IVY TECH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES
FAQ

What is the role of Disability Support Services (DSS) at Ivy Tech Community College?

The role of DSS is to advocate and provide for students with disabilities equally effective access and academic accommodations in the classroom, in our programming, and around campus.

What is a disability?

Federal disability law defines a person with a disability as an individual who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, including but not limited to performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, walking, communicating, reading, learning, and concentrating.

What is an accommodation?

An accommodation is the modification, adjustment, or elimination of a barrier to a program or service to enable an individual with a disability to perform on an equal basis. Extended time for test taking, conversion of documents to alternative formats, real-time captioning are examples of accommodations.

What are the responsibilities of students with a disability?

A student must self-disclose their needs to the DSS office and provide documentation of their disability from a licensed provider in order to receive accommodations. The records kept in the DSS Office are strictly confidential and are not part of the student's academic record.

As an instructor, what is my responsibility in providing accommodations?

Ivy Tech has an obligation to ensure students' accommodations are met in an effective manner. Instructors play a vital role in this process. Instructors are responsible for ensuring that courses are accessible to all enrolled students and that the approved accommodations of students in the course(s) are implemented. While DSS has resources to assist with alternative format text, communication access services, note-taking, and proctoring, you have the primary responsibility for implementing accommodations when given timely notice from the student. Please consult with DSS to discuss any questions or concerns regarding implementation of DSS approved accommodations in your course.

I've received a notification from DSS with regards to a student in my class... now what?

DSS prepares individualized letters/notifications to faculty members which verify the need for aides, services, and/or adjustments. Students are encouraged to meet with each professor early in the term to discuss the academic implications of their disability.

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How do I access a copy of a student's notification letter?
- Log in to MyIvy > Disability Accommodation Request > Faculty
- Use Ivy Tech Credentials to Log into Accommodate
- Click on Accommodation Letters
- Read message and electronically sign the letter

What if I have not received a notification via Accommodate, but a student indicates that they have an accommodation?

This may happen if a student changes sections of a course or an instructor is changed after the notification has already been sent. If no notification is listed, contact DSS. If an immediate copy is needed, the student may log into Accommodate and email you a PDF version of the letter.

Will I be notified of all students' accommodations at the beginning of the term?

To use approved accommodations, students are encouraged to notify instructors at the beginning of the term. However, DSS receives and approves requests for accommodations throughout the year, so instructors may receive notification later in the term. Instructors need only accommodate from the date/time of notice and are not obligated to retroactively accommodate students.

Should I provide a student with accommodations if they speak with me directly but I have not received notification from DSS?

No. In order to ensure that the College is following best practices and ensuring equal access under the law, and so that students have a full understanding of the scope of disability services available, students should be referred to DSS prior to accommodations being approved. Generally speaking, accommodations should not be provided on an informal basis. DSS will help the student use established procedures for requesting disability services, as well as fully explore all barriers that might impact their ability to fully participate in the life of the College.

What are some examples of reasonable accommodations that Ivy Tech approves for students who have disabilities?

Ivy Tech provides accommodations on a case-by-case basis, based on submitted documentation. Examples of approved accommodations include but are not limited to: additional time for testing, recording class lectures, textbooks in alternate formats, a distraction reduced testing environment, or relocating classrooms for mobility reasons. This is not an exhaustive list.

Does including technology in my course create issues related to accessibility?

Any technology used in courses should be accessible to students with different learning and physical needs. It may be helpful to contact DSS for recommendations on making course materials accessible.

Do you have any advice on implementing accommodations effectively and efficiently?

Proactively thinking through the course structure and design can be helpful in ensuring that the course is as accessible as possible. It would be helpful to review information about Universal Design for Learning (UDL). The Office of Educational Technology can support you in using Ally to create an inclusive experience in IvyLearn. Additionally, DSS can address questions about classroom accessibility and implementation of accommodations.

What questions can I ask a student regarding the nature of their condition?

The private conversation should be focused on ensuring equal access in the classroom. Questions that can be addressed include:

- Do you have access needs around class participation, attendance, or test taking?
- What are some ways to ensure that you're able to fully participate in the course?
- What are some accommodations that you have received in other courses that have worked well?

Instructors may not inquire about specific details of a student's disability, or request disability documentation or proof of a disability. If information is needed beyond what is included in the Accommodation Letter, please contact DSS.

What should I do if I believe a student in my course may have a disability?

If you notice a student having difficulty in your course, open a conversation with them and ask how you can help. Do not suggest that they may have a disability. Make sure they are aware of the variety of resources at Ivy Tech that can support them including the Tutoring Center, Library, and Disability Support Services. If a student references having an impairment that may substantially impact him/her (i.e. ADHD, difficulty reading, anxiety, medical condition), refer them to DSS. This provides the student with an opportunity to receive resources that can support their academic success.

What if I disagree with the approved accommodation or it appears to be unreasonable or is a fundamental alteration of the core requirements of the course?

Instructors should work with DSS to explore options that meet the needs of the student and maintain the core requirements of the course. Faculty members do not have the right to refuse accommodations.

What if I believe a student with disabilities may not be successful in my class?

Faculty members are encouraged to contact the DSS office to discuss concerns. If a student has met the prerequisites for the class it should not be suggested or advised that they drop due to their disability as this puts the college out of compliance with federal regulations.

I have a strict attendance policy in my class. Do I need to make exceptions for students with disabilities?

Students with disabilities are expected to adhere to the attendance policies of their classes. However, some disabilities may prevent the student from attending some classes due to hospitalization or outpatient treatment (such as chemotherapy or side effects of medication). The DSS office can assist you in working out reasonable accommodations with the student in these cases.

How do I address questions from other students about why a student is receiving an accommodation?

Information about a student's disability and accommodations is confidential. If students ask questions regarding another student's accommodation the instructor may state that the reason a student is allowed to use the accommodation is confidential.

How do I contact the Disability Support Services staff on a specific campus?

More information about DSS and the services and supports provided at Ivy Tech, including contact information by campus, can be found at IvyTech.edu/dss.