

College Students with Asperger's Syndrome

The University of New Mexico
Accessibility Resource Center
Mesa Vista Hall 2021
unm.arc.edu
505-277-3506/ 505-277-3750-Fax

Establishing Eligibility

- Submit documentation of a disability to verify eligibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Amendment Act of 2008, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the University of New Mexico Policy 2310.
- Request for services and/or reasonable accommodations *must be initiated by the student* once he/she is admitted to the University of New Mexico.
- The student must schedule an intake appointment with Accessibility Resource Center so that support services and reasonable accommodations may be discussed.

Additional Support Meeting

- Student will meet with ARC Specialist and Project Assistant to determine:
 - Functional challenges and support needed
- Project Assistant works closely with student with his/ her academic accommodations and challenges in the classroom setting.

Accommodations and Support Strategies (continued)

- Classroom Accommodations:
 - Use of digital recorders
 - Use of note taker
- Testing Accommodations
 - Extended testing time
 - Testing in a distraction- reduced environment
 - Use of computer with word- processing

Accommodations and Support Strategies (continued)

- Beyond the Classroom
 - Modeling *Professor/ Student* conferences
 - Clear instructions
 - Behavioral rules and written guidelines
 - Task checklists, task instruction cards, visual reminders
 - Interpersonal communication guidance
 - Organizational methods
 - ARC Resource Notebook

Working with UNM Professors

- Classroom observations to identify interpersonal communication problems in the classroom
- Working with professors to provide effective academic accommodations
 - How do I communicate with the student?
- Progress reports
 - Teaches how to project academic progress

Tips for Positive Communication

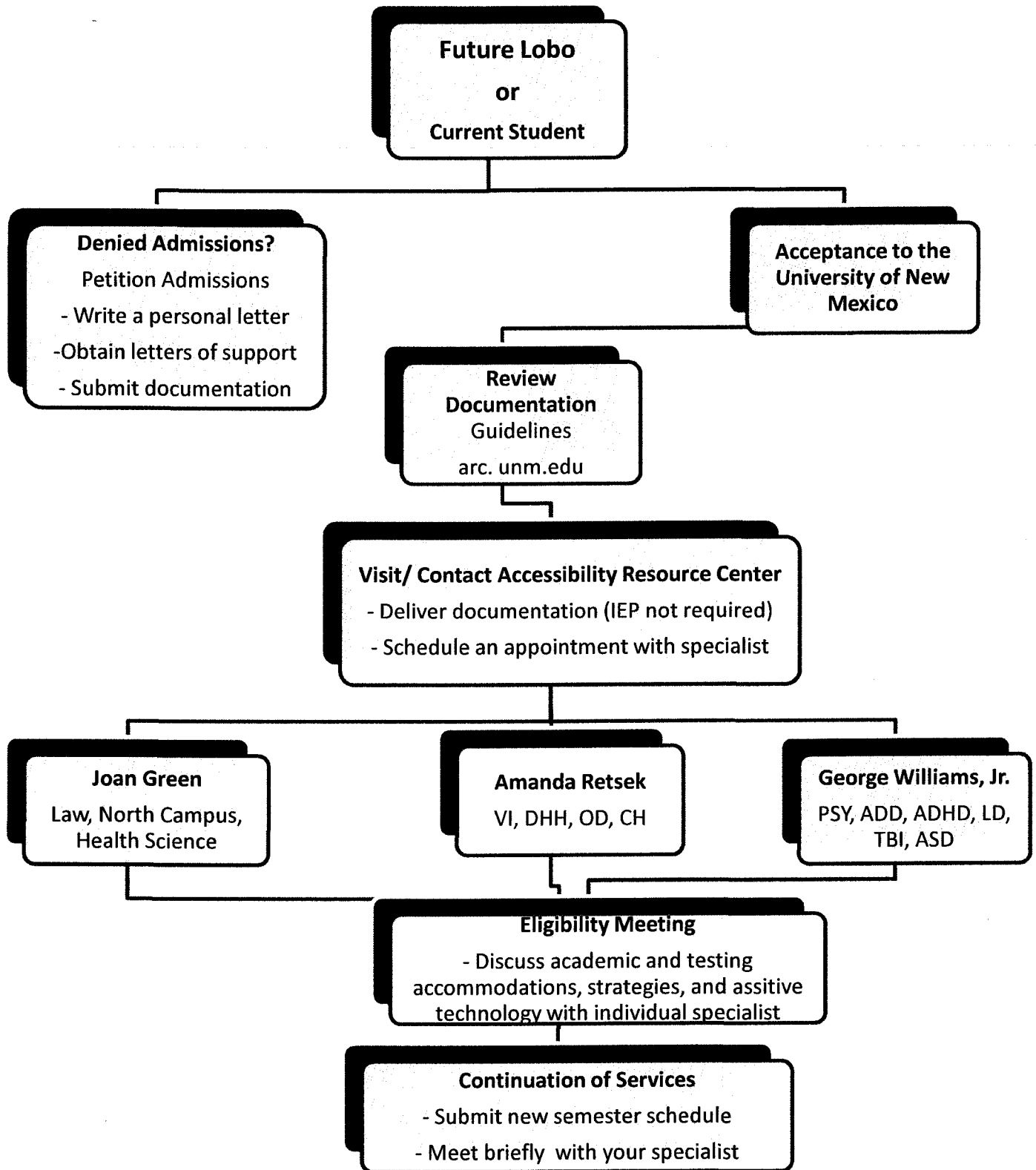
- Be firm and direct with the student, as a student with Asperger's may not understand social cues or nonverbal communication.
- Stress the importance of good study habits and effective time management.
- Give praise when merited; it builds confidence.
- Give timely feedback to the student; errors need to be corrected as soon as possible.

