

## SO YOU WANT TO GO TO COLLEGE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY

### **DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION PROCEDURES**

All colleges must provide accommodations to students with documented disabilities. This includes learning disabilities. Colleges comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to ensure that no student, employee, visitor, or other beneficiary of the ADA encounters discrimination on the basis of his/her disability. All college facilities, services, and programs must be accessible to students, employees, and visitors with disabilities unless doing so would be an undue burden to the college.

Students requesting accommodations must submit documentation of the disability to the ADA Coordinator or designated disability support service provider. Students do not need to reveal a disability, but without documentation on file, no exceptions to standard procedures can be given. Therefore, it is in the student's best interest to submit documentation even if there is no immediate need for support. Documentation is kept confidential in compliance with the ADA.

#### TO RECEIVE DISABILITY SERVICES STUDENTS MUST:

- ◆ Disclose the existence of the disability to the service provider.
- ◆ Provide documentation verifying the disability.
- ◆ Sign a release of information.
- ◆ Request accommodations in meeting with the service provider.
- ◆ Allow sufficient lead-time for the accommodations to be put in place.

#### COLLEGE'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

- ◆ Request documentation.
- ◆ Maintain confidentiality.
- ◆ Arrange accommodations.
- ◆ Refer students to resources whenever possible.
- ◆ Monitor effectiveness of accommodations.

#### STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS

Students are responsible for management of services, and for reading and following other college procedures. Reasonable accommodations can be provided for successful entrance into, and completion of, courses, but students should note that the college is not required to, nor should it, compromise on program admissions or essential course requirements. All students are expected to comply with the Student Code of Conduct/Discipline Procedures of the College, and should be aware that BD (behavioral disorders) documentation is not a protected disability under the ADA or 504.

#### TYPE OF DOCUMENTATION

The type of documentation that is appropriate is the IEP, the most current psychological, and current standardized testing results. Colleges can request other types of documentation, if necessary. After the documentation is received and reviewed, the student may be contacted to arrange a meeting with the ADA Coordinator.

## TYPES OF ACCOMMODATION

Reasonable accommodations are designed to support the documented disability. They are determined on an individual basis; therefore, not all accommodations are appropriate for every student. Some types of accommodations used for learning disabilities may include, but are not limited to:

Advocacy

Adaptive computer hardware/software

Evaluation and interpretation of documentation, special education records, and testing

Extended test time/quiet testing area/computer availability

Note takers

Personally designed study skills strategies

Special seating accommodations

Taped texts

Test readers/transcribers

Tutoring

## COLLEGE STRATEGY TIPS FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

### FIRST THINGS:

1. Take a Study Skills course!
2. Join a club that supports your career interests.

### GENERAL CLASS TECHNIQUES:

3. Never miss class! Be on time.
4. Sit near the front or in the least distracting seat possible.
5. Preview your text and review your notes before going to class each day.
6. Keep a calendar with assignments, exam dates, and appointments.
7. Work backwards from the due date on long-term projects and schedule in each step in the project.
8. Review notes as soon after class as possible and often!
9. Use a computer for all written assignments and use spell-check and grammar-check aids.
10. Know and wisely use the college's drop/add, pass/fail, and audit policies.
11. Find out your best learning style and study in this mode to enhance memory.
12. Review, review, review! Reading is not studying! Doing homework is not studying!
13. For notes:
  - use colored paper and pens
  - enlarge notes on copier
  - underline important words
  - highlight
  - recite notes out loud
  - use flashcards
  - draw
  - trace over words
  - rewrite
  - explain it aloud to someone, or something else, like the dog or even an

inanimate object  
tape record notes (and lecture, with permission of instructor)

14. For texts:

highlight

underline

write in margin

read out loud

walk and read

tape record and replay

draw pictures

15. Use these memory aids:

make lists

categorize

visualize

alphabetize

use mnemonics

make associations

TEST TECHNIQUES:

16. Determine the type of tests that are easiest for you to do successfully (objective, essay, oral) and try to enroll in a class where the instructor tests in that fashion.

17. If the test is essay, practice writing answers to made up test questions.

18. Eat and sleep before a test!

19. Make notes for yourself before starting the test, if you have to remember formulas, etc. This will keep you from forgetting due to test anxiety.

