yalehealth.yale.edu/directory/departments/member-services>

⁴⁰ <https://yalehealth.yale.edu/directory/departments/acute-care>

For life-threatening and urgent situations, visit the [Yale-New Haven Hospital](#)⁴¹ or [St. Raphael's Hospital](#)⁴² Emergency Room.

It may be a good idea to have the phone number and address of these locations stored in your phone in case you have to give someone directions there.

There is no co-payment for Acute Care, but there is a \$100 co-payment for visits to the Emergency Room. An ambulance co-payment tends to run about \$100.

If necessary, memorize how to call 911 quickly. Most phones have a way to do this from the lock screen.

- On an iPhone, hold down the side button and a volume button, and the Emergency SOS slider will appear. If you continue holding down these buttons, the phone will make an alert sound and begin a countdown to automatically dial 911.

You might also want to consider carrying a medical ID card that lists your allergies, blood type, and basic information about your medications and conditions.

Specialists

If you require treatment by a specialist, you will need to seek a referral, most likely from your primary care physician/provider (PCP). There is no co-payment required for specialist care. You will probably be referred to someone within the Yale Health practice group, but certain specialties are housed downtown rather than at Yale Health (e.g. Pulmonology). Double-check with your provider that you have a current referral on file if you need to see anyone outside of Yale Health (this includes routine procedures such as CT scans!)

All referrals require renewal each summer, even if you have seen the same specialist before. You may wish to contact your doctor prior to July 31 each year in order to guarantee you will be able to continue seeing your doctors with no interruption in care.

If you would like an external referral, either to someone at Yale-New Haven Hospital (YNHH) or someone within the Magellan network, do not hesitate to ask your PCP. Research your options and find a trustworthy doctor who can advocate for you.

Confidentiality

Your medical records are strictly confidential and available only on a need-to-know basis to other medical personnel. No information will be disclosed without your prior consent, provided you are over 18. You can review the Yale Health confidentiality policy on the [Yale Health website](#).⁴³

Designation of Patient Spokesperson

If you are over 18 and would like to authorize your parents to receive your health information and speak with your primary care clinician on your behalf, you will need to complete and sign the [Designation of Patient Spokesperson Form](#) and return it to the Health Information Management Department.⁴⁴

⁴¹ <https://www.ynhh.org/>

⁴² <https://www.ynhh.org/locations/new-haven-1450-chapel-street.aspx>

⁴³ <https://yalehealth.yale.edu/more/confidentiality-yale-health>

⁴⁴ <https://yalehealth.yale.edu/more/patient-spokesperson-and-your-personal-health-information-phi>

Dental and Vision Plan

Dental and Vision is not included in the standard Yale Health plan for graduate students, but Yale does offer graduate students the option to opt-into either a dental plan, a vision plan, or both. Enrollment is optional and must be completed online. The enrollment period is between August 15th and September 15th, and coverage begins on October 1st. The enrollment period is only open once a year. By default, graduate students are **not** enrolled in the dental and vision plan, so make sure to complete the enrollment for either the dental plan, the vision plan, or both, before the deadline ends. If you want to enroll in both the dental and the vision plan, you must enroll in both at the same time. More information about the enrollment process, the coverage, and cost for each plan can be found on the [Graduate & Professional Schools Dental & Eye Care Programs](https://gradprofdenteye.yale.edu/) website.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ <https://gradprofdenteye.yale.edu/>

Mental Health and Counseling (MHC)

Contact Information

Phone: 203-432-0290

[Website](#)⁴⁶

Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30am-5pm

Location: 3rd floor of Yale Student Health (55 Lock St)

For urgent concerns after hours: call Acute Care at 203-432-0123

Urgent situations

In urgent situations, any student can speak with an on-call clinician 24 hours per day, 365 days a year (daytime through Mental Health and Counseling at 203-432-0290 and after hours through Acute Care at 203-432-0123).

If you're thinking about suicide or are worried about someone else, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255), dial 911 or go/take them immediately to the nearest hospital emergency room for an evaluation.

Counseling appointment process

Appointments for an initial consultation can be made by phone or in person during office hours. You will be offered an initial appointment (approximately within one week, and longer during the months of September and October). Following this initial appointment, most students are connected with their therapist within a couple of weeks, but it can take several months depending on the demand.

Before your appointment, you may find it useful to complete the [anonymous mental health screening](#) that Yale provides.⁴⁷ If you decide to seek individual treatment, you will be matched with a clinician who will call, email, or send a MyChart message to schedule an appointment.

Switching therapists

If you would like to switch therapists at Mental Health and Counseling, call 203-432-0290 and leave a message saying that you would like to change to a different therapist. Your newly assigned therapist will call you directly to schedule your first appointment.

