

INDIANA UNIVERSITY SOUTH BEND
Office of Disability Support Services

**Policies and Procedures for Faculty
Relative to Students with Disabilities**

The role of Disability Support Services (DSS) is to ensure the civil rights of our students with disabilities while at the same time protecting institutional standards. The DSS office is charged with reviewing relevant medical and psychometric materials in order to verify a disability that qualifies for accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). We are very aware that the issue of providing academic accommodations for students with “non-apparent” disabilities (i.e. learning disabilities (LD), attention deficit disorder (ADD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), psychiatric, and chronic health problems) is not universally understood. This office does all that it can to keep up with relevant research and legal decisions to guide us in accepting/rejecting documentation as well as recommending reasonable and appropriate accommodations.

ACCOMMODATION LETTERS

Students approved for academic accommodations are issued a letter from DSS describing the accommodations. The student is responsible for delivering this letter to their instructors. Should a student request an accommodation, indicate that you will be able to discuss that when he/she has presented you with a letter from DSS.

Letters will be comprised of the following:

1. A non-descriptive verification of student’s disability status
2. Listing of appropriate accommodations
3. Administrative options for test-taking accommodations

REFERRING STUDENTS TO DSS

Faculty members should contact DSS with questions about a student who they feel may have a disability. While DSS hopes that all students with disabilities receive the necessary accommodations, it is the responsibility of the student to initiate contact with DSS. All students admitted to IU South Bend are sent a disability “self-disclosure” form. When the form is returned, the student will be made aware of services that IU South Bend offers pertaining to the disability the student lists on the self-disclosure form. A student may also disclose a disability to DSS at any time during that student’s career at IU South Bend.

College students are adults and **privacy is a major consideration**. If you believe a student may qualify for services from DSS, your referral to the DSS office needs to be informational and supportive as opposed to directive or authoritarian.

DSS recommends questions such as:

- “Did you know that IU South Bend has a disabilities office?”
- “That is a concern that the people in the disability office would be happy to discuss with you. Do you know where the office is located?”

Since the student’s privacy is a concern, it is recommended that this type of discussion take place in your office or discretely before or after class. Some students have a disability (particularly a learning disability or a psychiatric disorder) of which they are not aware. Others are aware, but choose not to disclose. Informing a student of the DSS office **is not a violation of privacy**, as the individual will make the decision as to whether he/she should go to the DSS office for services. Of course, if a student has asked for a disability related accommodation, a referral is appropriate and necessary.

EVACUATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Persons with disabilities must study and remember the features of each building they are in, including stairways, exits, phone locations and elevator procedures. At times assistance from others may be needed. Individuals with disabilities may seek assistance from others in their classes or offices if emergency evacuation becomes necessary.

Faculty members who have students with disabilities in their classes should discuss emergency evacuation of these persons ahead of time. A classmate can be assigned to be a “buddy” or escort, if necessary.

In the event of an emergency, faculty/staff should contact security. Escorts should be instructed to accompany a student to a predetermined disabled evacuation point. They should remain there until emergency personnel determine the nature of the situation.

GENERAL INFORMATION

A GOOD RESOURCE IS THE PERSON WITH THE DISABILITY. Do not ignore him/her, as good, open communication can lead to positive solutions.

Some reminders: The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 Regulations of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are legislative laws pertaining to an individual’s civil rights. Both are similar to the 1964 Civil Rights Act (race discrimination) and the 1972 Title IX Act (concerning gender discrimination). **Violations of any of these can lead to a federal investigation as well as punitive sanctions.** These laws are equal opportunity laws, since they ban discrimination on the basis of disability; there are no quotas, no guarantee of jobs,

diplomas, grades, etc. For post-secondary institutions, the guiding principle is that “what you make available to any of your students must be made available to all of your students.”

Collaboration: You are encouraged to communicate and collaborate with the DSS office if you have questions. Failure to accommodate or over-accommodation should be avoided. The DSS professional staff will discuss positive approaches with you to ensure fair accommodations for students with disabilities.

Several key terms:

“Otherwise qualified”: IU South Bend must maintain reasonable and defensible qualifications/requirements for admission, courses, degrees, etc. A disability is not a qualification.

Reasonable accommodations: Accommodations are decided on a case-by-case basis. Ideally, such accommodations will be in concert with the civil rights of the person with a disability and protect the standards and expectations of the university.

Essential components: Those elements which are vital to a course, major, and/or degree and for which modification or accommodation would change its nature. We must be able to describe and defend these elements.

Please direct all questions, concerns and referrals to:

Disability Support Services

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(574) 520-4256

Fax: (574) 520-4610

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