



Counseling Center

Student Guide

For

Disability Resources

**USI COUNSELING CENTER
STUDENT GUIDE FOR
DISABILITY RESOURCES**

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THE USI COUNSELING CENTER'S DISABILITY RESOURCES

The primary goal of the Counseling Center at the University of Southern Indiana is to help students function more effectively in the educational environment by assisting in overall personal development. Aspects of this development include the facilitation of emotional growth, improvement of interpersonal skills, adjustment to college life and exploration of options to aid in the resolution of personal and educational issues. The promotion of independence and self-advocacy is also instrumental in this development, and remains a major tenet of our philosophy for working with all students.

Under the law, professors may be responsible for ensuring students with disabilities receive reasonable accommodations in their classes, however, as a student with a disability you are responsible for initiating and maintaining communication with each of your professors and for following through with your assigned responsibilities in the accommodation process. The Counseling Center's role in this process is to assist the University in determining your eligibility as a student with a disability and to endorse your qualification for specific accommodations, to advocate on your behalf with your professors, and to assist in setting up academic accommodations and locating the resources you need to be more successful in the classroom.

While most of the services offered through the Counseling Center are available to all currently-enrolled USI students, disability resources are provided only to students with professionally-documented disabilities. A separate registration in the Counseling Center is required to use these resources. Please note the University does not charge any additional costs to a qualified student for the provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodations for a disability.

REGISTRATION AND APPEAL PROCESS

FORMS:

Each student must fill out a Personal Information Form (PIF) when first applying for disability resources through the USI Counseling Center. It is your responsibility to update the PIF, when necessary. It is **not** necessary to fill out a new PIF each semester if you have no changes to make on the form. A Request for Disability Resources form must be filled out in the Counseling Center **at least 60 days** before academic accommodations are needed, and

finalized as soon as you register for your classes. A new Request for Disability Resources form must be filled out before each new semester begins to reactivate your use of disability resources for the upcoming semester. It may not be possible for the University to provide you with the specific accommodations you request, if we do not have at least a 60 day notice with which to arrange accommodations that require additional staff or funds. The University reserves the right to substitute accommodations in such situations.

DOCUMENTATION:

Our Disability Verification Form The Counseling Center has a required disability verification form to be completed by your professional/specialist to document your disability and provide us with the information needed to best determine your qualification for, as well as the type and level of accommodations you may need. In most cases, the Counseling Center also requires that either a comprehensive diagnostic test report or a detailed diagnostic narrative (depending on your type of disability) be attached to your disability verification form. Please see below for a description of the appropriate attachments and the conditions for which each attachment may be used. The specific types of professionals or specialists who may appropriately document your disability and fill out your disability verification form are listed on the top of the form. A good match between the credentials of the professionals making the diagnosis and the condition being reported is expected. You may choose to have more than one professional fill out a disability verification form on your behalf, if you feel it will assist you in better documenting your disability and your need for accommodations. **Regardless of your type of disability, all questions on the disability verification form must be thoroughly and completely answered and the appropriate attachment must be included, or you may not be able to complete your registration for endorsement of academic accommodations and the use of the disability resources in the Counseling Center.**

The Detailed Diagnostic Narrative as an Attachment If you have an Attention Deficit Disorder, a Psychiatric Impairment or a Medical/Physical/Health Impairment, your disability verification form must include EITHER a detailed diagnostic narrative OR a comprehensive diagnostic test report. This narrative or test report may not be older than 3 years for an Attention Deficit Disorder or older than 6 months for Psychiatric or Medical/Physical/Health Impairments. If a detailed diagnostic narrative is provided by your specialist, it must be typed on the diagnosing specialist's letterhead and contain an original signature. We do not accept handwritten or prescription pad notes in lieu of a detailed diagnostic

narrative. Please note: if you have a Learning Disability, we will not accept diagnostic narratives; instead your disability verification form must include a comprehensive diagnostic test report that is not older than 3 years.