Magellan

Graduate students have the option of using Magellan Health Services to find a clinician outside of Yale Mental Health and Counseling. This option is typically presented during your initial consultation at Yale Mental Health and Counseling, and usually has a shorter wait time than for MHC therapists. Magellan Health Services may also allow you to see your therapist more frequently and for longer appointments than with an MHC therapist. There is no copay for sessions with a therapist who has been pre-authorized by Magellan.

To make an appointment, call Magellan Health Services' telephone center (800-327-9240 or TDD 800-456-4006). The Magellan clinician will give you names and contact information of providers in their network. You can either 1) call the providers to see if they are available and make an appointment or 2)

⁴⁶ <https://yalehealth.yale.edu/directory/departments/mental-health-counseling>

⁴⁷ <https://screening.mentalhealthscreening.org/YALE>

ask the Magellan clinician to find you the earliest possible appointment with an available provider. In the second case, Magellan will call you back with the date and time of your appointment. After you schedule an appointment with a provider, call Magellan Health Services back for an authorization.

Mental Health Therapy Options for graduate students

- **Individual therapy** at Yale MHC is available primarily on a short-term basis. However, there are no specific visit limits, and students are seen based on their individual needs. To regularly see a long-term clinician, finding a provider through Magellan Health Services may provide a better option than Yale MHC.
- **Group therapy** is a type of counseling in which a small group meets weekly to discuss their concerns and problems.⁴⁸ A therapist leads the group by helping to facilitate these conversations. Group members use feedback from others in the group to develop new perspectives and reflect on their experiences. Some groups focus on concrete skills and strategies while others are less structured, giving group members the time and space to explore ideas, gain insight and understand more about oneself.
 - A variety of groups are offered each semester, designed to cover a wide range of topics. Typically, Yale MHC offers groups addressing anxiety issues, eating disorders, mood disorders, loss and bereavement, life transition issues, relationship issues and general psychotherapy concerns. New groups can be started if there is enough interest in a particular topic.
 - Most groups meet weekly and last for approximately one semester. A group therapy session typically runs for 75 minutes on a weekly basis.
 - Group therapy is confidential. Everything and anything disclosed in group sessions must remain private and confidential with all of the members of the group.
 - If you are interested in joining a group, either schedule an initial appointment to discuss group therapy options, or talk to your clinician at Yale MHC (if you currently have one) about group therapy options.
- **Couples therapy** is available at Yale MHC if both members of the couple are Yale students.
- As of January 18, 2022, Dean Lynn Cooley announced that a mental health provider specifically dedicated to graduate students will be hired (anticipated at end of Spring 2022 semester). Per Dean Cooley via email:

“This new position will be embedded within GSAS, reporting jointly to the Associate Dean for Academic Support and to Yale MHC. The GSAS Mental Health Provider (MHP) will support graduate students with individual and group therapy. In collaboration with the Assistant Dean of Graduate Student Life, the MHP will also offer programming to help students develop a range of skills such as time and stress management, resilience and coping, conflict resolution, social and cultural belonging, and wellness and self-care. We intend to select a candidate who can provide culturally competent treatment to patients of varied racial/ethnic identities, socioeconomic backgrounds, and sexual/gender identities.”

⁴⁸ <https://yalehealth.yale.edu/group-therapy>

Medication Management

A team of psychiatrists at Yale Mental Health and Counseling is available if medication is part of your treatment. They provide consultations and on-going medication management. This may be in conjunction with individual therapy, group therapy, or on its own. If you see a therapist through Magellan Health Services, you will still need to see a psychiatrist at Yale Mental Health and Counseling for medication management if medication is part of your treatment.

Confidentiality

Mental Health & Counseling records for Yale students are separate from other medical records, are excluded from the electronic medical record, and are kept in a locked room in Mental Health & Counseling. Without your permission, Mental Health & Counseling will not release information about you to anyone, including deans, parents, family, friends, coaches, employers, or the government. Everything discussed with a mental health clinician is held in strictest confidence and is not communicated to anyone without your permission, except in the rare instance of a life-threatening situation.

MEDICAL LEAVE

The information below is taken from the [GSAS Programs & Policies 2019-2020 catalog](#).⁴⁹

How to apply for medical leave

If you must interrupt study temporarily because of illness or injury, you may be granted a medical leave of absence with the approval of the appropriate associate dean, on the written recommendation of a Yale Health chief physician or their designee. If you wish to take a medical leave of absence, you may request it from a physician at Yale Health or from the student's associate dean.