20. Read the directions!!!

21. Start anywhere.

22. Pace yourself, but don't be a clockwatcher.

23. If you don't understand a question, ask the instructor this question: "Does this mean . . .?"

24. If you don't do well, get help before the next test. Don't tell yourself you'll do poorly next time because you did poorly this time, but do get help.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT:

25. Talk to a counselor if you are having difficulty.

26. Set realistic career goals. Go into your area of strength, not weakness.

27. Allow yourself extra time to study, do assignments, and complete your degree.

28. Focus on positive accomplishments, not just negative ones.

29. Everyone makes mistakes. Learn from them and be gentle with yourself.

30. Get tutoring in your weak academic areas.

SOCIAL SKILLS:

31. Practice good hygiene and dress appropriately.

32. Be friendly, but pick friends carefully.

33. Be thoughtful and respectful when someone helps you.

34. Never "visit with" staff personnel for more than 5 minutes. They need to be working, not visiting.

35. Give everyone a chance to answer in class. If you are impulsive and you talk or ask questions more than 5 times in an hour class, ask your instructor if you talk too much in class.

36. Never fall asleep in class.

37. Be sure food and drink are allowed in your classroom before bringing snacks with you to class.

**MOST IMPORTANT THING:**

Believe in yourself! You have a right to be here!

#### **EXTERNAL ADVOCACY AGENCIES**

Regional Civil Rights Director, Office for Civil Rights, US Department of Education,  
111 North Canal Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor, Chicago, IL 60606

#### **LEARNING STYLES**

It is vital that students with learning disabilities know the way they learn the best. There are many inventories and surveys they can take to determine their best learning style. Some characteristics of the various styles are listed below.

#### **CHARACTERISTICS OF VISUAL LEARNERS**

Needs to see the teacher to understand concepts

Says: I see what you mean, It appears to me..., In light of..., I can't picture that, I can't see what you're saying.

Remembers what is seen or read.

Prefers to read rather than being read to.

Learns by reading text.

Is strong reader, writer, and speller.

Needs distance from instructor to create own personal picture of concept.

Quick gestures, loud sounds, lectures, and spoken directions may cause difficulty.

May misinterpret words.

Prefer written directions.

Can create pictures in head to remember info.

Take notes and write things down on notecards for review.

Good at jigsaw puzzles.

Needs overall vision and purpose for tasks.

Looks at overheads.

Likes charts, graphs.

May be good artist.

Strong sense of color.

#### **CHARACTERISTICS OF AUDITORY LEARNERS**

Gets information by listening.

Has difficulty with written directions and reading.

Problems with writing.

Inability to read body language and facial expressions.

Prefer talking to reading.

Likes lectures and tapes.

Moves lips when reading.  
Good at phonics.  
Can learn to spell with sequential patterns.  
Prefer oral directions and explanations.  
Says: I hear you, word-for-word, clear as a bell.  
Remembers what was talked about.  
Talks to self.  
Is weak in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.  
Answers even rhetorical questions.  
Scores better on tests where questions are in the same order as studied.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF KINESTHETIC LEARNERS

Learns and remembers best when feelings are connected to the content.  
Says: I've got a handle on it, I get what you mean, stiff upper lip, that's heavy.  
Likes to act things out or do demonstrations.  
Vague answer when asked what they don't understand.  
Moves a lot.  
Needs time to consider options.  
Wants speaker to speak slower.  
Touches things and people to learn about them.  
Plays with items such as pen or coins in pocket.  
Holds object in hand while trying to learn something new.  
Comfortable with hugging, touching, shaking hands.  
Enjoys working with tools and hands-on labs and classes.  
Chews gum, smokes.  
Remembers best by writing things down.  
Presses hard on pen.  
Learns to spell by finger-spelling.  
Can put things together without reading the directions.  
Learns faster and easier when physical activity is involved.  
Well-coordinated and athletic.

### PROCESSING DIFFICULTIES AND REMEDIATION STRATEGIES

#### Memory Difficulties

- Transposes numbers
- Difficulty remembering math facts
- Difficulty listening and taking notes at the same time
- Difficulty following directions, especially multiple step directions
- Difficulty remembering what was just said
- Loses train of thought often/easily
- Forgets names
- Forgets dates
- Experiences tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon often

#### Memory Strategies

- Use and increase background knowledge
- Combine all learning styles

- Use captioned videos
- Conduct learning styles assessment
- Use colors for forgotten parts in formulas or words
- Ask that the problem be put in context
- Use songs and rhymes
- Use manipulatives
- Allow wait time after a question to trigger memory and allow for processing
- Review!