The Comprehensive Diagnostic Test Report as an Attachment A fully comprehensive diagnostic testing generally must include the identification of global intelligence (IQ test,) a complete assessment of all areas of achievement, and a separate, complete assessment of all areas of information processing. A list of some of the appropriate tests for administration in diagnostic testing for a learning disability can found on the Counseling Center web site. Test reports must include a thorough clinical interview, a review of past reports, and must identify the specific methods that were used to evaluate the level of disability, aptitude, achievement, information processing and social-emotional functioning. The testing must show that the symptoms of your disability have resulted in either a significant discrepancy of at least 15 points between your ability and at least one area of achievement, or evidence of significant difficulties in processing information. A list of adult-normed tests administered with all test scores and interpretations must be included in your report. We do not accept handwritten or prescription pad notes in lieu of a comprehensive diagnostic test report.

Documentation must be received and your eligibility verified in the Counseling Center before our staff are able to endorse your qualification of academic accommodations with your professors. Please call us and request, or download from the Counseling Center web site a disability verification form to be completed by your licensed professional or specialist. Please also feel free to contact a counselor in the Counseling Center at 812/464-1961 if you have questions or concerns about your documentation, type of professional that is appropriate to document your disability, or if you need assistance in completing the process.

Please note: a school plan such as a Section 504 or an individualized education plan (IEP) is not considered appropriate or sufficient documentation. We will accept such a plan if you choose to submit it, but it will not be used in your eligibility determination.

ACCOMMODATIONS THAT ARE NOT ENDORSED:

Accommodations are only considered appropriate if they do not compromise or fundamentally alter the essential, academic requirements of a course or field of study. Accommodations which do so will not be endorsed by Counseling Center

staff. Accommodations are also not endorsed if they are for the purpose of personal use or study, such as a wheelchair or other individualized services needed for independent living, mental health stability, rehabilitation, individual remediation instruction or private tutoring. While these services are not provided as accommodations to a college student with a disability, you cannot be discriminated against when using any University service that is available to all students. Finally, accommodations that create an undue financial or administrative burden may not be provided, including those for which the University does not have enough advance notice or those that are impossible or infeasible to provide.

ADA COORDINATOR APPEALS AND GRIEVANCES:

You have the right to appeal any disability eligibility or requested accommodation decisions made by any Counseling Center staff member, faculty member, or University department. You also have the right to file a complaint or grievance against any member of the University community if you feel you have been treated unfairly or discriminated against because of a disability.

Please contact the ADA Coordinator, Doug Goepfner, by calling 812-465-7101 or by e-mailing him at drgoepfner@usi.edu to obtain specific instructions about this process.

MEETINGS AND APPOINTMENTS

PLACEMENT TESTING WITH ACCOMMODATION:

If you have a documented disability and choose to request accommodations for your placement tests, please follow these steps in setting an appointment:

1st Reserve a place for a specific Orientation date through the Office of Student Development Programs by calling (812) 465-7167.

2nd Contact Counseling Center staff at (812) 464-1961 to register for disability resources; this includes providing us with a copy of your completed disability verification form with attachments before you schedule an appointment for the placement tests. Once your registration in our office is complete, we will send a memo listing your appropriate accommodations to the Academic Skills Center, **upon your request.**

3rd Contact the Academic Skills Center at (812) 465-1743 to schedule an appointment for placement tests with accommodations. You must request

the **specific accommodations** you require in the testing situation, such as extra time, minimized distractions or a reader/scribe. The only test that is timed is the writing placement test; the mathematics and reading placement tests are not timed. All three placement tests are administered on a computer, and the mathematics test includes a “virtual” calculator within the program.

COUNSELING CENTER STAFF:

Each student is expected to make contact in the Counseling Center prior to the start of each new semester to turn in your Request form to activate your use of our resources and to pick up your letters for your professors. Regular appointments with a counselor are not required, however, you are encouraged to set up any appointments you feel you need. If you have a question, you are also welcome to e-mail Leslie Smith at **lmsmith@usi.edu**

If you have an issue to discuss which you feel is difficult, complicated or of a personal or confidential nature, please set up an appointment with a counselor for assistance in resolving the situation. If you have a problem to report, it is best to meet with a counselor rather than to speak of the problem in the lobby area or with clerical support staff. You may be asked to provide the counselor with a written statement of your problem or complaint, to assist us in determining appropriate options for resolving the situation.

