

Disability Support Services

For Adults with Autism

Spectrum Disorders

Towson University



Located at: Administration Building, Room 232

7720 York Road

Towson, Maryland 21252

Hours: Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Outline

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Please Note: All information is taken directly from Towson University's Disability Support Services website. Pictures were taken at Disability Support Services.

Contact Information



Main Office Number

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Role of Disability Support

The role of Disability Support Services at Towson University is to:

- promote the success, dignity and independence of students with disabilities by helping them to develop awareness of their disability-related needs, self-advocacy strategies and academic skills
- work with students with disabilities and with instructors to determine the need for and facilitate the delivery of reasonable accommodations and support services;
- assist the university community in understanding the needs of students with disabilities in order to optimize the learning environment for them

(Retrieved from <http://www.towson.edu/dss/studentguide/role.asp> on April 18, 2009)

NOTE: (Disability Support Services is for individuals with Autism and or other disabilities who would like Towson University to know that he or she has the disability and would like to receive services and or accommodations)

Accommodations and Services

Disability Support Services staff works with students to ensure access and participation in academic and campus life at Towson University. Students with disabilities, for their part, are responsible for making their needs known in a timely manner and meeting the academic standards set for all Towson University students. The primary responsibility of the DSS staff is to provide academic accommodations and services, such as extended time on exams and note taking services. However, we also encourage students to develop an individual working relationship with our staff to address learning and other issues, as appropriate.

Services and accommodations can include:

- Pre-admission counseling and new student orientation
- Help with course load and selection
- Priority registration
- Testing accommodations
- Note-taking assistance
- Interpreting services
- Alternate formats for printed materials
- Learning and study skills assistance
- Disability consultation and advocacy assistance
- Assistive technology
- Para-transit registration
- Campus orientation and mobility services
- Information and referral*
- Technical assistance and training to faculty and staff

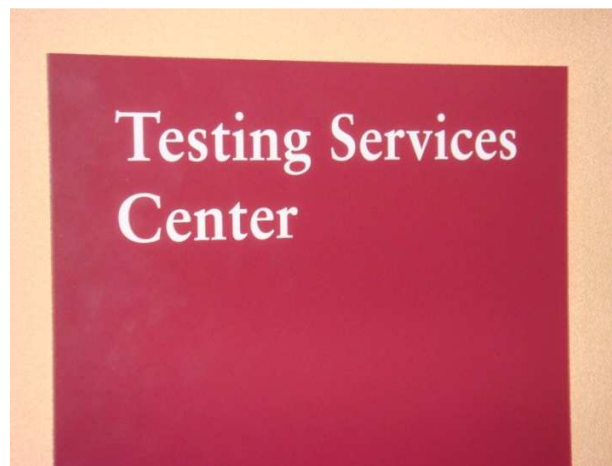
Please note: DSS does not offer diagnostic testing or content tutoring, but we can make referrals to campus and community resources.

(Retrieved from <http://www.towson.edu/dss.studentguide/accommodations.asp> on April 18, 2009)

DSS Policies and Procedures for Services and Accommodations

Testing Services Center

The Testing Services Center, located in the Administration Building, Room 232B, provides testing accommodations for students registered with Disability Support Services. The center offers extended time, reduced distraction testing spaces, computers and other assistive technology, as well as readers and scribes, as appropriate. All tests are proctored to ensure academic honesty.



Test Accommodation Process

Student and faculty related responsibilities for accommodations for testing are online at <http://www.towson.edu/testing/>

Eligibility

Students enrolled at Towson University who wish to receive accommodations and services must identify themselves as having a disability and register with Disability Support Services. Appropriate disability documentation as outlined in the Documentation Guidelines must be provided.

(Retrieved from <http://www.towson.edu/dss.studentguide/eligibility.asp> on April 18, 2009)

Procedures for Registering

The steps to register at Disability Support Services (DSS) are as follows:

1. Call or visit the DSS office (Room 232 in the Administration Building) to schedule an appointment to meet with a specialist to discuss your disability and types of accommodations and services that may be needed.
2. Have documentation of your disability available to review and discuss at the meeting. Disability documentation must be complete and up-to-date. If the documentation is insufficient, you will be given the opportunity to provide the needed information. DSS may also, as appropriate, give assistance in finding a qualified practitioner to conduct an assessment.
3. Pick up your memos for faculty from DSS certifying your disability and specifying your approved accommodations, and give them to your instructor. This should be done as early as possible each semester.
4. Discuss your accommodations with your instructors. DSS staff is available to assist both you and instructors in implementing accommodations as they relate to specific course requirements.
5. Throughout the semester, DSS staff is available to discuss academic progress or concerns, and provide assistance to you. DSS staff can inform you about other appropriate programs and services.
6. You must pick up your memos at DSS, distribute them and discuss your accommodations with your instructors each semester

(Retrieved from <http://www.towson.edu/dss/studentguide.procedures.asp> on April 18, 2009)

Documentation Guidelines

All students who request accommodations must submit documentation of their disability to Disability Support Services (DSS). The documentation must be up-to-date and include a complete written evaluation from a physician, psychologist or other qualified specialist. In most cases, a diagnostic evaluation must have been completed within the last three to five years, depending upon the nature of the disability and individual circumstances. The type of documentation needed varies with the disability. Generally, a psycho-educational evaluation is required for learning and cognitive disabilities, a psychiatrist's or psychologist's report is required for ADHD and psychological disabilities, while a typed letter or report is required from a physician for medical and physical disabilities. All documentation must provide diagnostic information, including a description of the nature and extent of the disability, assessment information on which the diagnosis is based, and recommendations for reasonable accommodations to offset the impact of the disability in the college setting.

(Retrieved from <http://www.towson.edu/dss/studentguide/documentationguidelines.asp> on April 18, 2009)

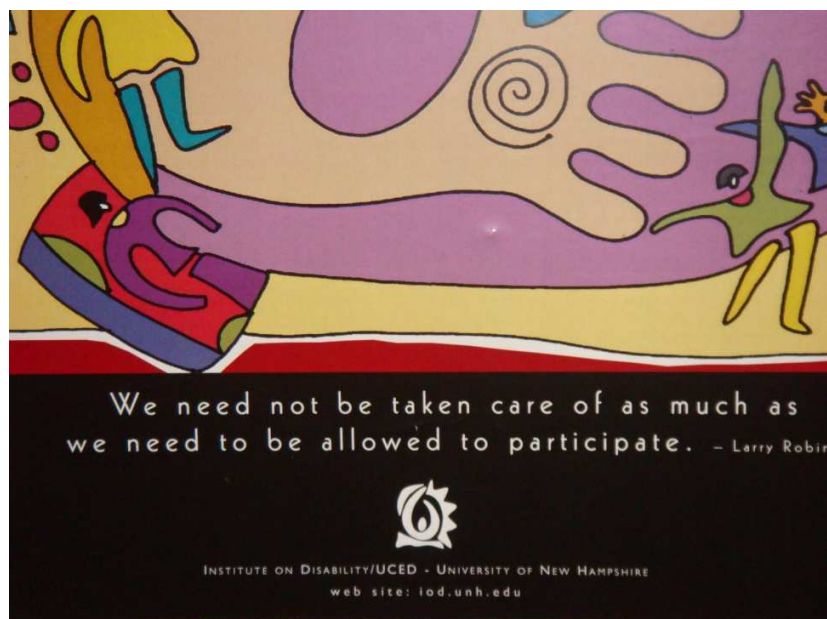
Confidentiality

All information related to a student's disability is confidential. Disability documentation is kept in a secure file with the Disability Support Services office. It is not part of the student's education record. Disability-related information may be shared on a limited basis with University faculty and staff to provide accommodations and services, but only with the permission of the student or as otherwise permitted under the University's student records policy and applicable federal laws. It is DSS policy not to share student information with parents unless the student is present.

(Retrieved from <http://www.towson.edu/dss/studentguide/confidentiality.asp> on April 18, 2009)

Student Authorization to Release/Obtain Disability Records

In order to release or obtain disability documentation, the student must provide written consent. The student will be asked to sign a Confidential Information Release Form.



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a disability?

Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provide protection from discrimination for individuals on the basis of a disability. Section 504 states that:

“No otherwise qualified person with a disability in the United States ... shall, solely by the reason of ... disability, be denied the benefits of, be excluded from participation in, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

Under the ADA a “person with a disability” is someone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, learning, breathing, and working. Physical or mental impairments include, for example, learning disabilities, emotional or mental illness, blindness and visual impairments, deafness and hearing impairments, mobility impairments and some chronic illness.

