Johnson State College is committed to providing support to all students. Students with disabilities are provided with appropriate accommodations and other services to allow equal access to all Johnson State College programs.
Philosophy & Vision Statement

Johnson State College has a long-standing tradition of providing accommodations and services for students with disabilities in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which states, “No otherwise qualified handicapped individual shall, solely by the reason of his handicap be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” Under the provisions of Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, colleges and universities must make reasonable accommodations in the academic program to allow maximum participation by students with disabilities. It is, therefore, the policy of Johnson State College not to discriminate against qualified students, and thus to provide reasonable accommodations to such students, while maintaining the integrity of academic programs.

Services for students with disabilities are provided through the Learning Specialist and the staff of the Academic Support Services Program (ASSP). In addition to the principles stated above, ASSP seeks to promote self-determination and personal responsibility for students with disabilities by educating them about their rights and responsibilities so that they can make informed choices in order to meet or exceed the standards expected of all students at Johnson State College.
What is a disability?

Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a person is “disabled” if he or she:

1) has a physical or mental condition that substantially limits one or more major life activities;
2) has a record of such a physical or mental condition; and/or
3) is regarded as having such an impairment.

Major life activities can include caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. Examples of physical disabilities can include arthritis, blindness/low vision, cerebral palsy, deafness/hearing impairments, multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injuries, and traumatic brain injuries. Examples of other disabilities may include AD/HD, learning disabilities, and emotional/psychological disorders.

How will my college experience be different from high school?

Unlike elementary and secondary schools, post-secondary education offers access rather than entitlement to academic programs. This means that as a student with a disability you are not automatically entitled to a college education. The law does guarantee you the opportunity to pursue a college education through equal access to academic programs provided by reasonable accommodations granted by the college. You must still complete the same requirements with the same degree of mastery as students without disabilities. At most, students with disabilities can expect a more equal chance to do the same work as their peers, i.e., a more level playing field on which to compete. Moreover, in higher education you are considered an adult, responsible for your own actions and decisions—and free to make them; the institution is not responsible for you. What
this means is that the college will not bring its programs and services to you, as was probably done in high school. You must access these services and advocate for yourself. The Learning Specialist and staff of the Academic Support Services Program stand ready to help, assist, and encourage you, but you must take the responsibility for making it happen.

What is a “reasonable accommodation?”

Reasonable accommodations are changes in the learning environment that permit students with disabilities to compete on an equal footing with their peers at the College. Accommodations modify non-essential elements of academic programs and allow students with disabilities the opportunity to learn by removing barriers that do not compromise academic standards. The College may deny accommodations that reduce academic standards, are unreasonably expensive, or impossible to administer. Current and specific documentation which verifies a student’s disability and the limitations it imposes is required before accommodations can be provided.

How do I access accommodations?

The Academic Support Services Program (ASSP) coordinates and provides reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities through the Learning Specialist. Accommodations are individualized to address specific functional limitations resulting from a disability. There must be a logical link between the functional limitation and the accommodation. Students must “self-identify” as a person with a disability and provide current and specific documentation. The process must begin, therefore, with the student contacting the Learning Specialist, preferably at the beginning of their first semester (documentation should be sent prior to this). There is no automatic referral process. The Learning Specialist
verifies the disability and determines how functional limitations affect academic work through discussion with the student and review of documentation. Together, they decide which courses the student needs accommodations for and what those accommodations should be. A letter is delivered to the appropriate faculty members by the student stating which accommodations the student is entitled to. It is the student’s responsibility to arrange these accommodations with faculty members. Academic Support Services staff are available to help if necessary. Students must meet with the Learning Specialist at the beginning of each semester to discuss what accommodations they may need for that semester’s courses. Frequently, students arrange follow-up meetings with the Learning Specialist or other ASSP staff for general check-in or to access other support, such as tutoring and academic skills help. (see “What other help can I get if I’m having trouble in a particular class?” on page 8). Accommodations are provided at no cost to students.

How do I access accommodations if I’m an EDP student and can’t come to campus?

In general, EDP students access accommodations in a similar manner to on-campus students, by submitting current and specific documentation to the Learning Specialist as early as possible in their college careers (see “How do I access accommodations?” above). The Learning Specialist requires an initial phone interview to review documentation and discuss accommodations; subsequent meetings can be via email. The Learning Specialist delivers accommodation letters to EDP students, usually via email, with copies sent to the student. Like campus-based students, EDP students must contact the Learning Specialist at the beginning of each semester to discuss what accommodations they may need for that semester’s
courses. For JSC EDP courses which meet at CCV, EDP students arrange accommodations with the JSC Learning Specialist as described above. EDP students taking CCV courses (or courses at other institutions) must submit copies of their documentation to the other institution’s disability coordinator and follow that institution’s procedures for arranging accommodations.

What is “current & specific documentation?”

Documentation of a disability must include a diagnostic evaluation by a qualified professional, completed preferably within the past 3 years. It should substantiate the student’s need for accommodations based on his or her current level of functioning in an educational setting. It should include an assessment and specific diagnosis based on test results, as well as specific recommendations for accommodations and the reasons for them. A school plan such as an IEP or 504 Plan by itself is insufficient documentation, though it can be included as part of a more comprehensive evaluation. Likewise, accommodations received in the past do not guarantee future accommodations. If documentation is missing, out-of-date, or insufficient, students must bear the cost of providing additional documentation.

What if I don’t want any accommodations?

