Graduate Students with Disabilities

What is Student & Employee Accessibility Services (SEAS)?

SEAS works with graduate (and undergraduate) students, faculty and staff who have a disability, medical condition or temporary injury that is impacting them in such a way that accommodations or services may be needed to ensure access to campus programs and services. The SEAS office coordinates accommodations and services with a variety of partner offices across the campus, including the Graduate School.

How can I schedule an appointment?

Calling 401-863-9588 during business hours, 8:30 to 5 pm, Monday through Friday is usually the best way to find a time. Evening meeting times are available to 6 pm for graduate students. Please ask to meet with Dean Cathie Axe or Associate Director Jon Corey. You can email seas@brown.edu too.

Do I need to have a diagnosed disability or medical condition to work with SEAS?

SEAS works with registered students with documented disabilities or medical conditions. You can meet with a SEAS staff member to discuss the best way to document your needs. Students may share documentation from a provider with whom they are working and/or medical or educational documentation that they may have from their undergraduate institution. Documentation is also accepted from Brown Student Health Services and Brown Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS).

What if I am wondering if I have a learning disability or ADHD?

It is not uncommon for learning or attentional issues to surface as the level and intensity of work increases and the amount of structure decreases. You can meet with a SEAS professional staff member to talk about these questions and to review your options for getting evaluated. The counselor can review with you options for putting temporary accommodations or services in place while you are getting evaluated.

Getting evaluated sounds expensive. Is financial assistance available?

Brown University’s Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) provides coverage for ADHD evaluations and may cover some portions of a learning evaluation when possible ADHD is explored too. In addition, SEAS has some funds made possible by a donor to support students being evaluated. You can speak with a SEAS professional staff member about how to request this assistance if needed.

Who will know that I am working with SEAS and what information will be shared?

Working with SEAS enables students to preserve confidentiality around their specific area of disability, but request accommodations or services as needed. The only information shared is what needs to be known to put things in place or effectively discuss reasonable options. Students communicate with faculty directly and can also request SEAS assistance with those conversations.
I worked with disability services as an undergraduate. How do services differ in graduate school?

Accommodations are usually similar within specific courses, but there may be some differences, especially as students navigate teaching or lab responsibilities. Also, since graduate study can be tied to grants, research, teaching or field work, things like taking a reduced course load or adjusting the pace of a program will typically require some conversations and coordination to determine what is reasonable.

How can I officially request accommodations or services?

Registering with SEAS is the mechanism to do this. You will need to complete an Information and Release form, provide documentation that meets our guidelines and meet with a SEAS professional staff member to discuss your needs and potential accommodations.

How will working with SEAS benefit me?

Here is a sampling: SEAS expertise will guide the accommodation process. SEAS can recommend technologies, suggest accommodations appropriate to your needs and situation, assist with navigating requests for accommodations or services, and may provide access to financial support for evaluations or coaching. The SEAS shuttle provides on campus transportation for those with mobility concerns. Registering also provides protections under the ADA.

When should I register or begin working with SEAS?

Registering and working with SEAS as early as possible is often most helpful to the accommodation process. We encourage students to meet with SEAS early in their first semester. It is not uncommon for students to begin working with SEAS at other points of their studies, as the nature of graduate study and potential academic supports can differ over the course of a degree program.

Am I obligated to follow through or use accommodations if I make contact with SEAS?

No. Registering and being approved for accommodations makes you eligible to use them when you need them and choose to request them. Timely notifications to your professors and effective communication with SEAS are critical steps if you choose to use them. Students are also welcome to just come in to explore whether they might have a disability.

Are there ways to meet other students with disabilities? How can I get more involved?

The SEAS office provides a number of support groups, including an ongoing ADHD group, an ongoing Spectrum Lunch Series, and other groups based on interest (concussion and migraine support are proposed for Fall 2018); students can also connect through organizations on campus; watch for announcements and contact SEAS about your particular areas of interest; SEAS is also interested in partnering with students who want to raise awareness and share ideas about speakers or events to bring to the campus; and finally, there are some ongoing effort by student groups that we can share with you. Let us know if and how we can help you to get connected.

What if I run into problems with accommodations or services? What if personal concerns or academic concerns are involved?

Contact SEAS immediately to discuss the situation and decide on a course of action. SEAS may assist by adjusting services or supporting you in advocacy efforts. They also may refer you to a Graduate School dean, CAPS or other resources.