#### Organization Difficulties

- Loses things easily/often
- Has trouble connecting cause and effect
- Often late
- Can only do one thing at a time
- Difficulty finding main ideas versus details
- Difficulty organizing belongings, workspace, time
- Difficulty categorizing parts from wholes
- Difficulty with sequencing

#### Organization Strategies

- Be highly structured; have a daily/weekly routine for studying
- Outline headings in text
- Keep a personal dictionary
- Teach task components to another- explain what you're doing
- Use a correct model or sample as example; list materials needed to do assignment
- Work in groups or pairs, then individually to master new tasks
- Learn words as ordered strings of letters
- Develop timelines or story maps
- Draw cartoons
- Match color of notebooks and folders with textbook for each class
- Use bookmark for tracking
- Use flash cards to organize information
- Clear work areas before starting assignments
- Watch changes in routine
- List steps for completing assignments
- Make an outline while taking notes

#### Attention Difficulties

- Does not generalize knowledge acquired in one setting to another task in a different setting
- Easily distracted by background noise or visual stimulation
- Short attention span
- Does not finish tasks
- Can only maintain attention if interested
- Over-reacts or under-reacts to situations

### Attention Strategies

- Act out, role play
- Ask question
- Don't answer with just yes/no, elaborate so instructor can see you are thinking correctly.
- Reduce room distractions and noises
- Use props
- Study with students with same cultural group, then different cultures.
- Use chalkboard if possible.
- Take breaks
- Read material out loud to develop fluency and trigger comprehension and make it meaningful

### Visual Perception Difficulties

- Problems with left/right
- Difficulties with spatial orientation of letters, numbers, and words, and possibly body
- Handwriting difficulties
- Difficulty reading out loud
- Difficulty reading maps, graphs, charts
- Difficulty copying from board or overhead
- Visual discrimination problems
- Poor spelling
- Can affect social skills

### Visual Perception Strategies

- Learn phonics
- Use books on tape, follow along in the book
- Use gestures
- Use real objects
- pay attention to bulletin boards
- Use colored paper, pens
- Use large print and lots of white space
- Teach left/right
- Emphasize key words with italics or bold when typing
- Keep notes clear and legible
- Rephrase main idea, do not repeat verbatim
- Trace letters
- Use space on handouts to copy underneath
- Use simple drawings to clarify new vocabulary and concepts
- Use color for impact and coding; use color to organize materials and information
- Use visual cues - highlighting, arrows, and underlining
- Teach visual patterns in words, pictures, and numbers
- Use simple visual layouts
- Summarize key points
- Use flash cards

- Use graphics to reinforce learning - films, slides, drawings, diagrams, video, and pictures
- Visualize

#### Auditory Perception Difficulties

- Difficulty following directions, especially multiple step ones
- Mishears sounds
- Mispronounces often and is not aware
- May ask for frequent repetition of information
- Has difficulty listening and writing
- Phonics not always helpful

#### Auditory Perception Strategies

- Draw notes
- Tape record
- Use taped texts
- Simplify language, not content
- Post vocabulary words around your room with picture
- Enunciate well
- Use inflections, emphasis, intonations, facial expressions, volume, pitch, exaggeration
- Repeat
- Listen then write
- Learn spelling patterns
- Make a brief written outline of reading materials that are assigned
- Tape class lectures
- Phrase your own test questions
- Keep a daily assignment sheet and verify that it is correct
- Incorporate games, songs, rhymes, and poems to form auditory mnemonics
- Repeat blended sounds to hear the differences
- Repeat information to be learned out loud, especially pronunciation of words
- Utilize small group activities to reinforce memory by verbalizing
- Minimize background noise

#### Haptic (tactile)/Kinesthetic Difficulties

- Clumsy
- Not athletic
- Drop things often
- Messy with materials and possessions
- Sloppy with dress and appearance
- Not mechanical
- Have difficulty with abstract concepts

#### Haptic (tactile)/Kinesthetic Strategies

- Have a wide variety of writing implements available – felt tip pens, markers, crayons, pens, pencils, etc
- Trace letters



- Cut out letters or words
- Use clay to make letters and numbers
- Act out action verbs
- Act out stories
- Take field trips
- Take breaks
- Ask to write on the board
- Use real life problems to solve assignments
- Use flashcards
- Vary activities
- Relate tasks to daily life
- Use a computer
- Draw notes

#### Handwriting Difficulties

- Misinformation of letters
- Illegible handwriting
- Poor fine motor control

#### Handwriting Strategies

- Print
- Use finger to properly space words
- Use appropriate writing materials and hold pen correctly
- Place paper correctly while writing
- Mark left hand start corner with green dot if needed
- Use the computer

#### Social Skills Difficulties

- Difficulty interpreting facial expressions and body language
- Rigidly resists change
- Impulsive behavior
- Inappropriate remarks or behavior
- Low frustration level
- Can't see others' point of view
- Naïve
- Difficulties with time management

#### Social Skills Strategies

- Role play
- Watch examples
- Ask about differences between cultures
- Ask for explanations of idioms, jokes, slang
- Do not monopolize the conversation