Strengths in Individuals with Asperger's Syndrome

- Reliability
- Punctuality
- Attention to detail
- Good memory
- Staying on task

Strategies and Tools

- Provide support through transition from home to college
- Create structure for students to follow
- Assist students with social issues/ isolation
- Ease out parental involvement to develop autonomy
- Educate students on issues possibly not covered in high school or at home (i.e., hygiene, social skills, social appropriateness, etc.)



Note: VI= Visually Impaired, DHH= Deaf and Hard of Hearing, OD= Orthopedic Disability, CH= Chronic Health, PSY= Psychological, ADD= Attention Deficit Disorder, ADHD= Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, LD= Learning Disability, TBI= Traumatic Brain Injury, ASD= Autism Spectrum Disorder

FACULTY FACT SHEET

Autism Spectrum Disorder

Definition

“A neurological disorder that affect one’s ability to understand and respond to other’s thoughts and feelings.” (Attwood) Impacts may manifest in cognitive, behavioral and social characteristics. In general, individuals on the spectrum may have a large disparity between their technical skills and abilities and their social competence. Aspergers Syndrome is the high end of the autism spectrum, often referred to as High Functioning Autism.

Typical Symptoms

Student may:

- Poor eye contact
- Inappropriate social interaction
- Unusually strong narrow interests
- Above average to superior intellect
- Lacks voice intonation
- Impulsive
- Very literal and concrete thinking patterns
- Prone to sensory overload

Classroom Behaviors

Students may:

- Attempt to monopolize conversation
- Become tangential in answering questions
- Exhibit distracting behavior in long classes
- Engage in self-stimulating behavior (rocking, tapping, playing with “stress toys.”)
- Correct instructor, or be argumentative

Strategies

- Breaks during class, particularly for movement, de-stress
- Redirect responses to bring student to point of answer
- Preparation in advance for changes
- Clearly stated expectations and procedures
- Allow time to process before answering orally
- Allow sunglasses/hat/earplugs to manage sensory over stimulation
- Capitalize on attention to detail/ memory for facts and figures
- Use of lists, scripts
- Low distraction environment
- Present the big picture, why something is happening