FACULTY:

You are expected to establish a working relationship with each of your professors and to self-identify as a student with a disability, so your professors will have the opportunity to provide accommodations. If you do not identify your disability, your professors may not know accommodations are necessary, and by law, they may not be responsible for accommodations if you have not given appropriate notice, or if they don't know the nature of your disability. A "Letter of Disability" is available for you to take to your professors, if you feel it will assist you in speaking to them. This letter (very generally) states you have a disability and lists the accommodations you have been determined eligible to receive. Some professors may require you to present this “Letter of Disability” before they will provide accommodations.

If you have a problem arise in a class during the semester, it is your responsibility to discuss and attempt to resolve the situation with your professor, **first**. Counselors are available to mediate situations in which you have already attempted to resolve the situation with your professor, but you are still in need of a

satisfactory solution. Remember, your professors are your primary resources for your classes. Your professors are responsible for assisting you in finding note takers and readers, as well as helping you identify options for completion of their classes. Their job responsibilities include office hours, which are the times set aside to answer questions, clarify class/textbook material and problem-solve with students.

ACADEMIC ADVISORS:

All students are expected to meet with an advisor prior to enrolling for classes and to register for classes at the earliest possible opportunity. If you do not participate in early registration, you may not be able to meet your 60-day obligation for turning in your **Request for Resources** form to the Counseling Center.

Students who do not declare a specific major or who are admitted to the University on a conditional basis are assigned to a University Division advisor. Students with declared majors are assigned to an advisor in the school of their major. Advisors assist students in determining appropriate classes to take, scheduling and registering for classes and will confer with students regarding academic progress and standards. **It is very important you relate any special needs you have to your academic advisor to assist them in appropriately advising you.** If you have questions about the advising process or are not sure with which advisor you should meet, please contact the administrative assistant in the school of your major. The name of your assigned advisor is also available by logging onto your BANNER account.

RELATED COMMUNITY SERVICES

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION:

We recommend all students apply for services through their area Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR, OVR, DVR, DORS, etc.) to help offset the costs of obtaining a college education. VR is a governmental agency which provides services to assist people with disabilities in preparing for, obtaining or retaining employment. VR may be able to help you obtain documentation as a part of their application process and may also be able to assist you with other school-related expenses and accommodations, as long as they relate to your employment goals. For more information about VR services in Indiana, as well as the location of the VR office in your area, visit their website at <http://www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/2636.htm> For Illinois residents, visit

<http://www.dhs.state.il.us/ors/> or for Kentucky residents, visit <http://ovr.ky.gov> for more information or office locations.

RECORDING FOR THE BLIND AND DYSLEXIC:

If you qualify for taped textbooks, we ask that you inquire with professional taping services (i.e.: RFB&D) to see if your books are already available on tape. Applications for RFB&D are available in the Counseling Center office. If you are a VR client, ask your counselor if VR will agree to cover the fees for these services, as they sometimes will. RFB&D's toll-free phone number for ordering books or for inquires is **1-800/221-4792**. You can also check on the availability of books by accessing RFB&D's Internet web page at **www.rfbd.org**.

TALKING BOOKS:

The Indiana Central Library System has a program titled Talking Books, a free service to students who qualify based on disability for taped books. You may be able to check out some of your taped books, such as for literature classes, through this program. The Evansville Central Library's phone number for the Talking Books program is 428-8235.

BOOKSHARE.ORG:

Individual subscriptions to this service enable "all-you-can-read" access to books in easy-to-use digital formats for a full year. Books from Bookshare.org contain the full text of the book (not pre-recorded audio) that can be read with the adaptive technology of your choice. A talking software application is included with membership, providing members with one option for reading the books. Books are also available in contracted digital Braille. For more information about using the Bookshare.org website, including recommended system requirements, or if you would like to try out Bookshare.org before joining, visit their site at **www.bookshare.org**. Bookshare.org recently received a grant, thereby allowing them to offer subscriptions free of charge for a limited time.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND RESOURCES

Each student's accommodation needs are evaluated on an individual basis. However, the following are some specific accommodations which are more "standardized."

