

Accommodative Services

FAQs for Parents of Students with Disabilities

What is my role as a parent of a college student with disabilities?

Parental involvement changes as students transition from high school to college, and your involvement should take place within the boundaries set by law as well as the best interest of your child, who is beginning the transition to adulthood. Thus, your involvement as it pertains to the college mainly involves advising and encouraging your student from the sidelines. Your student needs to begin learning self-advocacy skills, if they have not done so already. This includes asking for help from Accommodative Services (and other campus resources) and reporting any issues or concerns. Only in situations where the health and safety of the student is threatened should a parent become directly involved. Be assured that the Accommodative Services office is available and responsive to students who reach out for assistance. We love working with students!

How do services for college students with disabilities differ from services provided in high school?

The laws protecting students with disabilities are different at the high school and post-secondary level. In general terms, high schools are guided by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) while colleges must adhere to the guidelines established by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The guidelines for high schools are designed to promote student *success*, while the laws guiding colleges require that students have *access* to an equitable education.

It is not the college's responsibility to identify and provide services to students with disabilities; rather, the student must self-identify to the college, and the college must then provide reasonable academic adjustments to qualified students. These adjustments are intended to ensure equal opportunity for students with disabilities. However, accommodations cannot fundamentally alter the essential requirements of a course or curriculum.

How and when can my student request academic accommodations?

New students can register by using this [link to the Accommodative Services page](#) on Union's website. Students should input their basic identifying information and upload their most recent psychoeducational evaluation and documentation to support their request for accommodations. For first year students entering for the fall term, applications will start to be reviewed after spring term ends in mid-June. We will continue to review applications and documentation throughout the summer. It is best to make accommodation requests several weeks in advance of the start of the term so that there is plenty of time for requests to be evaluated.

What kind of documentation does my student need to submit?

Documentation submitted to support a request for accommodations should: 1) measure student aptitude, achievement, and information processing; 2) include recommendations for accommodations to facilitate learning; 3) be conducted by a qualified professional; 4) be current (defined as no more than three years old). *Ideally, the qualified professional will have conducted the evaluation using adult measures with a student ages 16+.

Can my student sign a waiver that will allow me to speak with Accommodative Services?

A college student can sign a release giving staff permission to share information with parents. However, students themselves are required to handle any matters related to our office, including requesting accommodations and reporting issues. We do not work with the parent in place of the student.

In high school, teachers kept me informed of how my student was doing. Will a professor contact me if my student is having difficulties in class?

In college, students are responsible for seeking assistance if they are having problems. Parents will NOT be contacted regarding grades or any other academic issues, and parents should not contact professors. Parents need to speak directly with their student with any questions regarding academic progress or concerns.

How can I help my student who is struggling in classes even with accommodations?

Ask your student if they are using all of the accommodations granted. You can also encourage them to go to the Accommodative Services office to ask for assistance. In addition, Union College has several resources for students who are struggling academically. These include the Writing Center, the Office of Academic Achievement, the Language Center at Schaffer Library, class deans, and academic advisors. Students should also seek help from their professors if they are struggling with course material.

Are tutoring services available?

Tutoring is not an academic accommodation. However, individual academic departments on campus offer Supplemental Instruction (SI) for challenging classes. Your student should contact the academic departments directly, or the Office of Academic Achievement, to find out the SI schedule for each term, and for referrals to peer tutors who may be available. In addition, professional staff members and student mentors are available to work with students on time management, organization and study skills.