



OASIS

Parent Handbook

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This handbook is directed primarily toward parents of students with disabilities; however, we hope it is equally useful to high school teachers, guidance counselors and students. It introduces some of the legal and philosophical changes that occur for students when transitioning from the secondary to postsecondary level of their education at East Stroudsburg University.

Our Mission

East Stroudsburg University and the Office of Accessible Services Individualized for Students are committed to providing equal educational access to otherwise qualified students with disabilities and recognizes the responsibility of the university community to provide such access and full participation in any university program or activity.

Our Task

OASIS is responsible for the administration of ESU's commitment to equal access and full participation for all students who have documented disabilities or medical conditions, in academic areas and other programs sponsored by the University. This includes providing appropriate accommodations pursuant to the legal requirements in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the American with Disabilities Act (1990), and the ADA Amendments Act (2008, ADAAA).

Our Philosophy

OASIS values a positive student-centered approach to academic accommodations characterized by self-advocacy, student learning, and equal access for all students, while carefully maintaining the confidentiality of each student. By utilizing best practices in the field, education and outreach to the ESU community, OASIS fosters access for students, attitudes that reflect both an awareness of disability issues and principles of universal design, and a philosophy encouraging an environment of accessibility by removing barriers to ensure opportunities for academic success based on a student's abilities, not their disabilities.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or veteran's status in its programs and activities in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations

Staff Listing

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Introduction

Once students turn 18 years old, they are legally an adult, responsible for their own actions and decisions. As they leave secondary school to enter college, fundamental changes occur with respect to their education as people with disabilities. Students attending public schools have, for the most part, a legal entitlement to an education, regardless of a disability. They must also receive their education in a least restrictive environment possible.

In college, students have a civil right to have access to their education. The fundamental principle at work is the assumption of integration and that students, not the institutions, are responsible for themselves.

We hope this handbook will help you better understand some of those distinctions and provide tips on how best to support your son or daughter in college. The following table explains the primary differences in student rights and responsibilities between secondary and postsecondary education.

Transitioning to Postsecondary Education

What is the intent of the law?

Secondary Education:

IDEA- To provide a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment to students with disabilities.

504- To ensure that no otherwise qualified person with a disability is denied access to, benefits of, or is subjected to discrimination in any program or activity provided by any public institution or entity.

Postsecondary Education: *To ensure that no otherwise qualified person with a disability will be denied access to, benefits of, or is subjected to discrimination in any program or activity provided by any public institution or entity.*

Who is covered under the law?

Secondary Education: All infants, children, and youth requiring special education services until age 21 or graduation from high school

Postsecondary Education: *All qualified individuals with disabilities who meet the entry level criteria of the university and who can document the existence of the disability as defined by the ADA.*

Who is responsible for identifying and documenting the need?

Secondary Education: School districts are responsible for identification, evaluation, and planning educational services at no expense to the parent or individual.

Postsecondary Education: *Students are responsible for self-identification and for obtaining disability documentation from a professional who is qualified to assess their particular disability. The student, not the institution, assumes the cost of evaluation.*

Who is responsible for initiating service delivery?

Secondary Education: School districts are responsible for identifying students with disabilities and providing special instruction, individualized education plans, and/or accommodations.

Postsecondary Education: *Students are responsible for notifying the Office of Disabilities staff of their disability and of their need for accommodations. Accommodation, not special education, are provided on a semester by semester basis in order for students with disabilities to have equal access to the institution's programs, services and activities.*

(Modified from materials prepared by Kay McVey, PROJECT CONNECT, Henderson State University and the WNY Collegiate Consortium of Disability Advocates website: <http://www.ccdanet.org/>)

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between entitled to education and right to equal access to education?

Unlike elementary and secondary schools, postsecondary education offers *access to* rather than *entitlement to* academic programs. In 1975, Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. This act, commonly known as Public Law 94-142, provided that any child with a disability was “entitled to a free and appropriate education” in public school systems. Fundamentally, 94-142 and its successors (including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 and IDEA Improvement Act of 1997 and 2004) said that public schools would determine what was most appropriate for your son or daughter’s education. They were then required to provide that education.

At the postsecondary level, the rules have changed. Public Law 94-142 and IDEA no longer apply, including the required IEP (Individualized Education Plan/Program) and 504 Plans.

In 1990, Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act. Modeled on section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, ADA is a civil rights law. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability as long as the person is otherwise qualified. In the case of public-funded colleges and universities, ADA affirms the right of a student with a disability to a level playing field.

This means that East Stroudsburg University must ensure access to all students who are otherwise qualified. Access includes ramps, elevators, and wide parking spaces as well as information and technology. Therefore, East Stroudsburg University must make reasonable accommodations for students’ disabilities in order that they may be able to demonstrate their ability. However, civil rights laws and reasonable accommodations are in no way intended to guarantee success. At most, students can expect a more equal chance to do the same work as their peers.