2. Who qualifies for accommodations and services?

A “qualified” person with a disability is one who, with reasonable accommodations (if necessary), meets the essential standards required for admission or participation in Towson University’s programs and activities. An example of a reasonable accommodation in a college setting would be allowing a student to take tests with extended time.

3. Is there a separate admissions process for students with disabilities?

There are no separate admissions procedures or criteria for students with disabilities. Prospective students should contact the undergraduate or graduate admissions office for application information. The admission office will not refer students who identify themselves as having a disability to DSS. Therefore, students should contact DSS upon admission to register for accommodations and services. Registering with DSS will enable students to receive appropriate accommodations and services, including accommodations necessary for orientation programs or required placement exams, as well as classroom and testing accommodations.

4. Will the services and accommodations that were provided to me in high school automatically be provided to me in college?

College-level services for students with disabilities are not a continuation of special education services received in high school. The university must provide accommodations that address your documented disability, thus affording you an equal opportunity to participate in its programs, courses and activities. However, the university is not required to provide accommodations as they appeared in your high school IEP or Section 504 plan. In fact, DSS staff may determine that some accommodations you received in high school alter aspects of the curriculum, and are therefore not reasonable. When discussing possible accommodations for college-level work, be

prepared to consider alternative accommodations in the event that some may no longer be available to you.

5. How do I register for services?

You may request an accommodation at anytime, however, students are encouraged to contact DSS upon admission to the university. To be eligible for services, students must make an appointment to meet with a specialist for an intake interview and submit current, comprehensive documentation of his/her disability. Eligibility guidelines are available online in this Student Guide and from the DSS office.

For high school and transfer students starting college in the fall, DSS staff is available to meet with you over the summer. DSS participates in Towson University Open Houses and TU Cares Programs. During this time, students are invited to meet with DSS staff, who will answer questions about our program and services.

6. How accessible is campus?

Although the university is physically accessible to students with disabilities, the terrain on campus is hilly. Disability Support Services has available a campus accessibility guide that shows grade changes and traveling routes from easiest to most difficult. An Orientation and Mobility Specialist may be provided to work with students individually.

Transportation services are also provided. An on-campus Shuttle Bus Service is available during the Fall and Spring semesters. The Shuttle takes students to and from campus buildings and classrooms. The front seats in each Shuttle are reserved for students with disabilities. Additionally, there is Mobility Van equipped with a wheelchair lift that will make pickups and drop-offs at any TU campus location.

7. What documentation do I need to provide?

All students who request accommodations must submit documentation of their disability to Disability Support Services. The documentation must be up-to-date and include a complete written evaluation from a physician, psychologist or other qualified specialist. In most cases, a diagnostic evaluation must have been completed within the last three years (or up to five years for some adults), depending upon the nature of the disability and individual needs and circumstances. Specific guidelines for documentation are located in the Student Guide.

8. Do I have to pay for a new evaluation, and who can I find do it?

For a student with a disability leaving high school and entering college, it is recommended that you work with your high school to obtain an updated evaluation appropriate to document your disability and need for accommodations as you transition to college. Generally, for a high school student, the evaluation should be no more than three years old. Although many high schools are willing to conduct and pay for a new evaluation, neither your high school nor college is required to do so. This may mean that you have to pay or find funding to pay an appropriate professional

to do it. Disability Support Services maintains a list of qualified evaluators who conduct psycho-educational evaluations, including those who use a sliding fee scale. Also, if you are eligible for services through your state vocational rehabilitation agency, you may qualify for an evaluation at no cost to you.

9. What should I do if my accommodation or services are not working?

Let your Disability Support Services (DSS) specialist know as soon as you become aware that the results are not what you expected. It is harder to correct a long-standing problem and it may be too late if you wait too long or until the course or activity is completed. You and your DSS specialist should work together to resolve the problem, and in collaboration with college faculty, staff and administrators, as appropriate.

10. What is the Testing Services Center?

The Testing Services Center provides testing accommodations to students registered with DSS. The Center is equipped to provide extended test time, a reduced distraction testing environment, readers, scribes, and word processors, as well as other assistive technology. To use the Testing Services Center, the student and instructor must follow the Center's procedures as outlined on the Test Accommodation Request Form and on the DSS website.

(Retrieved from <http://www.towson.edu/dss/studentguide/faq.asp>, April 18, 2009)