

ACCESSIBILITY AT ISU: GUIDANCE FOR STAFF AND FACULTY ADVISING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Things advisers can keep in mind as they work with students with disabilities.

- Advisers should not ask directly if a student has a disability and students are under no obligation to share this information.
- Advisers could consider asking “Is there anything I need to know to help you be more successful in college?”
- If a student does mention a disability, chronic medical or psychological diagnosis, or that they had an IEP or 504 plan in high school, please refer the student to Student Disability Resources (SDR) if they are not already registered with the office.

Remember, any information, documentation, or issues related to the student’s disability, including a student’s notification letter, must be considered confidential and cannot be shared without the student’s written permission. Any discussion that you have with a student about their disability and/or accommodations should be in a private setting.

If a student does disclose a disability or medical situation, there are a number of issues to consider. Students or advisers should feel free to contact SDR for additional guidance.

- Does the condition or medication impact alertness, eye strain, or overall fatigue? Is the student at his/her best in the early morning, mid-afternoon or evening? Does the student need a balance between courses in terms of work load and amount of reading?
- While a balanced schedule is important for all students, it is essential for students with learning disabilities. For example, a student with a serious language based learning disability should avoid taking four courses that require extensive reading and writing. Similarly, a student who has difficulty with certain test formats should select teachers that use a variety of evaluation techniques.
- Does the schedule need to allow for breaks in between classes for meals or snacks, blood sugar checks, medications, or other personal needs? Does the student have routine medical appointments that cannot be altered? For example, dialysis treatment or weekly infusions at set times. Assist the student in creating a schedule that meets the student’s medical and disability needs.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Student Disability Resources, 1076 Student Services Building, Ames, Iowa 50011

(515) 294-7220, Fax: (515) 294-2397, disabilityresources@iastate.edu, www.sdr.dso.iastate



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- Students who anticipate absenteeism due to medical concerns should be encouraged to discuss their situation with instructors before registering for classes. Students should make arrangements with instructors at the beginning of the semester to ensure that class requirements are met despite absenteeism due to chronic disabilities. A lighter course load should also be discussed as an option for students concerned about missing a significant number of classes.
- Is attention span/concentration an issue? Does pain impact how long the student can comfortably sit without needing to stand? Fifty minute classes may be better than 80 minute classes or evening classes.
- Can the student physically get from one class to another in the necessary time? Are longer breaks needed between classes?
- Will the student be using extended time on tests? Suggest no more than two back-to-back classes. Have the student consider a balance of classes between MWF and TR.
- Is there a possibility of taking a lighter academic load or what we call reduced course load? Students with severe disabilities may wish to take minimum full-time loads, or even attend part-time. Taking summer classes might help them keep on track. Advise students to talk with financial services if needed, but respect any decision to take a minimum load. Also, ISU policy does not require 12 hours to live in the residence halls.

Be careful not to jump to conclusions about a person's vocational capabilities based on your perception of the limitations imposed by that person's disability. Consult SDR for information about support available in the community which enables students to pursue the career of their choice.



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