TEXTBOOK CONVERSION:

Counseling Center staff will arrange to have your textbooks converted to an

accessible format if you qualify for this service. Options include conversion of standard print to Braille or an audio format. Audio files allow you to listen to text using a computer or an MP3 player. Please note that conversion services require you to purchase and submit your textbooks to the Counseling Center to be sent out of state to a conversion service. The binding of your books will be removed prior to conversion and you will not be able to sell your books back to the bookstore where you purchased them. Another option is to obtain electronic (e-text) versions of your textbooks directly from the publishers. E-text allows you to access reading material in different ways on your computer, including: use of a screen reader, screen enlarging software, and manipulation of color/contrast of materials. You will be able to sell your books back to the bookstore using this option. Please meet with a counselor to determine the most appropriate format and the requirements for each option.

Since all the options for converting your textbooks to an accessible format require extensive time, you must submit your Request form and all your textbooks to the Counseling Center a minimum of 60 days before the start of classes each semester.

TEST ACCOMMODATIONS:

There are a few rooms available on a “first come, first served” basis in the Counseling Center for scheduling test accommodations. Please let each professor know at the beginning of the semester that you qualify to use our test rooms. We require a “Test Instructions Form” for every test brought to the Center, and you may need to provide your professors with this form to use for your first test. These forms are available in the Counseling Center or can be downloaded from the Counseling Center web page.

We recommend you bring your course syllabi to us at the beginning of each semester and schedule your test rooms for the entire semester. Once our rooms are full, you will be referred back to your professors for the accommodations. Your professors may have space in their departments they prefer you use for testing, which is their prerogative. However, you are still entitled to receive appropriate accommodations. Please let a counselor know if you do not receive accommodations from your professors in the testing situation, **as soon as possible**.

If you schedule a test room in the Counseling Center but need to change or cancel the reservation, please notify us as soon as possible; if you arrive more than 15 minutes after your scheduled time your room may no longer be available. You will

not get longer than your scheduled time if you are late for testing. For example, if your scheduled time is from 1:00 to 2:40 and you are late, we will still collect your test at 2:40 unless prior arrangements have been made and the test room remains available.

Generally, you may schedule a test room for up to double time of testing (a 50-minute class = 1 hour 40 minutes; a 1 hour 15 minute class = 2 ½ hours.) Professors of night classes generally administer the same tests to their day and night classes; therefore, the length of time you receive for testing is the same time allotted for the day class, unless we have been otherwise notified by your professor.

If you schedule test readers through our office and fail to show up for two testing sessions without providing at least a two hour notification to Counseling Center staff, you will be suspended from scheduling future test readers. You may appeal to the ADA Coordinator for reinstatement of test reader services.

TUTOR REFERRAL:

If you need tutoring for any of your classes or for study skills/time management assistance, you will be referred to the University-sponsored tutoring in the Academic Skills Center (ED-1111). Free tutoring is offered in Accounting, Algebra, Calculus, Chemistry, History, Psychology, Study Skills, as well as in other subject areas. The Academic Skills Center also has Supplemental Instruction (SI) for a variety of required classes. SI provides students with weekly group study sessions with a trained “leader.” Students have a chance to compare notes, discuss concepts, and develop strategies for studying the subject material and take practice tests before exams. At your request, you may choose to be assigned to meet with an academic coach on a weekly basis to help you with your choice of skill development in: time management, organization, textbook reading, test preparation or note taking. Please let your counselor know if you would like a referral to the Academic Skills Center to be paired with an academic coach.

If you would like to hire a private tutor, please contact the department or your professor of the class for which you want a tutor. Often, departmental secretaries keep a list of potential tutors for hire or they may be able to recommend a student who is majoring in that subject as a possible tutor. The cost of private tutors is the responsibility of each student.

NOTE TAKERS:

The University operates with volunteer note takers: students who are already enrolled in the classes for which note takers are needed. If you need note takers, ask your professors at the beginning of each semester to anonymously announce the request to your classes. Your professors should assist you in finding appropriate students in their classes to provide you with notes; your “Letter of Disability” notifies them of this responsibility. The Counseling Center provides notebooks and carbon paper for note takers or copy services for notes, if you prefer. Even with a note taker, you should still attempt to take notes relative to your ability. **Attendance in the class is required** as with any other student and your professor is under no obligation to provide you with notes on days for which you are absent.

