Indiana University South Bend

Accessible Educational Services Office

Policies and Procedures for Faculty

Relative to Students with Disabilities

The role of the Accessible Educational Services Office (AES) is to ensure the civil rights of our students with disabilities while at the same time protecting institutional standards. The AES office is charged with reviewing relevant medical and psychometric materials to verify that a student's disability qualifies for accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). We are very aware that the issue of providing academic accommodations for students with ‘non-apparent’ disabilities (such as learning disabilities, autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, traumatic brain injuries, psychiatric or chronic health problems) is not universally understood. The office does all that it can to keep up with the relevant research and legal decisions, guide us in accepting or rejecting documentation, and recommend reasonable and appropriate accommodations.

**Accommodation Letters**

Students approved for academic accommodations are issued a letter from AES describing the accommodations. The student is responsible for delivering this letter to their instructors. Should a student request an accommodation without a letter, please inform the student of our office and have them contact us.

Letters will be comprised of the following:

1. A non-descriptive verification of the student's disability status
2. A list of appropriate accommodations
3. The responsibilities of the student and instructor
4. Instructions for accommodations relating to testing

**Referring Students to AES**

While AES hopes that all students with disabilities receive the necessary accommodations, it is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the AES office. All students admitted to IU South Bend are sent a disability ‘self-disclosure’ form. When the form is returned, the student will be made aware of the services IU South Bend offers regarding disabilities. A student may also disclose a disability to AES at any time during their career at IU South Bend.

College students are adults, and their **privacy is a major consideration.** If you believe a student may qualify for AES services, your referral to the AES office needs to be informational and supportive rather than directive or authoritarian.

AES recommends questions such as:

* Did you know that IU South Bend has a disabilities office?
* That is a concern that the people in the accessible educational office would happily discuss with you. Do you know where their office is located?

Since the student's privacy is a concern, it is recommended that this type of discussion occur in your office or discretely before or after class. Some students have a disability of which they are not aware of. Others are aware but choose not to disclose. Informing a student of the AES office in private is not a violation of privacy, as the individual will decide whether to go to the AES office for services. Of course, if a student has asked for a disability-related accommodation, a referral is appropriate and necessary.

**Evacuation of Persons with Disabilities**

Persons with disabilities must study and remember the features of each building they are in, including stairways, exits, phone locations, and elevator procedures. At times, assistance from others may be needed. Individuals with disabilities may seek assistance from others in their classes or offices if emergency evacuation becomes necessary.

Faculty members who have students with disabilities in their classes should discuss emergency evacuation ahead of time. If necessary, a classmate can be assigned to be a ‘buddy’ or escort.

In the event of an emergency, faculty and staff should contact security. Escorts should be instructed to accompany a student to a predetermined disabled evacuation point and remain there until emergency personnel determine the nature of the situation.

**General Information**

The best resource about a person with a disability is *that person* with the disability. Do **not** ignore them, as good, open communication can lead to positive solutions.

Some reminders: The Americans with Disabilities Act of 990 and Sections 504 Regulations of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are legislative laws pertaining to an individual's civil rights. Both are similar to the 1964 Civil Rights Act (race discrimination) and the 1972 Title IX Act (concerning gender discrimination). **Violations of any of these can lead to a federal investigation and punitive sanctions.** These laws are equal opportunity laws since they ban discrimination based on disability; there are no quotas and no guarantee of jobs, diplomas, grades, etc. For post-secondary institutions, the guiding principle is that ‘what you make available to any of your students *must* be made available to all of your students.’

Collaboration: If you have questions, you are encouraged to communicate and collaborate with the AES Office. Failure to accommodate or over-accommodation should be avoided. The AES professional staff will discuss positive approaches with you to ensure fair accommodations for students with disabilities.

Several Key Terms:

 **“Otherwise qualified”:** IU South Bend must maintain reasonable and defensible qualifications or requirements for admission, courses, degrees, etc. A disability is not a qualification.

 **Reasonable accommodations:** Accommodations are decided on a case-by-case basis. Ideally, they will be in concert with the civil rights of the person with a disability and protect the university's standards and expectations.

 **Essential components:** Those elements that are vital to a course, major, or degree and for which modification or accommodation would change its nature. We must be able to describe and defend these elements.

**Please direct all questions, concerns, and referrals to:**

**Accessible Educational Services**

Administration Building, Suite 175

Phone: 574-520-4460

Email: sbdss@iu.edu