Can a postsecondary school deny my daughter or son admission because of a disability?

No. If your daughter or son meets the essential requirements for admission, a postsecondary school may not deny their admission simply because of a disability.

What is meant by reasonable accommodations?

Reasonable accommodations are made in order to level the playing field for qualified individuals with disabilities. As much as possible, accommodations are designed to minimize the functional limitations of an individual in a given task. These adjustments permit students with disabilities the opportunity to learn by removing barriers that do not compromise academic standards.

In providing an accommodation, ESU is not required to lower or affect substantial modifications to essential requirements. ESU does not have to make modifications that would fundamentally alter the nature of a service, program, or activity or would result in undue financial or administrative burdens. Also, ESU does not have to provide personal attendants, individually prescribed devices, readers for personal use or study, or other devices or services of a personal nature, such as tutoring and typing.

Who will manage my son or daughter’s educational services?

Your son or daughter is ultimately responsible for managing their own education, understanding functional limitations, and requesting necessary accommodations.

As adults, all students go through a process of learning about themselves. They develop the skills of self-determination, including confidence to advocate for the things they need in order to thrive and achieve.

OASIS strives to promote this kind of self-knowledge. It is in the development of these skills that OASIS can best guide students with disabilities in their educational growth. These skills are critical, because it is the students, not OASIS staff,

who will approach instructors and other staff to request the accommodations that are reasonable for them to receive. These are the skills all students need when they leave college and move successfully into their chosen careers.

What is the process for receiving accommodations?

Incoming freshmen and transfer students may apply for accommodations once admitted to East Stroudsburg University. Current students may apply at any time. It is your student's responsibility to identify themselves to OASIS and present proper documentation of a disability if he or she would like to receive accommodations.

Application

The Public Accommodation Request Form can be found at www.esu.edu/oasis. If assistance completing the form is required, please feel free to contact OASIS. A completed application will not be processed until documentation is received.

Documentation

Students seeking services from OASIS on the basis of a previously diagnosed disability/condition will be asked to submit documentation that verifies their eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the ADA Amendments Act.

All documentation submitted is considered confidential. OASIS will not return documentation. Please keep copies for your records.

Submission of materials

The application form and documentation must be submitted on line at www.esu.edu/oasis. All documentation must be in .pdf or .doc file format. If you do not have access to a scanner or FAX, you can utilize a free app that converts images into pdf file (e.g. CamScanner).

The Review Process

The review process typically takes up to 2 weeks. In particularly busy times, such as the start of a new semester, this process may take longer. Students will be notified once the application and documentation have been reviewed.

Intake Interview

Once a student is notified of their eligibility for an intake interview, an appointment is scheduled to meet a faculty member of OASIS. The meeting will be held during the first semester the student identifies as needing accommodations/access and attends classes. The disability service provider will review with the student their self-disclosure form and documentation, gather any additional information necessary, and determine the appropriate accommodations for the student.

Accommodation Letters

If approved, the disability specialist will complete an Accommodation Letter for students to give to their instructor. This letter informs the instructor that the student is registered with OASIS and is eligible for the specific accommodations listed. The student is responsible to activate their academic accommodations and authorize the distribution of their accommodation letter to their professors each semester.

How has my role as a parent changed?

At the postsecondary level, both parents and students experience a transition. A parent's role shifts to a subtle hand of guidance when it comes to the process involved in the student's education. Encourage the student to take responsibility for academic concerns and limitations. Both the parent(s) and student should acknowledge the disability and the limitations that may result in an educational setting. This will allow the student to identify areas in which they should consider accommodations to level the playing field. It will also make it easier for the student to convey their requests for accommodations to instructors or anyone from whom they may seek assistance. Encourage the student to contact OASIS where they will be coached on how to proceed in obtaining reasonable accommodations.

What do you mean you cannot disclose any information to me about my son or daughter's services?

Once students, whether they are 18 years old or not, enroll in a postsecondary institution, they become the sole guardian of all records maintained by that institution. Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1976 (FERPA), students have the right to access their own records upon written request. The parent or guardian does not share that right. This means that parents do not have legal access to their student's grades, transcripts, or any information concerning the services being provided through OASIS. This information is confidential. However, we understand that students may wish to share educational information with parents and guests. Students wishing to grant access to their educational records to parents and/or guests can do so by completing the FERPA Disclosure Form at the Student Enrollment Center in Zimbar Hall. The only time a student's record may be disclosed without written consent would be to comply with a subpoena or in an emergency situation where the health and safety of the student or another individual is threatened.

Note from OASIS

The staff of OASIS hope that this handbook has been a helpful tool in preparing you and your student for a successful transition to East Stroudsburg University.

Adapted from

- Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities from U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, September 2011
- Toto, I Have A Feeling We're Not In High School Any More by Dan Burke from The University of Montana-Missoula Disability Services for Students, 2003