



Department of Student Services

Disability Services

Disability Services, a division of the Department of Student Services, is the designated office that provides services to students with disabilities.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Office of Disability Services is to coordinate services and accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure accessibility and usability of all programs, services, and activities. Disability Services also serves as a resource for information and as an advocate for students with disabilities for full participation in all aspects of campus life.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) gives individuals with disabilities civil rights protection that is similar to that provided to all individuals on the basis of race, sex, national origin, and religion. The act guarantees equal opportunity in employment, public accommodations, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications. In addition, Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation act states: "No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States shall, solely on the basis of his/her handicap, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance".

The policy at Ozarka College is consistent with the ADA and Section 504. Ozarka College is open and accessible to students with disabilities. We are committed to providing assistance to enable qualified students to accomplish their educational goals as well as assuring equal opportunity to derive all of the benefits of campus life.

Confidentiality and Release of Information

The Office of Disability Services is committed to ensuring all information regarding a student remains confidential as required or permitted by law. This information may include grades, biographical history, disability information, and case notes. No one has immediate access to student files except authorized staff. Any information regarding a disability gained from medical or psychological evaluations shall be considered confidential and shall be shared with others within the institution on a need-to-know basis only.

Only with written consent form giving our office permission to discuss the disability with faculty and staff, parents, and/or advisors who require further information. Information will not be released without consent unless it is required by federal or state law.

Accessing Services

To be eligible for academic accommodations through Disability Services (DS), students must present documentation of a disability. Documentation must be provided before accommodations can be arranged. In most cases, documentation will be needed from doctoral level professionals such as psychologists, medical doctors, psychiatrists or neurologists. The professional should be experienced in diagnosing and treating the disability, should prepare the documentation on appropriate clinical stationary, should sign the document and should be able to provide the college with verification of the experience and expertise in the specialty if asked.

The type of documentation may vary dependent upon the type of disability. Documentation should be current within three years, but exceptions may be necessary dependent upon individual circumstances and disability.

Online Students

Students who reside outside the immediate campus community and are taking only online courses will follow a somewhat different process. The DS application process can be conducted entirely by phone, or part e-mail and part by phone. Instead of meeting personally with your professors to discuss the logistics and accommodations, you will contact them by phone or e-mail. You will need to indicate to DS that you are an online student, so we will know to send the letters to your professors via email. It is still necessary for you to contact your professors to work out accommodation logistics for exams and to follow up to be sure they received your Faculty Notification Letter.

Students Without Documentation

Some students contact our office who have not been tested for cognitive disabilities, such as a learning disability, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or a psychological disability, but suspect that they may have one. Ozarka College does not have the resources to provide the necessary testing. DS will provide students with a list of appropriate professionals who are qualified to conduct a diagnostic evaluation. The cost of such an evaluation may vary. Insurance companies sometimes pay for testing, but often they do not. In some cases, local service agencies can provide financial help to students.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Are there any special application procedures for students with disabilities?

The application process is same as it is for all students. Students with disabilities must apply to Ozarka College through the regular admissions procedure. Applicants with disabilities are part of the regular application pool and considered based on the same criteria as all students. There are no special admissions procedures.

A student may, however, apply to the companies that administer the standardized admission exams (such as Educational Testing Services and The College Board) for provision of accommodations when taking standardized tests such as the SAT, ACT and GRE. Contact the exam administration companies for further information on how to apply for and make arrangements for standardized exam accommodations.

Do I need to do anything to get disability services accommodations again next semester?

Yes, students seeking accommodations must set up a DS appointment each semester to coordinate your accommodations for the following semester. It is not performed automatically.

How do disability services in college differ from those in high school?

In college, students with disabilities are covered under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Colleges are required to provide any reasonable accommodation that may be necessary for equal access to education. They are not required to design special programs for students with disabilities or have Individualized Educational Plans (IEP's). Since this is the case, the legal obligations change. There is no special education in college. Under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), it is the responsibility of the schools to provide services and seek out students with disabilities. At an institution of higher education, it is the student's responsibility to seek out services through the Office of Disability Services.

