INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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WHO HAS TO PAY FOR A NEW EVALUATION IF I NEED ONE?

Neither your high school nor Albright is required to conduct or pay for a new evaluation to document your disability and need for accommodation. If one is required, then you will have to pay for or find funding to pay for an evaluation by an appropriate professional. Insurance may cover disability assessments, and if you are eligible for services through your state vocational rehabilitation agency you may qualify for an evaluation at no cost. You can locate your state vocational rehabilitation agency at www.albright.edu/vocation. The ALC may be able to provide helpful referral information.

ONCE ALCBRIGHT HAS RECEIVED THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTATION FROM ME, WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT?

Albright will review your request in light of the documentation and the essential requirements for the relevant program, and will arrange to have you meet with the staff to discuss your needs. Arriving at a final plan must be a team effort between you and the College. The ALC strives to complete this process as soon as possible (usually within two weeks), but keep in mind that at peak times of the semester or for less commonly accommodated disabilities the process may take a little longer. The earlier you initiate the process, the sooner you will receive the services you need.
Albright College has a long tradition of quality liberal arts education, and we have welcomed students with disabilities and/or medical conditions for many years. The College ensures that people with disabilities have equal opportunity to participate in its programs, events and activities. Students with disabilities are considered for admission on the same basis as all other applicants and must meet the same academic requirements.

At Albright College, disability services are coordinated through the Academic Learning Center (ALC), which handles all requests for academic accommodations and makes referrals to other College units as needed. The ALC is committed to providing timely assessment of each student’s needs and promotes self-advocacy and intentional learning among all students, including disabled students.

All students with disabilities are encouraged to take time to reach a better understanding of their disability and how it affects their learning by talking with parents, teachers, doctors, psychologists and counselors. Understanding your disability will help you develop better strategies to overcome it. Students are also encouraged to disclose their needs and use services they qualify for—not doing so means not using all the tools you have available to succeed.

Colleges approach disability-related needs and requests differently than K-12 schools do. The following questions and answers incorporate information from the federal pamphlet Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education.

Q: NOW THAT I’M ENTERING COLLEGE, WILL I SEE DIFFERENCES IN MY RIGHTS AND HOW THEY ARE ADDRESSED?

Yes. Legal requirements differ from those in force during high school. For instance, while Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act requires school districts to identify an individual’s educational needs and provide any necessary special education and related aids and services, colleges are not required to identify you as having a disability or to clinically assess the functional impact of your disability in the educational environment. Colleges must provide accommodations that ensure equal access to programs, events and activities only to those who disclose their disability, make an accommodation request, and sufficiently document their disability and request. In other words, the law respects your privacy and responsibilities as an adult.

Q: DO I HAVE TO INFORM ALBRIGHT THAT I HAVE A DISABILITY?

No, only if you want the school to provide accommodations in response to your disability requests after your acceptance to the College. Even your parents will have limited access to information disclosed to the College, so if you want them to know certain things about your career at Albright, including your accommodation request and clinical documentation or your academic status, you will need to sign a waiver allowing information to be shared with them. While disclosing your disability and educational needs to the College is voluntary, keep in mind that requesting necessary accommodations may improve your chances of succeeding.

Q: WHAT MUST I DO TO REQUEST AN ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION AT ALBRIGHT?

You must inform the ALC that you have a disability and are requesting academic accommodation by submitting current and comprehensive clinical documentation of your disability. You will be responsible for knowing and following Albright’s policies and procedures, which can be obtained by contacting the ALC or accessing them online at www.albright.edu/academics/alc-disabilities. Keep in mind that academic accommodations in the college arena are not set up automatically. Students must request an interview with the ALC to review clinical documentation and their specific requests. Assuming you are eligible for accommodations, you must register for services each semester and complete the official forms for faculty notification. Some academic accommodations take more time to provide than others; please request them as early as possible to help ensure that they will be available when you need them.

Q: WHAT ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS DOES ALBRIGHT PROVIDE?

The answer will depend on the functional impact of your disability in the educational environment. Some common examples of accommodations are note-taking services, reduced course loads, extended time or low-distraction environment for testing, and adaptive software or hardware. Determining specific accommodations is an interactive process that relies on several variables: clinical and comprehensive documentation, your opinions and experience as to what accommodation would best serve your educational needs, and the College’s determination of what reasonably satisfies both the functional impact of your disability and the integrity of the academic course or program.

Q: DO I HAVE TO PROVE THAT I HAVE A DISABILITY TO OBTAIN AN ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION?

Albright requires you to provide current and comprehensive documentation of a disability by a credentialed professional or medical practitioner, such as a licensed psychologist, who is qualified to address the history and functional consequences of your disability. A student’s high school IEP may be helpful, but cannot be the basis of accommodation decisions in college, and even clinical evaluations may sometimes be too old to be of current relevance.

Please keep in mind that accommodations do not always travel from one environment to the next. In high school, accommodations may have been called “modifications,” but cannot be the basis of accommodation in college. Albright's approach to academic accommodations is different from high school, where accommodations may have been set up automatically. Instead, Albright requires students to actively seek out accommodations and prove their necessity through documentation. This process ensures that accommodations are provided based on individual need, rather than on historical practices or assumptions.