

Disability Services

Institutions of Higher Education are governed by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. Equal access to education is the governing principle. No one is entitled to anything, but rather students have civil rights and they must advocate for themselves in order to enjoy those rights.

Q. How are disability services in college different from disability services in high school?

A. Section 504 upholds the institution's right to maintain academic standards, and no accommodations may be permitted to reduce that standard for any student. Thus, there is no "free" education, and accommodations must be reasonable and assure a student's **access**, not success. Colleges are required to provide reasonable accommodations, but receive no additional financial support to provide services or auxiliary aids.

There is an Accommodation Plan, but instructors are only contacted with the student's permission. Parents are not involved without the student's permission. **The student is responsible for advocating for the accommodations needed.**

Placement integration is assumed. Colleges adjust the environment through accommodations but don't provide alternative environments (e.g. a resource room) for students.

Disability Services never contacts a professor without express permission from the student. **The student must initiate all actions regarding accommodations with each professor, for each course, every semester.** In addition, students have the civil right to refuse accommodations they don't need or want; and **if they do not request an accommodation, it is assumed they do not want it.**

Q. What other responsibilities does the student have?

A. The student should **identify themselves** in person to the Coordinator of Disability Services if requesting accommodations. The student must **submit current and appropriate documentation** of a disability to the Coordinator of Disability Services. After the student and the Coordinator have met to determine appropriate and reasonable accommodations, the student **must meet with each of their instructors to discuss implementation of the reasonable accommodations** for each class. **It is also the student's responsibility to bring to the attention of the Coordinator any concerns about accommodations.**

Q. What documentation is needed for a student to receive accommodations in college?

A. The provision of all reasonable accommodations and services is based upon assessment of the impact of the student's disability on his or her academic performance at a given time in a student's life. This assessment must be made by a certified professional in the area of the disability. It is in the student's best interest to provide recent and appropriate documentation relevant to the student's disability. All documentation must be submitted in writing. The documentation should be submitted on the professional's letterhead and be dated and signed.

The documentation must be comprehensive, including (when appropriate) history, diagnostic interviews, test results (including standardized test scores when available), differential diagnosis, and details regarding the student's functional limitations. Strengths, weaknesses, and deficits should be specifically discussed. Clear documentation of deficit areas is necessary in order for colleges to provide appropriate accommodations.

Disability and Testing Services is located in the Learning Resource Center (LRC) 150. The Coordinator of Disability and Testing Services can be reached at JHeathcote@jbu.edu or 479-524-7464.