

Being Your Own Advocate: Steps You Can Take to Help You Be a Successful Student

In college YOU are responsible for getting the help you need. You must be able *to advocate for yourself*. *Advocates* are persons who know what they want and will stand up for their rights. Making each of the following 4 steps a habit will help you to be a good self-advocate and a successful student.

Know yourself and your disability

Before you can advocate for yourself, you need to identify your:

Strengths - the skills you do well.

My strengths are:

Areas to improve - the skills you need improve that will help you realize success.

The areas I need to improve are:

Interests - the career areas you may want to explore.

My interests are:

Preferences - the ways you like to learn.

The ways I learn best are:

You also need to know how to talk about your disability in a way that other people will understand. Do you know what your disability is?

My disability is:

The college or school has my documentation so that I can get the accommodations that will help me succeed: YES NO **

*****If no, this should be one of your top immediate priorities.***

Know Your Responsibilities

My responsibilities are:

Know Where to Go for Help

A very important part of being a successful student is the ability to know when you need help or when you don't need help. Writing down the names and phone numbers of the people on campus who will help you, including the Academic Support Center, is a good idea.

The people I can go to for help are:

Academic Support Center-To request accommodations for a learning, psychological or medical disability

Martha Van Cise, Director	Memorial Library, First Floor	706.233.4080
Kim Sippel, Secretary	Memorial Library, First Floor	706.233.4080

Tutorial Services—FREE

ACADEMIC SUPPORT CENTER TUTORS

Email your request to tutoring@berry.edu or mvancise@berry.edu or drop by my office in Memorial Library, First Floor.

MATH LAB

Walk in tutorial services for any math class. Located in Science Building, Room 348. No phone.

WRITING CENTER

For help with writing a paper in any course. Located on second floor of Memorial Library
706.238.5903

<http://www.berry.edu/wc/>

Registrar's Office – For answers about my transcript, GPA, forms for transient study, AP credit, etc.

Bryce Durbin, Registrar	Hermann Hall 238	706.236.2282
Bonnie Jermundson, Assoc. Registrar	Hermann Hall 238	706.236.2282
Shirley Stevens, Secretary	Hermann Hall 238	706.236.2282

Financial Aid Office- Question about scholarships and financial aid

Marcia McConnell, Director	Hermann Hall 105	706.236.1714
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Health and Wellness Center

Anita Erickson, Director	Ladd Center	706.236.2267
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Residence Life

Lindsey Taylor, Dir. Of Res. Life	Ladd Center 09	706.236.2209
Dennis Goshorn, Dir. Of Housing	Ladd Center 11	706.236.2209
Matthew McCarthy, Coord. Res. Life	Ladd Center 10	706.236.2209

Student Work

Rufus Massey, Dean	Krannert 316	706.236.2244
Jimmy Storey, Coordinator	Krannert, 320	706-236.2244

Information Technology— computer help, Berry email, and Viking Web

Help Desk, Computing & Technology (Tech Support)	706.238.5838
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EMERGENCY

Gate House	706.236.2262
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Other Numbers of People/Offices where I can get help

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Phone</i>
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Take Action

Once you know who you are and what you need, you can work on reaching your goals. You should also work on communicating your needs. This means that you should practice talking with your instructors. You might practice on a counselor or a trusted friend. Practice explaining your disability and the accommodations or modifications you will need to help you be successful.

Realize that you will not be the first student to ever talk with an instructor. Talking to an instructor might seem scary now, but as you become more aware of who you are, you will gain more confidence. When you are ready, schedule a meeting with your instructors.

The following suggestions may make the meeting with your instructors go more smoothly:

- ✚ Talk with your instructor before the semester begins or the first week of class or.
- ✚ Schedule a private meeting in his/her office and present him/her with your accommodation letter. Have the instructor sign the letter.
- ✚ Be prepared to discuss your disability with the professor.
- ✚ Refer the instructor to the Academic Support Center if he/ she needs more information or has any questions about implementing the accommodations.
- ✚ Be confident! You know yourself and how you learn and perform in the classroom better than anyone.
- ✚ Don't forget to thank your instructor meeting with you.
- ✚ Continue to talk with the professor, ask questions, and ask for help and/or explanation of assignments/lectures throughout the semester.

-OR-

Some students find it easier to write a letter to give to their instructors instead of talking to them. Writing a letter allows you to edit and re-edit what you are trying to say, BUT YOU WILL STILL NEED TO GET THE INSTRUCTOR'S SIGNATURE ON THE ACCOMMODATION LETTER.

THINGS YOU MUST REMEMBER TO DO TO RECEIVE ACCOMMODATIONS

- ✚ **DON'T FORGET TO RETURN THE SIGNED ACCOMMODATION LETTER(S) TO MS. VAN CISE.**
- ✚ **REMEMBER THAT PROFESSORS ARE NOT OBLIGATED TO GIVE YOU ACCOMMODATIONS UNLESS THEY HAVE SIGNED AN ACCOMMODATION LETTER.**
- ✚ **ALSO REMEMBER THAT YOU MUST MEET WITH MS. VAN CISE AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH NEW SEMESTER TO REQUEST ACCOMMODATION LETTERS FOR YOUR CLASSES. BRING A COPY OF YOUR SCHEDULE WITH YOU.**

Manage Your Time Wisely

Successful students manage their time wisely.

Plan your time each day to help you stay on track and prevent your falling behind on your reading and homework assignments. Using a personal calendar can help you keep up with your assignments and organize your day. Some prefer to make "to do" lists and cross off tasks as they complete them. Do whatever works for you to keep yourself organized and productive. Being organized and getting things done will relieve the stress of getting behind.

It is very important to learn to estimate how long you will need to complete different school tasks [i.e. write a paper, read assigned chapters] and set that time aside **each day for those tasks**.

Do you know how long you need to study before you take tests? Here's the answer: You need to prepare **every** week: You should review class and textbook notes every week for every class so that you can perform well on tests. Unlike high school, you will have on average, two tests a semester—a mid-term [at 7 weeks] and a final exam [at 14 weeks]—that will be the majority of your grade. If you wait until the last minute to begin studying for a test, you will not have enough time to get your mind ready for your test. Why? Information has to be stored in your long-term memory so you can retrieve it on the test. Reviewing notes and texts at least once a week [for every class] will ensure that this information gets stored in your long-term memory. Those with short- and long-term memory learning disabilities should be particularly diligent about studying this way.

A word about homework

College professors do give homework [reading assignments, problems to solve, summaries of readings, etc.]. Unlike high school, however, they don't always pick it up, grade it, or comment on it. Think of homework in college as information the professor may not have time to cover in class that he/she thinks you need to know to supplement the lectures, or in the case of math class, practice problems that will help you be prepared for doing the problems on the test. Therefore, don't fall into the trap of not doing the homework assignments because you don't get a grade for it.

Managing your time is the single most important factor in becoming a successful student, particularly for students with LD or ADHD.