

Student Disability Services FAQs

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I'm not sure what college I want to attend. What services will SDS at the University of Memphis provide?

In addition to the disability-related accommodations a student needs, SDS at the University of Memphis can provide students with additional services such as math tutoring, one-on-one assistance with paper writing and study skills, as well as executive functioning and time management skills through weekly meetings with a Coordinator or Graduate Assistant.

What are the admissions requirements for SWDs?

There are no separate admissions criteria for people with disabilities. The admissions criteria of the University of Memphis must be met by each person who applies.

Are there any scholarships for students with disabilities?

There are two scholarships for students with disabilities at the University of Memphis: the Exchange Club Shackelford Scholarship and the William P. Roberts Scholarship. Both are primarily for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. More information may be found on the website: <http://www.memphis.edu/scholarships/> In addition, some students may qualify for tuition assistance through Vocational Rehabilitation. For more information on Tennessee Vocational Rehabilitation, please visit their website: <http://www.tn.gov/humanserv/rehab/vrs.html> Students from others states should contact a vocational rehabilitation office in their state.

Does the University have accessible dorm rooms?

Physically accessible rooms are available. Requests are made through Residence Life, but students requesting accessible rooms must be registered with Student Disability Services. Additional information may be obtained through their website: <http://www.memphis.edu/reslife/>

I don't have a physical or visible disability. Can I still register with SDS?

SDS assists students with a variety of disabilities. Some students have hearing, visual and mobility impairments, while other students have psychological, cognitive, or emotional disorders. The largest population the office assists is students with ADHD and/or learning disabilities.

What is the cost for services at SDS?

The University of Memphis is fortunate to offer tutoring and coaching services to students registered with SDS at no additional cost.

Do you work with a lot of students with ADHD?

Do you work with a lot of students with chronic illness?

Do you work with a lot of students with psychiatric disorders?

During the 2010-2011 academic year, there were 522 students registered on the LD/ADHD/ASD caseload. About 80% of those students were diagnosed with ADHD. There were 320 students registered with the office who identified as having psychiatric disorders or chronic illnesses.

What kinds of accommodations are available?

As always, accommodations are decided on a case-by-case and course-by-course basis. One student's needs may not be the same as another student. Similarly, what is reasonable and appropriate in one course, may not be in another. Without specific documentation and a meeting with a staff member, SDS may not be able to determine what is and is not reasonable or appropriate.

My best friend and I both have the same diagnosis, but he gets note takers, and I don't.

Why can't I have them, too?

Accommodations are as varied as the students registered with SDS, so the functional limitations one student has may not be the same as the functional limitations of another. Each student has accommodations based on his or her own specific needs, the nature of the course that is being taken, and the documentation he or she has on file with the office. One student may have documentation that supports his or her need for accommodations, whereas another may not. To find out more, check with the Coordinator and see what other accommodations might be appropriate based on the information on file. It may be that additional documentation is needed to determine if other accommodations are appropriate.

Can I use my laptop for note taking?

Can I take my test on a computer?

Students are encouraged to meet with their Coordinator to determine if the use of laptops or computers are reasonable or appropriate accommodations based on their documentation and the essential requirements of the class.

I just got diagnosed with ADHD and I've never used accommodations, not even in high school. Can I still get accommodations in college?

It is possible that accommodations are appropriate, even without a history of accommodation usage. Speak with the LD/ADHD/ASD Coordinator about what information will be needed to register with SDS.

I haven't been successful in learning or completing a foreign language. I have an LD, so I can get out of that, right?

While not all majors at the University of Memphis require a foreign language, some do. If the foreign language requirement is essential for the degree, the student will have to take the foreign language. If the student wants to pursue a foreign language substitution, he or she should meet with the appropriate Coordinator to discuss the process of requesting a foreign language substitution. After the meeting, SDS may recommend a foreign language substitution to the Dean of the College or School in which the student is enrolled. The Dean then makes the final decision and will provide a list of classes that should be taken in lieu of a foreign language.

Can you make my math requirement go away?

The University of Memphis considers math to be an essential general education requirement for all degree programs.

I need extra time on the (GRE, TEAS, PRAXIS, LSAT, MCAT, etc). Is that possible?