If there is a problem with the notes you receive or if a note taker repeatedly misses classes, please talk to your professor **immediately** and ask your professor to review the notes you are receiving to determine if the quality is effective, or to assist you in finding a new note taker.

SIGN LANGUAGE SERVICES:

It is essential you register for your classes at the earliest date possible and turn in your "Request" form at least 60 days before the start of the upcoming semester. If we do not receive your “Request” form at least 60 days before sign language interpreters are needed, we may not be able to guarantee interpreters can be found for your classes. This is because there is a great shortage of qualified interpreters and a great demand for these services; many interpreters are scheduled by other schools in the region. You should include your VR counselor’s name on your form, as well as the names of your preferred interpreters. We will then submit your request for interpreters to your VR counselor. If your VR counselor will not be able to provide your interpreter services, your VR counselor must send us a written notification of the reason the services are not being provided, so we are able to proceed with obtaining University authorization for these services. If you do not qualify for VR services, please meet with Leslie Smith, Assistant Director, so we can proceed accordingly to arrange for interpreters for your classes. We will provide one copy of textbooks to your interpreters, at your written request.

At this time, we contract interpreters through an independent agency and must follow their rules and guidelines. You will be asked to sign an Interpreter Services Agreement outlining your obligations and responsibilities and your agreement to also follow their rules and guidelines. **You are responsible for cancelling**

interpreters for classes you are unable to attend with at least a 24 hour notice. You may choose to notify the interpreters you will not need their services, but this does not constitute a cancellation. You must cancel by e-mailing the agency with a copy to the University at lmsmith@usi.edu. Two unexcused class absences without the appropriate cancellation will result in suspension of your interpreter services. You may appeal to the ADA Coordinator Doug Goepfner for reinstatement of sign language interpreter services.

If you would like to request interpreter services for activities outside the classroom (extracurricular activities,) you should submit your request to the USI Department or individual faculty or staff person organizing the event, since they are responsible for the accessibility of that event. If you are unable to determine the appropriate sponsor for an event, please contact the ADA Coordinator, Doug Goepfner, as specified in the earlier section titled: “APPEALS AND GRIEVANCES.”

ATTENDANCE FLEXIBILITY:

The University of Southern Indiana believes attendance at all classes is important to successful learning, and therefore has a mandatory attendance policy. It is the responsibility of professors to inform students of the consequences of absences from class, and the responsibility of students to keep professors informed regarding absences. Please remember that students who miss class are not excused from their obligations to professors. However, professors are expected to provide students with an opportunity to meet class commitments when absences are for good and proper reasons. Please refer to the **University of Southern Indiana Bulletin** you receive during Orientation for more information about the academic policies for which you are responsible.

Class attendance for traditionally offered, college-level courses is considered a significant aspect of participatory learning. However, if you have a medically-related condition that is episodic or unpredictable in nature, or other disability-related reasons that make it difficult for you to fulfill attendance requirements, you may request attendance flexibility. Please be aware that attendance flexibility is not a waiver of attendance policies.

In order for us to endorse attendance flexibility, the documentation you submit to the Counseling Center must specify the reasons you may miss classes, as well as give some indication of the extent of these absences. If it is determined that your request for attendance flexibility is justified by the impact of your disability, you must specifically request attendance flexibility on your “Request” form each

semester. An appointment with a counselor is required **before the start of the semester**, and you will be asked to sign a “Consent to Release Information” form. A separate memo endorsing attendance flexibility will then be sent to each of your professors by your counselor.

Attendance flexibility potentially provides some relief from requirements for physical attendance in classes. However, you are responsible for contacting your professors every time a disability-related absence occurs, and informing them when you will return. You are also responsible for any material covered or work completed during disability-related absences. Neither extension of deadlines for assignments due, nor arrangements for making up missed tests or quizzes are included in this accommodation and must be negotiated individually with each professor. If you are unable to reach a professor directly, please contact the Counseling Center for assistance.

If any of your professors believes attendance flexibility is not feasible because it will alter the fundamental nature or jeopardize the learning objectives for their class, you and your professor may request assistance from the ADA Coordinator, Doug Goeppner.