Eligibility

If you are making satisfactory progress toward degree requirements, you are eligible for a medical leave any time after matriculation. The final decision concerning a request for a medical leave of absence will be communicated in writing by the appropriate associate dean.

Length of leave

If you are in a Ph.D. program, you may be granted a leave for one term or one academic year. A leave extends the eligibility for fellowship aid by a time equal to the duration of the leave, but not for partial terms. The expected last date of registration will be adjusted by one term for each term of the leave. If you are in a one-year M.A.S./M.A./M.S. program, you may be on leave for a maximum of one term. If you are in a two-year M.A./M.S. programs, you may be on leave for a maximum total of one year. In exceptional circumstances, renewal of a one-term or one-year leave, to a cumulative maximum total of two years of personal and medical leave, may be granted for students in Ph.D. programs. Leaves of absence for students in M.A.S./M.A./M.S. programs are not renewable.

Tuition and Finances

If you are placed on medical leave during any term, you will have tuition adjusted according to the same schedule used for withdrawals (see Schedule of Academic Dates and Deadlines).

A leave of absence does not exempt you from meeting the tuition requirement (payment of eight terms of full tuition in Ph.D. programs, or the appropriate established tuition charge in M.A.S./M.A./M.S. programs) or from paying the Continuous Registration Fee (if appropriate), but merely postpones the required charges.

If you are on a leave of absence, you are not eligible for financial aid, including loans; and in most cases, student loans are not deferred during periods of nonenrollment.

International students

If you are an international student and apply for a leave of absence, you must consult with OISS regarding your visa status.

Making progress towards degree while on leave

While you are on leave, you may complete outstanding work in courses for which you have been granted approved Incompletes. You may not, however, fulfill any other degree requirements during your

⁴⁹ <http://catalog.yale.edu/gsas/policies-regulations/academic-regulations/#leavesofabsence>

time on leave. (If you intend to work toward your degree while away from the University, you must request registration in absentia instead.) If you actually make progress toward your degree while on leave, you will have your registration changed retroactively to in absentia for the period of the leave.

Access to University facilities and housing while on leave

While on medical leave, you are not eligible for the use of any University facilities available to enrolled students. If you live in a Yale University housing unit, you should review your housing contract and the related policies of the Graduate Housing Office before applying for a medical leave to make sure that you will still be able to live there while on leave.

Health insurance while on leave

You may continue to be enrolled in Yale Health while on leave by purchasing coverage through the Student Affiliate Coverage plan. In order to secure continuous coverage from Yale Health, you must request enrollment in this plan prior to the beginning of the term in which you will be on leave or, if the leave commences during the term, within thirty days of the date the registrar was notified of the leave. Coverage is not automatic; enrollment forms are available from the Member Services Department of Yale Health, 203.432.0246.

Eligible Ph.D. students will receive a Health Award from the Graduate School to cover the cost of the Student Affiliate Coverage plan for the remainder of the coverage period in which the medical leave is started, if you apply for this coverage through Yale Health within thirty days of the start of your leave.

Returning from medical leave

Before re-registering, you must secure written permission to return from a Yale Health chief physician or their designee. You do not have to file a formal application for readmission when you want to return from medical leave, but you must notify the registrar in writing of your intention to return at least eight weeks prior to the end of the leave. Make sure to register for the term following the end of the medical leave. If you fail to do this, you will be administratively withdrawn from the Graduate School.

SOCIAL LIFE

Being a graduate student can be an isolating process, especially once you have moved past the coursework phase of your degree. If you are looking to build community with other graduate students with disabilities, the Graduate Student Disability Alliance holds many events throughout the semester for this very purpose. Below, we have also listed several social spaces at Yale focused on graduate and professional students and/or wellness.

Finding physically accessible social spaces

To look up the physical accessibility of a certain space on campus, first try the online [Yale Campus Map](#).⁵⁰ For most buildings, there is an Accessibility tab that may list whether the building has an elevator, automatic door openers, accessible bathrooms, etc. Please note that the accessibility information on the Yale Campus Map is not always correct or present, so you may need to reach out to the organization or department hosting an event to find out the accessibility of the space..

McDougal Graduate Student Center

[The McDougal Graduate Student Center](#), found on the second floor of 135 Prospect St, hosts many events for graduate students throughout the year.⁵¹ Students in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences can enter the building and the McDougal Center with their Yale ID card. An elevator is available near the Prospect St. parking lot entrance, through the double doors. There are gender-neutral bathrooms on the first floor of the building, in the Office of LGBTQ Resources. The McDougal Graduate Student Center has several spaces where they host events and where graduate students are able to informally socialize. Most of these spaces are accessible by elevator, but please note that the Swenson Terrace, the large outdoor terrace behind the McDougal Center, does not have elevator access and is up six steps from the McDougal Common Room.

