



What Parents Should Know About the Transition from High School Disability Services to Postsecondary Disability Support Services

Are there differences between high school and college disability services?

Disability services at the postsecondary level are not a continuation of special education services from high school. In high school a student's education fell under a law called Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) this law ensured the student was provided a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

IDEA does not apply to colleges and universities. Colleges and universities are governed by The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA.) The responsibilities of colleges and universities are significantly different from those the student's high school.

It's important for students to understand these differences as they will be responsible for managing their academic accommodations. Student responsibilities are as follows:

- Students must self identify directly with the Disability Services Office and provide documentation that demonstrates a substantial limitation to one or more major life activities as defined under the ADA.
- Students are treated as independent adults and are expected to take full personal responsibility for their educational experience. Students must advocate for themselves.
- Students must request accommodations from the DSS in order to receive them and do so on a semester by semester basis. Primary responsibility for accommodations belongs to the student. Accommodations are not put in place automatically.
- Students are expected to monitor their own progress, seek out assistance, and communicate their needs to appropriate staff or faculty.
- Students must make decisions on their own, manage their own time, and arrange their own schedules.
- Students must meet all academic standards and requirements with or without reasonable accommodations. Postsecondary institutions are not required to reduce, alter, or waive any of the essential requirements of a course or program.

What's the difference between Accommodations and Modifications?

An ***accommodation*** is defined as a support or service that is provided to help a student fully access the curriculum or subject matter. An accommodation **does not change the content** of what is being taught. Common accommodations at the postsecondary level may include: extended test time, test taking in a distraction free environment or use of a scribe or reader for tests

A ***modification*** is defined as a **change to the curriculum** or other material being taught. The teaching strategies are modified so the material is presented differently and/or the expectations of what the student will master are changed.

Dean College Disability Support Services does not modify a student's coursework, testing or assignments.

Who will manage my student's accommodations?

After the required documentation is received your student will make an appointment with the DSS Coordinator to discuss their documentation and reasonable accommodations. Appointments can be made by calling the Learning Center at 508-541-1968.

During the intake interview with the DSS Coordinator discussion will take place regarding the student's academic profile including their disability, documentation and the accommodations the student would most benefit from to be successful Dean College. Once accommodations have been discussed your student will receive blue forms (one for each professors) listing the accommodations agreed upon.

The student is responsible for giving each of their professors a blue form. The student will work with their professors to access classroom accommodations i.e. making arrangements for extended test time, study guides, copies of notes, and use of pulse pen or recording device.

Students need to re-apply for accommodations at the end of each semester.

A goal of the Dean College DSS Office is to assist students with the development of self-advocacy skills. These skills will be critical as your student progresses in college and move successfully into their chosen careers.

What if my student requires accommodations in the residence halls?

Specialized Housing Accommodations are considered for students with medical, physical or other disability-related needs. To be considered for Specialized Housing students will need to complete the Specialized Housing accommodation form and submit current documentation from a doctor/healthcare provider. In addition students making this request specialized must follow the steps to register with the Disability Support Services office.

Students are expected to complete the Residence Life Housing Application, meet the appropriate housing deadlines, and pay the housing deposit.

What if my student does not want anything to do with the disability office?

It is not uncommon for college students to reject support services. Students often see coming to college as a way to "shed" this stigma of having a learning challenge and say "*I just want to make it on my own, without help.*"

Going to college is a great opportunity for students to gain insight about their learning challenges, however; this does not happen overnight. Students who do not seek out support services often come to the DSS office when they are in trouble academically. Although this is frustrating for parents, for the student, it is a step towards success and a greater understanding of their learning style.

What can parents do?

Send your student the message you have faith in him or her; encourage them to take control of their academic success by self-advocating.

How does the DSS Coordinator encourage students to come in to apply for accommodations?

The DSS office informs students about accessing accommodations through informational sessions at New Student Orientation, emails reminders, programming and announcements on plasmas and Today.dean.