Applications for standardized tests are typically done online; however, students who need testing accommodations may need to submit a paper application. Be advised that some processes for approving accommodations can take as long as TWO MONTHS. It is important that the student makes sure his or her information is up-to-date before submitting the application. For the applications needing verification from SDS, the student will need to set an appointment with the appropriate Coordinator to discuss the accommodations needed and additional information SDS may need to fill out on the application. If a letter is required, SDS will write it and give it to the student to be included with the application.

I don't really need accommodations. I really just need someone to help me stay on track and accountable. Is that okay?

Many students say they get the best help from SDS through weekly meetings. Students are invited to schedule an appointment any time to discuss important issues, or they can set weekly meetings with the Coordinator or the Graduate Assistant for the assigned caseload.

I don't want anybody to know I'm registered with SDS. Is that okay?

SDS places great emphasis on maintaining the confidentiality of students; however, there may be some instances where the student would want others to know. For example, if the student wants to use accommodations on tests, he or she will need to speak with the professor and present him or her with a memo from the office. These memos let the professor know that the student is registered with SDS and outline any approved accommodations. These memos are for information purposes only and do not include a student's diagnoses, unless the student requests that information to be included.

SDS will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of all students registered with the office. Only those faculty or staff with a need-to-know will be informed of a student's registration with SDS.

Will my transcript/diploma indicate that I was registered with SDS or used accommodations?

There will be no identifiers on transcripts or diplomas that a student was registered with SDS, used accommodations, or utilized services through SDS.

I'm afraid my professors will grade me harder if I use my extended time.

Professors may not grade any student on a scale different from other students. Accommodations are not “extra help”, they are like a step-ladder one might use to change a light bulb. They are tools a student uses in an academic environment. Accommodations are not designed to give a student an edge over other students. In fact, the accommodations should make the student’s experience an equal one to that of his or her peers.

I have a reading disorder. What should I major in?

A person with a disability does not fit into a specific major because of their disability; rather, the student makes the disability fit into what they want to do. With reasonable accommodations and some creative thinking, accommodations can accentuate college experiences for students. A student with a disability should approach career choices based on personal interests, skill levels, likes and dislikes.

I have a math disorder and want to major in engineering. Can I do that?

No person should be advised out of a major or career path they have chosen simply because of a disability. SDS will, however, talk with students frankly about the field they want to work in and the practicalities of majoring in that field, the coursework involved and nuances of working in that field. We will work with each student on appropriate accommodations and make sure they are structuring enough study time, and working with tutors.

I need access to disabled parking. Where do I go?

“Designated accessible parking areas are available to persons with physical disabilities who have a registered University of Memphis parking permit and a valid disabled parking permit issued to the student or employee by a State Department of Safety. No additional fee will be assessed to STUDENTS for physically disabled parking permits. The priority parking permit fee will be assessed to FACULTY/STAFF for physically disabled parking permits. This permit authorizes the permit holder to park in accessible parking spaces in priority parking lots and in other non-reserved, general permit parking spaces on campus.” (from the University of Memphis Parking Services website)

Do you provide on-campus transportation between classes for SWD?

SDS does not transport students between classes, but may be able to provide transportation across the Southern Avenue train tracks to the Rec Center or to classes for students who use

wheelchairs or have other mobility issues. Transportation across the tracks is determined on a case-by-case basis.

Will SDS find and hire a personal attendant for me?

If the personal attendant is needed to perform specific tasks in the classroom as a disability-related accommodation, SDS will provide a classroom attendant. Typically, the student should provide for his or her own attendant to assist with personal, daily activities.

What is “Assistive Technology”?

Assistive Technology (or AT) is any tool used to help people become more self-sufficient. Two examples of assistive technology are text-to-speech and speech-to-text software. To create text-to-speech, SDS can scan documents and materials into a computer and the computer will read the text to the student. With speech-to-text software, students talk into a microphone and the information is typed into a computer document. AT reduces the need for another person to assist a student with whatever task they have, making the student more independent.

I am pregnant. What can SDS do to help me?

A student who is pregnant is not considered to be a person with a disability; however, a student who is experiencing complications due to pregnancy may be eligible for certain assistance, as would any student with a temporary disability. These actions are determined on a case-by-case basis.

English is a second language for me, and I do not fully understand my instructors. Will you provide me with note takers or extended time on exams?

Students who are English language learners (aka ELL or ESL), are not typically eligible for services or accommodations through SDS, unless they are also a person with a disability.