

Students with Disabilities: The Advocacy Process

In some cases, the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education allows the university to waive standardized SAT/ACT scores and/or foreign language requirements for qualified students with documented learning disabilities.(see BHE statement below). Students must still complete the 16 required college preparatory courses, with one exception: students with language-based disabilities may substitute two college preparatory units/electives for the foreign language requirement.

BHE EXCEPTION ALLOWANCES: Learning Disabled Applicants

"Applicants with professionally diagnosed and documented learning disabilities (documentation must include diagnostic test results) are exempt from taking standardized tests for admission to any public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth.

Foreign Language Requirement:

An applicant may substitute two college preparatory electives for the two required foreign language courses only if the applicant has on file with the high school results of a psycho-educational evaluation completed within the past three years that provides a specific diagnosis of a learning disability and an inability to succeed in a foreign language." 11/27/07

Although state law does not require students to disclose a disability, applicants who wish to receive special consideration in the admission process must submit a copy of complete diagnostic testing, both IQ and achievement, that provides clear evidence of a specific learning disability along with their admissions materials. The documentation must include test results from widely recognized instruments, that have been standardized for the age of the student at the time of testing, relevant test and sub-test scores, including raw scores, standard scores, and grade equivalence either in the text of the report or in an accompanying summary of test scores. The evaluation must include a DSM or ICD diagnosis, as well as specific recommendations for academic and/or other accommodations.

If you are otherwise academically qualified for admission to Fitchburg State University and wish to be considered for the SAT/ACT and/or language requirement waiver, please do the following:

- Mark “YES” on the Advocacy portion of the college application and
- Submit appropriate documentation of a disability that affects learning (please see college guidelines, below).

Diagnostic testing and/or other disability related paperwork should be submitted with other admission credentials to the Admission Office in a sealed envelope marked “Confidential: Advocacy Documents.”

Disability materials that are received with application materials are separated from the student file (to insure student confidentiality) and forwarded to Disability Services for eligibility consideration. For additional inquiries about disability documentation and the advocacy process, please contact the Director of Disability Services at (978) 665-4020.

Please note: Consideration in the admission advocacy process is distinct from registering with the office of Disability Services for academic accommodations. Once admitted to the university, a student may elect to activate accommodations through Disability Services by registering with the office and requesting specific services in person (e.g. accommodations, assistive technologies, etc.). For more information about how to register with Disability Services for academic or environmental accommodations, please visit the department web site at <http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/disability/>.