Students correctly want to feel that the work they do in school is of equal value to that of their classmates. They often express discomfort at feeling like they are getting some advantage others may not have. While the Americans with Disabilities Act protects the civil rights of qualified students with disabilities, it also affirms their right to refuse any accommodation. Moreover, as adults, students are in control of their academic career and
civil rights, and can make their own choices. If a student does not request accommodations and performs poorly without them, they must then live with the consequences of unsatisfactory academic performance. Since college courses cover more material, move faster, and are generally more difficult than high school classes, it often makes sense to make use of reasonable accommodations early in a student’s academic career. Later, when a student is more accustomed to the demands of the college’s academic environment, accommodations may not be needed as often.

What types of accommodations are available?

Examples of available accommodations at Johnson State College may include but are not limited to:

- extended testing times
- note-takers
- alternate test location
- use of a calculator
- texts in electronic format
- sign language interpreters
- use of a computer for essay exams
- evaluation of in-class assignments can exclude spelling
- assistive technology (TextHelp, Smart Pens, Inspiration, Dragon NaturallySpeaking, etc.)

These are decided upon by the Learning Specialist and the student and generally arranged for by the student and the faculty member involved (see “How do I access accommodations?”).
Can I get evaluated for a learning disability or AD/HD through the College?

Johnson State College does not provide diagnostic evaluations for students who may have learning disabilities or AD/HD. Screening tests that may indicate the presence of a learning disability or AD/HD are available through the Learning Specialist. A list of qualified local providers who can administer diagnostic evaluations will be provided. Students should check with health care providers in their hometowns for other resources. Most health insurance plans do not provide coverage for these evaluations, though this can sometimes be arranged through a referral from a family physician.

What should I do if I’m not receiving accommodations I’m entitled to?

In general, faculty at Johnson State College are extremely helpful and supportive of students with disabilities. Occasionally, because of overwork, oversight, or lack of information a faculty member may appear uncooperative in arranging accommodations. When this happens, usually polite persistence brings a favorable outcome. It is best to talk to professors outside of class, preferably during their office hours. Students should make sure that professors receive letters requesting accommodations as early in the semester as possible. It is the student’s responsibility to arrange accommodations with her or his professors; however, ASSP staff can assist in this process. If you feel you have been unfairly denied accommodations, please contact the Learning Specialist immediately.
What other help can I get if I’m having trouble in a particular class?

Johnson State College’s ASSP provides services and support to any student seeking to improve their academic performance. The program offers professional tutoring in writing and math in our offices and in the dorms, as well as online writing tutoring. Students can also register for one-on-one tutoring in a specific course, provided by trained peer tutors who have successfully completed that course. In addition, there is a wealth of material available to help students with time management, note-taking, and general study skills. ASSP provides these services to all JSC students at no cost.

What next?

Academic Support Services welcomes you to Johnson State College! You are about to embark on an exhilarating educational odyssey, unlike anything you’ve experienced before. We are here to guide you through the maze and to provide support and encouragement when needed. However, you must provide the “motivational muscle” to fuel this journey. Responsibility for success ultimately lies with you. Good Luck! This is truly the beginning of the rest of your life!

The Learning Specialist coordinates specific services and resources for students with disabilities at Johnson State College. Questions about documentation and accommodations for specific disabilities should be directed to:

Learning Specialist
114 Dewey Hall • (802) 635-1264
Resources: Services for students with disabilities are provided through the Learning Specialist, in conjunction with the 504/ADA Officer and the staff of the Academic Support Services Program. The Learning Specialist assists students in accessing accommodations and services including test accommodations, note-taking assistance, sign language interpreters, and textbooks in electronic format. The Learning Specialist also assists students in coordinating services with other departments such as the Dean of Students, Residential Life, The Counseling Center and the Office of the Registrar.

TRiO is a program administered by Academic Support Services that provides enhanced services to students who meet program eligibility criteria. Services include academic advising, career exploration, study & problem solving skills, tutoring, accommodations, non-traditional student services, assistive technology, financial literacy, graduate school information, and assistance with completion of financial aid forms.

Located in 114 Dewey Hall • (802) 635-1259

Tutoring is provided by Academic Support Services for most academic disciplines. Professional tutoring in writing and math is also available to assist students. Academic Support Services maintains a friendly and supportive environment for any student seeking to improve his or her academic performance.

Located in 114 Dewey Hall • (802) 635-1464

The Academic Advising & Career Services office coordinates a variety of programs and services that encourage students to be active participants in their own educational and career development. Programs/services include: academic advising, career development, choosing a major, job/internship postings, National Student Exchange, and study abroad programs. A variety of resources are available online at www.jsc.edu/OfficesAndServices/CareerCenter/Advising/default.aspx
The Counseling Center is a campus resource concerned with all aspects of healthy emotional development. The Center is staffed by experienced professional counselors and interns and offers confidential individual and group counseling.

Located in Senators North Basement • (802) 635-1424

The Health Center assists in maintaining the health and well being of Johnson State students. All students must have a completed medical record on file with the Health Center.

Located in Senators Hall South • (802) 635-1265

The Residential Life Office provides appropriate housing for all students. Immediately upon acceptance of admission, students with special needs are requested to discuss living arrangements with the Residential Life Office.

Located in 161 Dewey Hall • (802) 635-1200

Parking permits are available through Public Safety for designated handicapped parking spaces.

Located in Dewey Hall • (802) 635-1205
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