FAQs for Students

What is a disability?

The Americans with Disabilities Act defines a person with a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity.

What type of documentation do I need in order to receive accommodations?

Students must provide up-to-date appropriate documentation from a qualified professional stating their disability. A psychosocial evaluation, IEP or a 504 plan are acceptable forms of documentation. Prescriptions from doctors are NOT considered appropriate documentation.

When is it appropriate for me to meet with the Disability Specialist? And how often should I meet with the Disability Specialist?

You should meet with the Disability Specialist the week prior to classes starting or during the first week of classes. During your initial meeting with the Disability Specialist, you should bring your appropriate documentation and be prepared to discuss your accommodations. After your initial meeting, you will need to continue to meet with the Disability Specialist each semester to receive your accommodation forms for each class. You will need ONE form per class per semester should you want accommodations.

Whose responsibility is it to tell my professors about my disability and accommodations?

The Disability Specialist will provide you with accommodation forms during the meeting you schedule at the beginning of each semester. It is your responsibility to have your professors sign the forms and return the signed form to the Disability Specialist. You do NOT have to disclose your disability to your professors when you have them sign the forms. If you would like your professors to know what your disability is, you must be the one to share your diagnosis with your professors. Your decision to disclose or not disclose your disability to your professors will have no bearing on your ability to receive accommodations. We do recommend you share with your professor what types of accommodations might be helpful in the class so they can best serve you. For example, if you need a note-taker, you might want to arrange with your professor how you will go about obtaining a note-taker.

If I’m a student with a disability, will the Disability Specialist seek me out like my counselors did in high school?

The Disability Specialist will NOT seek out students with disabilities. Unlike high schools, colleges are only responsible for providing services for students with disabilities. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the Disability Specialist to receive services.
What should I do with my accommodation forms once my professors have signed them?

The accommodation letter is a triplicate form. Your professors will retain a copy once they have signed the form. You should hold on to a copy for your own records. It is imperative that you bring the third copy to the Disability Specialist to ensure that it is on file.

FAQs for Parents

May I have access to my student’s grades?

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) the college may not disclose the contents of a student’s educational records to anyone, including parents, without written consent from the student. Exceptions exist for parents of a “dependent student” as defined by the IRS. The Financial Aid Office (440) 646 – 8309, can verify whether a student is a dependent. Parents and students are encouraged to have open dialogue about the student’s academic progress.

May I talk with the Disability Specialist about concerns I have?

Yes, you may contact the Disability Specialist to share any concerns that you have about your student. Keep in mind that you may share concerns, but the Disability Specialist will not be able to share specific information unless your child has signed a release in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

If I have concerns about my student, to whom should I address the concerns?

If you have concerns about your student’s living environment, you should contact Residence Life at (440) 646-8334. You may contact the College Psychologist at (440) 646 – 8323 if you are concerned that your student may have anxiety or depression or another mental health concern. If you or your student, feel that your student has been discriminated against because of a disability, you should speak with the Vice President of Student Affairs, (440) 646-8108.

Will the Disability Specialist ever call me?

No. However the Disability Specialist will return your phone calls and emails.

How do the services that colleges provide for students with disabilities differ from the services provided to high school students with disabilities?

College students with disabilities are eligible to receive reasonable and appropriate accommodations. Unlike in high school, college students with disabilities do not have Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs). Students discuss with the Disability Specialist what are
considered reasonable and appropriate accommodations and an accommodation letter is then provided to the student to be distributed to his/her professors.

**FAQs for Faculty and Staff**

**May I ever ask a student what her disability is?**

No! A student may decide to disclose her disability to you, but you may never ask a student about his or her disability.

**What should I do if I suspect a student has a disability?**

If you believe a student has a disability you should refer the student to the URSA office and make sure that she knows that the Disability Specialist is a resource for students. For example, if you find that a student struggled with a writing assignment, you should refer the student to the Writing Center.

**What should I do if I have concerns about a student’s ability to be successful in college?**

Make sure that the student is aware of the aforementioned resources available on campus. You should also consult with your department head who may choose to speak with legal counsel if necessary.

**What is my responsibility regarding students’ accommodation forms?**

Students who receive services will bring you accommodation forms to sign at the beginning of each semester. You should read through the form so that you know the accommodations that the student is legally entitled to under the Americans with Disabilities Act. You will need to sign the triplicate form and retain a copy for your own personal records. It is the student’s responsibility to return these forms back to the Disability Specialist.

**What should I do if a student is not getting her work done?**

Talk with the student *privately* and ask is there is something going on that is causing her to have trouble completing her work on time. Make sure the student is connected to the appropriate campus resources.

**If I notice a sudden change in a student’s behavior, what should I do?**

If you notice a sudden change in a student’s behavior, you should complete a Behavior Assessment Team Report located in the “Student Concerns” folder on the pdrive.

**May I ever explain to other students why another student receives accommodations?**
No! This information is highly confidential and legally you may NOT share information about a student’s disability or accommodations with other students.

Don't accommodations give students with disabilities and unfair advantage over other students?

No, accommodations provide students with disabilities with equal access to the classroom and learning environment.

What if I don't agree with the accommodations a student receives?

Students with disabilities are legally obligated to receive reasonable accommodations. If you have any questions or concerns about a student’s accommodations you should speak directly with the Disability Specialist. Denying or confronting a student about an accommodation that is listed on her accommodation form poses a potential legal liability for the faculty or staff member. When in doubt, consult with the Disability Specialist.