

# **College 101:**

## **Navigating Disability Services at a large university**

**Presented By:  
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# About Me: Brian Siemann

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## Brian Siemann

Came to U of I in 2008 as a student

English/Secondary Education

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# Syllabus

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- **College Application Process And Disability Services**
  - College Visits
  - What to do after you get accepted
  - What Disability Services Office Does
  - Registration Process
  - Documentation Requirements
- **Level the Learning Field**
  - Accommodations
  - Course Substitutions
- **Getting Help**
  - Campus Resources
  - Self-Advocacy

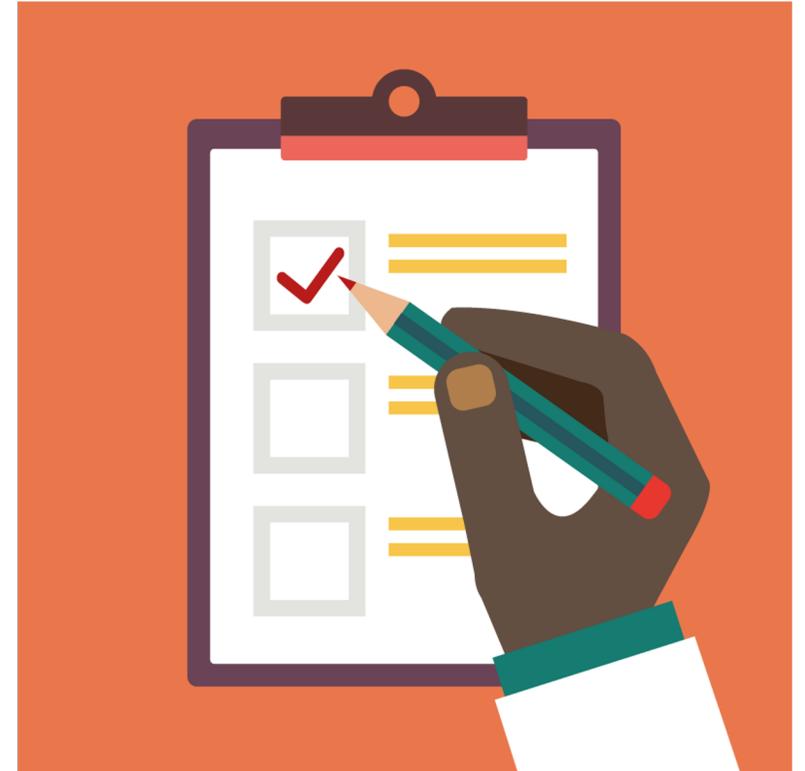


Image from: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-06619-3>

# **College Application Process and Disability Services**

**What to do and  
when to do it**

# College Application Process

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When deciding on a college or university, do your research!

No special admission standards

Students are not required to disclose disability in application, but can choose to if they desire.



Image from: <http://www.tgconnection.org/polls-and-surveys/>

# Before Accepting University Offer of Admission

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- **Visit the school**
  - Go when it's not picturesque seasonally
  - Think about classroom size / distance between buildings
  - Transportation options
  - Healthcare facilities / Mental Health Services (begin to think about medication management too)
- **Check out Disability Services Office**
  - Ask about services and supports
  - No DS office can “pre-approve” accommodations for a student
  - Accommodations process can only start once an offer of admission is accepted

# After Accepting Offer of Admission

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## ▪ **First: Set up University Account**

- Usually you get information from admissions about this in your acceptance email
- Most processes (housing, disability services, etc..) can't begin until this happens

## • **Next: Fill out application for Disability Services**

- Does not need to be first day you accept offer, but end of April/May is fine
- We're usually trying to work with our current students, so incoming student meetings get put off until the summer
- Don't wait until the first week of classes – it can take some time

# Disability Services Office

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- **Main role is to provide academic accommodations to students with disabilities on campus**
- **Visible and Non-Visible disabilities:**
  - Physical, systemic, chronic, Learning, Psychological, ADHD, Autism, Deaf/HOH, Blind/Low Vision
- **This is the only place on campus you need to disclose specifics about your disability!**
  - Students must self-disclose
  - Application will have section for you to submit documentation and describe how your disability impacts you in classroom setting
  - Accommodations are based on the impact of current academic performance
- **Accommodations at post-secondary level are for equal access, not success**
  - Some accommodations look different in college