I suspect I have a learning disability. Can Disability Services conduct the assessment to provide a diagnosis?

Colleges are not required to conduct or provide testing. The student is responsible for providing current documentation, and any additional testing to support the requested accommodations, if necessary. However, Disability Services provides referral information for local evaluators.

I'm a Department of Rehabilitative Services (RS) client. Is there anything special I should know about Ozarka College Disability Services?

If you have a RS counselor in your home town, you are encouraged to stay in contact with your home counselor. If you do not have a home town RS counselor or have other questions regarding RS, you may contact the local Rehabilitation Office.

I'm a RS Division for the Blind Services client. Is there anything special about Ozarka College Disability Services that I should know?

If you have a RS counselor in your home town, you are encouraged to have your home counselor contact Disability Services to provide information about your accessibility needs. If you do not have a home town RS counselor or have other questions regarding services for the blind, you may contact the local Rehabilitation Office at (870) 972-0025.

If I am a student with a disability, will Disability Services seek me out to provide services like my counselors did in high school?

Colleges do are not required to seek out students with disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to seek out services through Disability Services.

Should I provide information about my disability in my admission application?

Deciding whether to disclose a disability is a personal decision. The college cannot ask if you have a disability during the application process. However, some students feel that how they have successfully handled the challenges of their disability reveals the uniqueness and strength of their personality and choose to write about it in their application. It is not necessary to include medical or educational testing with your application. You are welcome to send documentation to Disability Services in preparation for enrolling or to inquire as to what accommodations you would be eligible to receive.

What are the procedures for implementing accommodations for students with a disability?

Once admitted to Ozarka College, contact the Disability Services office. We will set up an appointment to meet with you to discuss your disability and request documentation. Send us any records of accommodations/services provided to you at any previous academic settings (e.g., IEP, Section 504 plan, college service plan, etc.). Eligibility for services is based on a combination of the student's description for need, the thoroughness of the disability documentation, and documentation policies. Once eligibility is determined, the Coordinator for Disability Services will assist you with implementing the agreed upon accommodations.

What do I do if I am taking summer classes and will need to receive disability accommodations?

As soon as you know you are taking classes in the summer at Ozarka College, notify the Disability Services office to discuss possible accommodations.

What documentation do I need to present in order to receive services from Disability Services?

Documentation from a medical, licensed or certified professional must be provided to Disability Services to be eligible for services and reasonable accommodations. The documentation must be current (within the last 3 years) and state a diagnosis of a disability and the functional limitations it causes. If you have questions about documentation, please contact the Coordinator of Disability Services.

What if I can't take my test with disability accommodations at the regular time because I have a class right after?

If you can't take your test during class time because your use of an accommodation will conflict with another class, you must talk with your instructor to arrange a different time. You will also need to contact the Testing Center to schedule an appointment to take a test, if necessary.

What if I don't need disability accommodations in all of my classes? Can I just use accommodations for certain classes?

Yes. Because the structure of classes can be different, you may not need accommodations in all of your classes. You only need to request accommodations for the classes you need them in.

What role do my parents play in the disability support process?

Students who are 18 years old or older are legally recognized as adults. In this case, the student is responsible for their own accommodation requests and disability-related decisions.

Who can help me with disability services?

At Ozarka College, the Vice President of Student Services is designated as the Coordinator for Disability Services. The DS counselor assists students and faculty with any reasonable accommodations that need to be made to provide equal access to the college's programs

Who is eligible for disability services?

An individual is considered to have a "disability" if she/he has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity such as seeing, hearing, speaking, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, learning, caring for oneself, or working.

Will Disability Services monitor my medication once I arrive?

You are responsible to monitor your medications with a licensed professional in your own community. We encourage students to work with their licensed professional who is familiar with the issues you are facing as a college student. It is important to maintain regular appointments with this provider during your first few months at college because you might need changes in medication due to the change in requirements and environment.