

Special Program & Services Student FAQ's

1. What is Special Program and Services (SPS)?

SPS is a program designed to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to all of the educational offerings at Los Angeles Harbor College. The program facilitates equal opportunity through the provision of appropriate support services, curriculum, instruction, and adaptive technology.

2. How do the services from Special Program and Services (SPS) differ from the high school services students may have received?

High school special education programs are legally required to provide whatever services, accommodations or modifications that are needed for the student to be successful. Different laws require colleges to provide "equal access" to education. Access is provided through "reasonable" accommodations. Unlike high school, colleges do not have a "school within a school." Except for a handful of special classes, students in college are mainstreamed with non-disabled students, are required to do the same work, and are held to the same grading standards. This means that mainstream courses are never modified to make passing them easier for students with disabilities.

3. How do I qualify for Special Program and Services (SPS)?

Complete an SPS application in our office and bring along with you documentation to verify your disability. SPS needs signed documentation from an appropriate professional that includes your functional limitations.

4. Will my disability information be kept confidential?

Yes. The only time SPS shares the information about a student's disability or the services provided is when SPS gets a court order, when the student gives us written permission, or when there is an emergency.

5. Do I have the right to choose my counselor?

Yes. Students may choose which counselor to see. However, the availability of a particular counselor is dependent on department scheduling.

6. What is an accommodation?

An accommodation is anything "reasonable" that must be done to provide students with disabilities with equal access to the programs and services of the College. Reasonable accommodations are support services which allow a student to have equal access to the educational process without altering fundamental college requirements or endangering the health and safety of other individuals.

7. How do I get my accommodations?

Students must request any accommodations and provide documentation to prove that their disability requires those accommodations. If a student does not request an accommodation or provide documentation, the College is not required to provide it.

8. Who decides what accommodations I may receive?

Each student and his/her Special Program and Services counselor will discuss all appropriate accommodations needed. The counselor will work with SPS staff to set up the accommodations and will make sure the student receives them.

9. What are some of the support services available if I qualify for Special Programs and Services?

Services are offered according to the specific disability needs. Some services include:

- a. Adaptive computer technology and training with specialized software and hardware such as, voice recognition, screen readers, or print enlargement
- b. Extended time and/or distraction free environment for exams, quizzes, and lab practicums
- c. Specialized classes designed for students with disabilities
- d. Priority Registration and Registration Assistance
- e. E-text and/or enlarged text
- f. Assistive listening devices
- g. Specialized tutoring
- h. Recording lectures
- i. Interpreters
- j. TDD or TTY
- k. Notetakers

10. Does anyone else have to know that I have a specific disability?

No. Privacy laws prohibit SPS from sharing information about your disability without your permission. You must provide Special Programs and Services with sufficient information about your disability to be eligible for reasonable accommodations. Once we receive verifying documentation about your disability, we will keep it in your confidential file, separate from other college records. Disability information may be given to a college administrator only when there is a legitimate educational or safety need to know. The only exception to this would be in situations when SPS files might be subpoenaed in legal proceedings, which is an extremely rare occurrence.

11. If I have a problem with an instructor, staff member, or another student, can SPS help?

Special Programs and Services can intercede on your behalf if you are a registered student with SPS. Students who believe they have been discriminated against, based upon their disability or refused appropriate accommodations should contact Special Programs and Services.

12. What do I do if my instructor denies an accommodation?

Instructors are not allowed to decide anything about a student's accommodations. Instructors must provide the accommodations. If you are a student experiencing difficulties with receiving your accommodations, please let Special Programs and Services know immediately.

13. Do I need to be a full-time student to attend Harbor?

No. The number of units students take is entirely their decision. However, sometimes, it may be necessary to be a full-time student, for example, to maintain health insurance, qualify for Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, or Financial Aid. For more information, see a Special Programs and Services counselor.

14. Are there any costs related to Special Services?

No. All services are free to qualifying students with documented disabilities enrolled at Harbor College.

15. Will my disability waive the costs of college?

The fact that a student has a disability does not mean that any of the costs of college will be waived. However, a student may be eligible for Harbor's Financial Aid Program and/or for the State Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (see a Special Programs and Services counselor for more information).

16. What are my options if I cannot pay for my educational expenses?

Special Programs and Services will direct you to agencies and campus departments which can help. The campus Financial Assistance office is located in SSA Building Room 114. Please check with the Financial Assistance office early each semester for specific guidelines and deadlines.

17. I am a Special Programs and Services Student, and I tried to register for classes but was informed that I have a hold. What do I do?

Special Programs and Services can check your college records and make recommendations. Have you returned all equipment loaned from Special Programs and Services? Do you have outstanding balances on your school account (enrollment fees, health fees, etc.)? Do you need to complete matriculation/ basic skills testing?

18. How can I get notes for my classes?

Special Programs and Services assists in locating volunteers to provide notetaking services. If you believe you need this service, make an appointment with a Special Program and Services Counselor to request this accommodation.

19. I have a visual or mobility impairment. Can I get help finding my classrooms at the beginning of each semester?

Yes. We recommend that students make an appointment and come in the week before school starts. Students may also sign up to attend one of our Special Orientations at the beginning of each semester.

20. Can you help me find campus locations?

Our office will gladly provide you with a campus map, and you may attend one of our Special Orientations and Tours. If you have a mobility or visual disability, we can arrange a campus orientation to point out accessible pathways, restrooms, parking, etc.

21. I cannot stand in line at Admissions and Records. Can SPS help me?

Yes. If you have a verified disability with an associated functional limitation, Special Programs and Services can often fax or hand deliver any paperwork that needs to go to Admissions and Records and other offices on campus.

22. What do I do if I am failing a class?

First, see a Special Program and Services counselor. The counselor will explain any options and make suggestions about strategies the student can do to help the situation. Never just stop going to class! Also, students should discuss their concerns with their instructors. Instructors are a great resource. If the student feels that he/she cannot do the work in a class, make sure to officially drop the class. It is the students' responsibility to drop courses!

23. I am failing some of my classes and wish to drop these classes. Can I do that?

Yes you can, although you must drop the class/classes by a certain date each semester. Important dates can change each semester and are located in the current class schedule. If a course is not dropped by the deadline, you may receive a failing grade or a "W". You should make an appointment with an SPS counselor to discuss your educational plan.

24. I am a Special Program and Services student and using my accommodations; however, I am still not academically successful, and I don't know what to do. Can you help me?

Yes. You should make an appointment with one of our counselors, specifically to analyze your educational needs and disability-related accommodations. Our goal is to help you succeed at Harbor College!

25. I need to see an SPS counselor immediately. What do I do?

You may call the front desk to schedule an appointment with a counselor (310) 233 – 4629. The front desk can also inform you of when counselors will hold "Drop-In" hours. For drop-in hours, there are no appointments, and counselors will gladly help "walk-ins."

26. I have a crisis situation, can Special Program and Services help me?

Please notify us immediately, so we may connect you with a Life Skills counselor as soon as possible. In addition, the Student Health Center may provide medical assistance.