# Registration Process

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**Step One:** Fill out application (most likely online)

**Step 2:** Submit documentation that supports disability

- **Specifics coming on next slide**

**Step 3:** Once necessary documentation is completed, student schedules a meeting with DS office for intake meeting

**Step 4:** If accommodations are appropriate, student needs to send letter of accommodations to instructors during the first week of class (follow DS policy)

# Documentation Requirements

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- Disability Services Office will have requirements on their website
- IEP and 504 Plans are good supplemental forms of documentation, but do not usually have the required information a college needs
- Psychoeducational testing/file reviews done in high school usually has the diagnostic testing needed
- Testing conducted from outside providers could also be submitted
- Current testing usually needed (around 3-5 years)
  - We need to see how disability **currently** impacts academic performance, not from when student was in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
  - Helpful not only for college, but if student wants to go to Grad School or any Graduate exams

# **LEVEL THE LEARNING FIELD.**

**Accommodations  
process in college**

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# Accommodations

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- ADA: “make reasonable modifications in policies, practices or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the public entity can demonstrate that making such modification would fundamentally alter the nature of the services, program or activity”
- Basically what this means is that accommodations need to be provided for disabled students in college, but cannot fundamentally alter the material or objectives of assignments, exams, classroom participation.

# Accommodations

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- When you go in for meeting with disability service office, student needs to be prepared to discuss how their disability impacts them in the classroom
- Remember: No disability service office should be telling you what you (the student) will be receiving prior to the orientation meeting! It is an interactive process!
- Accommodations are not a buffet. Disability service offices aren't offering a menu to choose from, but rather trying to remove specific barriers to access as a result of disability.

# Accommodations

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## ■ Common Accommodations

- Extended testing time
- Distraction reduced environment
- Notetaking software or assistance
- Assistive technology for exams

## ■ Uncommon Accommodations

- Memory aid/word banks/formula sheet
- Study guides from professor
- Instructor notes
- Extension for assignments
- Modified exams or homework

# Letter of Accommodations

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- Legal document – instructors required to provide accommodations listed
- Different from IEP and 504 ---it's **not** a plan, it's only accommodations
- Disability services office can meet with different departments and colleges within the university to clarify any questions about LOAs, the law, and professor and student rights
- Accommodations at the post-secondary level are designed for **equal access**

# Course Substitutions

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- Typically get requests for these in either foreign language or math courses
- **Very, very, very, very, very, very** difficult to get approved in college
- Students can get more supports in high school than college in terms of meeting requirements (especially in foreign language)
- Admission requirements vs. Graduation requirements are very different
- If a course substitution is considered appropriate (again, very rare to even make it to this point), students generally have to attempt the course in college with their accommodations.
- Look at the graduation requirement for your degree and try to do it in high school

# Getting Help in College

College  
Resources and  
Advocacy

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# Getting Help in College

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## ■ Academic Coaching

- Look to see if your disability service provides academic coaching (or if the service is provided to students through another department)
- Coaching is not tutoring

## ■ Tutoring Services

- Most large universities have tutoring resources within each department
- DS office might have insight to campus resources
- When in doubt, Google (**SUBJECT Tutoring INSERT UNIVERSITY NAME**)



Image from: <https://mzion.org/connect/accessibility-and-inclusion/>

# Getting Help in College

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- **Mental Health Counseling**
  - Look to see if this is a service offered within the DS office (in addition to campus resources)
  - Investigate counseling center options and procedure **before** you need to use it for the first time
- **Updating Accommodations**
  - Get in touch with DS office as soon as possible
  - Accommodations are **not** retroactive
  - DS Office is there to help – don't try to do it on your own!
  - Not much can be done the last week of the semester when everything is a dumpster fire

# Advocacy in College

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- All students, regardless of disability status, are expected to meet the same requirements of a particular class or program of study.
- Students must self-identify to disability services office and request accommodations
- Staff at DS office can help with the entire process – reach out to them as soon as you have a question about implementation of accommodations



Image from: <https://blog.adobe.com/en/publish/2018/04/02/different-breaking-accessibility-universality-inclusion-design.html/>

# Questions & Answer Session

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Image from: <https://white-rhino.co.uk/conference-planning-take-qa-sessions-next-level-slido/>

# CONTACT

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