SELECTIVE SCHEDULING:

You may qualify to register earlier than your scheduled date and time if the symptoms of your disability require a highly selective schedule of classes, for example: no evening classes due to a reduced ability to see at night, or if you require accommodations that must be scheduled or purchased as soon as possible before the start of each semester. Generally, you must notify a counselor prior to registration time **EACH SEMESTER**, so a memo can be sent to the Registrar’s Office and arrangements made to release any holds in the registration process. Please set an appointment with a counselor to determine if you qualify for this accommodation.

COURSE SUBSTITUTIONS/WAIVERS:

If you would like to request a substitution or waiver of a course that is required for either the Core Curriculum or for your major, it will be very important to begin the process as soon as possible in your college career. We recommend you be prepared to present documentation that details how the functional limitations of your disability prevent you from participating in the course and that includes a history of repeated failures with this type of course, regardless of the provision of accommodations. We also recommend your documentation state that a substitution

or waiver is the only accommodation that will allow you to be successful in achieving your degree objective.

Your request for a course substitution or waiver should be submitted to your academic advisor. If you would like us to attach a letter of endorsement to your request, please set an appointment with Leslie Smith, Assistant Director of Counseling.

GENERAL ADVOCACY:

If you need assistance with advocacy, dropping a class or withdrawing from the semester, an appeal of an University decision, a recommendation to VR for a change in your rehabilitation plan, or a recommendation to an insurance company for permission to reduce your course load, please speak to a counselor. We will do what we can to assist you in determining or completing the appropriate processes, and will send a letter of recommendation, when appropriate.

RESIDENCE LIFE ACCOMMODATIONS:

If you require an accommodation in your living arrangements due to your disability, please submit your request directly to the Office of Residence Life during the application process, especially if a structural alteration is needed. Generally, an accommodation may only be provided if it specifically relates to the functional limitations or symptoms of your disability. Residence Life staff may ask that you submit documentation that supports your request, or in some cases, that Counseling Center staff accept your documentation on their behalf and provide them with a letter recommending the requested accommodation. If this is asked of you, please contact our office as soon as possible so a counselor can assist you in this process.

SERVICE ANIMALS:

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requires universities to permit the use of service animals by people with disabilities in all areas of the campus that are open to the general public. An ADA service animal is defined as “any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.” In addition, the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights has determined that proof of training or certification is necessary for an animal to be considered an ADA service animal. Instances for which the University can restrict or prohibit the presence of an animal that meets this definition are if there is a legitimate safety concern or if the animal is not controlled and poses a direct and immediate threat to the safety of

others. Even in the case of a laboratory class or in the presence of other students with animal allergies or fears, reasonable modifications must be made to policies, practices and procedures to allow the use of a service animal.

If you use a service animal, you have specific responsibilities in its care and use. Your service animal should be up-to-date on all vaccinations required by Indiana state law, and should have routine veterinarian check-ups, regular exercise, adequate water and a proper diet to maintain good health. Your animal should remain on a lead and under your control without disruption to others, at all times. You are expected to maintain the cleanliness of your service animal for the health, safety and in consideration of others. Please let a counselor know if you need a referral to a veterinarian in the Evansville area and we will be happy to assist.

ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT/ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY:

If you are in need of an adaptive equipment/assistive technology evaluation to determine the most appropriate equipment/technology for your situation, a counselor will be happy to provide you with a community referral for such an evaluation. If you have already obtained an evaluation and specific adaptive equipment/assistive technology has been recommended or if you know which equipment/technology can best assist you in participating in your classes, please meet with a counselor at least 60 days prior to the start of the semester for which the equipment/technology is needed. When you submit your request, please be prepared to provide the counselor with as much information about the product as possible. Specific product and purchasing/vendor information will need to be obtained before the counselor can seek authorization to place the order and submit the purchase for payment.

For more information, please refer to the Counseling Center web page at www.usi.edu. To register for resources contact us at: (812) 464-1961 or TTY (812)465-7072 in the Orr Center 1051. Information can be faxed to the Counseling Center at (812) 461-5288. Staff include:

Leslie Smith, Assistant Director
Brooke Orth, Staff Counselor
Sarah Phillips, Staff Counselor
Rosie Bigge, Administrative Assistant
Diana Rumsey, Administrative Assistant

