

Just The FAQS

Frequently Asked Questions about Learning Disabilities Services at Indiana University Bloomington

Is there a special admissions process for students with disabilities?

No, there are no special admissions criteria at Indiana University for students with disabilities. The Office of Admissions evaluates all applications without regard to disability status. All students must meet the specified admissions criteria. Admission to the university is competitive. When you apply, professionals in the Office of Admissions will evaluate your past academic performance and determine whether you are ready for Indiana University's academic challenge.

What are the admission standards for Indiana University?

The admission standards can be found on the web at www.indiana.edu/~iuadmit along with application forms and other information about applying to the university. This web site includes information for prospective freshmen, transfer students, and graduate students. As an example, the factors considered in making freshman admission decisions include high school grade point average, the types of courses taken in high school, class rank, grade trends, and SAT or ACT scores. Indiana University considers each application on its individual merits and does not use formulas to make admission decisions. (If you do not have access to the web, the Office of Admissions may be contacted by e-mail to iuadmit@indiana.edu or by phone at 812/855-0661.)

Should I send documentation of my disability to the Office of Admissions?

No, all disability documentation should be sent directly to the Office of Disabled Student Services (see the "*How to Request Learning Disability Services*" handout included in this packet for details). All documentation is confidential and stored securely in our office, separate from the student's other university records.

Does Indiana University have a structured learning disabilities "program?"

No. Like many postsecondary institutions, Indiana University provides services to students with learning disabilities and/or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorders. This means that we provide academic adjustments (e.g., testing modifications) to offset the substantial limitations that result from the disorder so that the student with a disability has equal access to the educational environment. As such, students are responsible for taking an active role in requesting and arranging disability support services, and we work with them on continuing to develop their

self-advocacy skills. If you anticipate you will need an individualized program of support, you may want to consider a college with a comprehensive learning disabilities program (such programs generally charge extra fees to cover the cost of staffing).

If I have a disability and have received accommodations in the past, am I automatically eligible for services at Indiana University once I am admitted?

Having had disability support services in high school or at another postsecondary institution does not automatically mean you will have services at Indiana University. Your eligibility for services must be established with us before you begin receiving services here. It is your responsibility to notify the Office of Disabled Student Services that you are a student with a disability and to request any needed services. This is called self-identifying. This is very different from high school. You will need to submit appropriate documentation to support your need for accommodations to our office for review. To do so, follow the instructions in the "*How to Request Learning Disability Services*" handout included in this packet.

When should I self-identify and request services?

This should be done after you have received an offer of admission to Indiana University. At that point, submit the "*Request for Learning Disability Support Services*" form and your documentation to the Office of Disabled Student Services as per the instructions in the handout "*How to Request Learning Disability Services*" (included in this packet). Because of the time involved in the review process, we encourage you to contact us as soon after you have been admitted as possible. If you wait until you are enrolled to make your initial contact, the start of any services for which you may be eligible will be delayed until the review process has been completed.

Will I have all the same services I have had in the past?

Not necessarily. The services you receive here will be determined by an individualized review of your documentation and will be based on the current functional limitations that are shown to result in a substantial limitation in a major life activity (such as learning). The federal laws that govern accommodations and assistance for students with disabilities at the postsecondary level are quite different from those that apply to high school students (see "*The Big Difference*" handout included in this packet). Some of the services provided in high school may not be appropriate at the postsecondary level because of these differences.

What tests and information am I required to submit to the Office of Disabled Student Services to document my learning disability?

You will need to provide us with a comprehensive psychoeducational evaluation that is current (usually, this means it was completed within the last three years). Please refer to the “*Guidelines for Documentation: Learning Disabilities*” handout included in this packet for specific details about what is required.

I have an attention deficit disorder and take medication. Is that counted as a learning disability?

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorders (ADHD) are conditions that can interfere with learning, but they are not technically learning disabilities (unlike those with learning disabilities, students with ADHD have achievement scores consistent with their IQ scores). Students with ADHD may be eligible for disability support services, depending upon the severity of the disorder and current functional limitations. Please refer to the “*Guidelines for Documentation: Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders*” handout for specific details about the information we need to receive for review to determine eligibility.

Once I have been admitted to the university and have been determined to be eligible for disability support services, what services will be available to me?

The specific academic accommodations provided to a student with a disability are determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the student’s individual needs as supported by the documentation. The kinds of services we can provide may include, but are not limited to, testing modifications (e.g., extended time, use of a word processor with spell checker, a reader to read exam questions aloud or an audiotaped version of the exam, a scribe to record exam answers, etc.), permission to tape record class lectures/discussions, a backup set of class notes from a peer note taker, audio versions of texts, and referrals to other campus and community resources.

Some of my requirements in high school were waived. Will requirements be waived for me at Indiana University?

At the postsecondary level, reasonable adjustments, support services, and auxiliary aids are designed to offset the effects of the disability by providing effective access to academic programs and the university environment, but do not constitute a fundamental alteration of essential course or degree requirements. Therefore, such essential requirements are not waived. Occasionally, course substitutions may be granted on an individual basis depending upon the role of the course in the overall degree requirements. This decision is made by the academic department on a case-by-case basis following referral from the Learning Disabilities Coordinator. Be sure to carefully review the course requirements for the degree(s) in which you are interested. If you have concerns, discuss these with the Learning Disabilities Coordinator as early in your program as possible.

As a result of my learning disability, I have difficulty learning other languages. What does this mean for me at Indiana University?

If you select a major in the College of Arts and Sciences (COAS), study of a foreign language will be required as part of the degree requirements. For bachelor of arts degrees, students must demonstrate proficiency at the second-year, second-semester level – basically four semesters of language. For COAS bachelor of science degrees, the requirement varies and may range from two to four semesters. COAS does not waive the foreign language requirement, but does have a process through which students with learning disabilities that impact foreign language learning may request accommodations. Such students should meet with the Learning Disabilities Coordinator prior to enrolling in their first language course at the university to discuss the accommodation process. In general, the process begins with a referral to an assistant dean in COAS. The student will then attempt the language course (attend class regularly, do the assigned homework, attend instructor’s office hours, etc.) and stay in contact with the dean regarding their progress. The dean may assist with invoking a pass/fail option for the course, or a late withdrawal, if needed. The dean will also discuss with the student the option of petitioning the COAS Committee on Academic Accommodations if the student needs to request a substitution for part of the foreign language sequence.

Do you provide tutors?

No, we do not provide tutors as an accommodation. However, there are a number of helpful resources on campus. The Writing Tutorial Service (www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts) offers free help to students in any stage of the writing process. The Student Academic Center (www.indiana.edu/~sac) provides free peer tutors in the academic support centers located in three of the dormitories. In addition, some departments (e.g., math) have study tables or review sessions where students can seek additional help. If a student wants to hire a private tutor to work with them one-on-one in a particular subject, we will help them generate ideas on how to recruit a tutor. Our office also keeps a list of a few people in the community who are available to be hired as general tutors (reading help, etc.) or as proofreaders.

Are there resources available to help me develop more effective study strategies?

Yes. The Student Academic Center (www.indiana.edu/~sac) offers a variety of options which include workshops, courses for credit, and individualized academic assessment and assistance. All of these options are available at no charge and students can select an option which will best meet their needs.