Good Life Center

[The Good Life Center](#) (GLC) cultivates wellness at Yale by offering a space for wellness-related events, providing free wellbeing programming, and teaching and coaching healthy habits.⁵² It is located on the 4th floor of Byers Hall in the undergraduate residence hall Silliman College at 505 College St. There are accessible gates into Silliman College with ramps leading into the courtyard, and accessible doors leading into Byers Hall. Byers has an elevator up to the fourth floor where the GLC is, and there is an accessible bathroom in that space.⁵³ Graduate students do not have ID access to Silliman College, so they can either use the intercom during business hours to access the GLC or reach out to alexa.vaghenas@yale.edu for details on obtaining limited gate access (if they will regularly be using the GLC).

⁵⁰ <https://map.yale.edu/>

⁵¹ <https://gsas.yale.edu/resources-students/student-life-community/mcdougal-graduate-student-center>

⁵² <https://www.yaleglc.com/mission>

⁵³ Source: Email from Tracy George, Feb. 19, 2020

Gryphon's Pub

[Gryphon's Pub](#), located at 204 York St, is a social space dedicated to graduate and professional students at Yale.⁵⁴ The Pub's first two floors and outdoor patio are accessible by elevator, and they have an ADA-compliant restroom near the downstairs bar. The third floor of the Pub, which hosts Graduate and Professional Student Senate meetings, is not accessible by elevator.

⁵⁴ <http://gryphonspub.com/>

NEW AND PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

Orientation

GSAS Orientation events occur a couple weeks before the academic year begins, typically in August. There are several mandatory events that all new students must attend; see the [Graduate School of Arts and Sciences website](#) for the orientation schedule.⁵⁵ There are also many optional events such as campus tours, info sessions, resource fairs, and socials in and around campus. Orientation can be an exhausting time for disabled students, as there can feel like there is an overload of events and an immense pressure to attend as many as possible to meet new people. One piece of advice we have is to make sure to rest as much as you can, and note that it is okay if you don't go to every event. There are plenty of opportunities to meet and socialize with other graduate students after orientation ends. If you have questions about the accessibility of any of the GSAS orientation events, please contact gsas.newstudents@yale.edu.

Transitions Program

Transitions is an optional year-long program for first-year graduate students, sponsored by the Office for Graduate Student Development and Diversity, to provide incoming students with the skills, connections, and community that will let them flourish at Yale. Transitions is free for all participants, and invitations are sent to new students in the spring and summer prior to matriculation. For questions about the Transitions program, contact ogsdd@yale.edu.

Adjusting to Yale Group Therapy

Yale MHC offers a group therapy option focusing on issues associated with adjusting to graduate school and the Yale experience. The 60-minute weekly sessions (lasting 8 weeks) will allow students to discuss the challenges of beginning college with other 1st year graduate students who are going through the same transition. Topics will include (but are not limited to) imposter syndrome, building community, balancing academic responsibilities and personal life, and coping with stress/anxiety. Above all, the group aims to be a supportive place for students interested in a smoother transition to Yale. If you are interested in joining this therapy group, see the [Mental Health and Counseling](#) section for more details.

Diversity Preview Days

If you are a prospective student who would like to learn more about PhD programs at Yale, you can apply to attend Diversity Preview Days. See the [Diversity Preview Days](#) website for eligibility requirements.⁵⁶ If accepted, you will visit Yale's campus for three days and meet current graduate students and faculty, tour the campus and facilities, learn more about the graduate admissions process, and participate in professional development workshops. For questions, contact ogsdd@yale.edu.

⁵⁵ <https://gsas.yale.edu/orientation-new-gsas-students>

⁵⁶ <https://gsas.yale.edu/diversity/prospective-students/diversity-preview-days>

OTHER DISABILITY-RELATED ORGANIZATIONS ON CAMPUS AND IN CONNECTICUT

Student/Staff Organizations

- [Disability Empowerment for Yale](#) (DEFY) is Yale's undergraduate advocacy group for Yalies with physical disabilities, mental illnesses, chronic illnesses, temporary disabilities, and learning disabilities, and for veterans and members of the wider community with these disabilities.⁵⁷
- [Disability Empowerment for the Yale School of Drama \(DEFY\)](#) exists to create accessible spaces of community and support by and for the disabled community of the Yale School of Drama.⁵⁸ The group advocates for stories of disability on the stage and for disabled voices in the room. In all of its work DEFY acknowledges that disability identities are intertwined with race, gender, sexuality, citizenship, age, religion, and class, and strives to create space for discussion and action that piece through these intersections and honor their complexities.
- [American Sign Language at Yale](#), or ASLaY, promotes the education of ASL and Deaf culture at Yale.⁵⁹ ASLaY is composed mostly of Yale undergraduates and is also open to graduate students, faculty, and community members.
- [DiversAbility at Yale](#) (DAY) is the faculty and staff affinity group for disability.⁶⁰ DAY creates an environment that is open and inclusive for all individuals impacted by disability, through engagement, education, and advocacy. The group also focuses on ways to support the recruitment, retention, and advancement of people with disabilities. They have a useful list of resources that can be accessed on [their website](#).
- [ThinkDifferent](#) is a law student affinity group composed of communities situated within a broad disability umbrella.⁶¹ They define their affinity group broadly, welcoming anyone who identifies as a member. Their aim is to foster a sense of community and increase the legal profession's accessibility and cultural competency surrounding disability.
- [Mind Matters](#) is a student organization that works to create an open dialogue about mental health in the community by hosting guest speakers, arranging study breaks, screening films, and circulating newsletters.⁶²

Graduate student-serving organizations (for the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences)

- [The Office of Graduate Student Development and Diversity](#) is committed to building and maintaining a nurturing and caring community of scholars where students from diverse backgrounds and experiences are supported in their professional and intellectual goals and pursuits.⁶³ They offer everything ranging from informal advising to workshops and lectures presented by diverse scholars to social and professional development events. Contact the Assistant Dean of OGSDD, Danica Tisdale Fisher, at danica.fisher@yale.edu.

⁵⁷ <https://defy.sites.yale.edu/>

⁵⁸ <https://www.drama.yale.edu/about-us/student-life/>

⁵⁹ <https://orgsync.com/165621/chapter>

⁶⁰ <https://day.yale.edu/>

⁶¹ <https://law.yale.edu/student-life/student-journals-organizations/student-organizations/thinkdifferent>

⁶² <https://mindmatters.sites.yale.edu/>

⁶³ <https://gsas.yale.edu/diversity/office-graduate-student-development-diversity-ogsdd>

- [The Graduate Student Assembly](#) (GSA) is an elected body of Yale students in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.⁶⁴ The Assembly's goals are to identify the needs and concerns of graduate students, consider possible solutions, and present these to the Dean and other administrators. The GSA has committees dedicated to issues like [Facilities and Healthcare](#),⁶⁵ and if you have questions or concerns that you would like to bring to their attention, you can attend a biweekly Assembly Meeting or email any departmental representative.

Yale Offices

- [The Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity](#) aims to increase awareness of dyslexia and its true nature. The Center aims to illuminate the creative and intellectual strengths of those with dyslexia, to disseminate the latest scientific research and practical resources, and to transform the treatment of all dyslexic children and adults.⁶⁶
- [The Yale Office of Institutional Equity and Access](#) encourages any student, employee, or applicant for programs or employment at Yale who is concerned about affirmative action, equal opportunity, sexual harassment, racial harassment, or fairness in admissions or employment at Yale, either in a general sense or with respect to their own situation, to contact them.⁶⁷

Offices in New Haven and CT

- [New Haven Disability Services](#) is charged with ensuring that residents and visitors with disabilities have equal access to the City's programs, services and activities.⁶⁸ They also strive to foster a welcoming and accessible community for individuals with disabilities through policy development, education and the formation of strategic partnerships with public, private and nonprofit entities.
- [Disability Rights Connecticut](#) provides legal advocacy and rights protection to a wide range of people with disabilities.⁶⁹ This includes assisting individuals with problems such as abuse, neglect, discrimination, access to assistive technology, community integration, voting, and rights protection issues. DRCT also addresses issues through policy advocacy, education, monitoring, and investigation.

⁶⁴ <https://gsa.yale.edu/>

⁶⁵ <https://gsa.yale.edu/committees/facilities-and-healthcare>

⁶⁶ <http://dyslexia.yale.edu/>

⁶⁷ <https://oiea.yale.edu/>

⁶⁸ https://www.newhavenct.gov/gov/depts/disability_services/

⁶⁹ <https://www.disrightsct.org/>

CONCLUSION

Thank you for reading this Disability Resource Guide for graduate students at Yale University. If you have additional questions, concerns, edits, or have an idea for another section to be added to the guide, please reach out to gsda.leadership@gmail.com. We welcome your feedback, and are always willing to do our best to help and support you during your time at Yale. Please also feel free to reach out if you are a prospective student who would like to discuss life at Yale.