



Inclusive Services

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
COLORADO SPRINGS

MENTOR HANDBOOK



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Use of the OIS Mentor Handbook

This handbook is in addition to the State of [Colorado Employee Handbook](#) and the [Code of Colorado Regulations](#) for state employees. The OIS Staff Handbook is not meant to replace the Colorado Employee Handbook or the Code of Colorado Regulations. The Office of Inclusive Services abides by the regulations and the policies stated in the state and federal handbooks.

Mission

The Office of Inclusive Services at UCCS is committed to providing equitable and meaningful inclusive access to university life for people with intellectual disabilities. The OIS works toward equal participation in academic, social, independent living, and career experiences on campus and in the surrounding community. Upon completion, students will transfer skills learned at college back into their community. As students with intellectual and developmental disabilities participate with equal access, the communities they engage in will transform to redefine inclusion.

Vision

The Office of Inclusive Services will be a premier postsecondary education program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities with the goal of supporting students to live self-directed lives.

Purpose

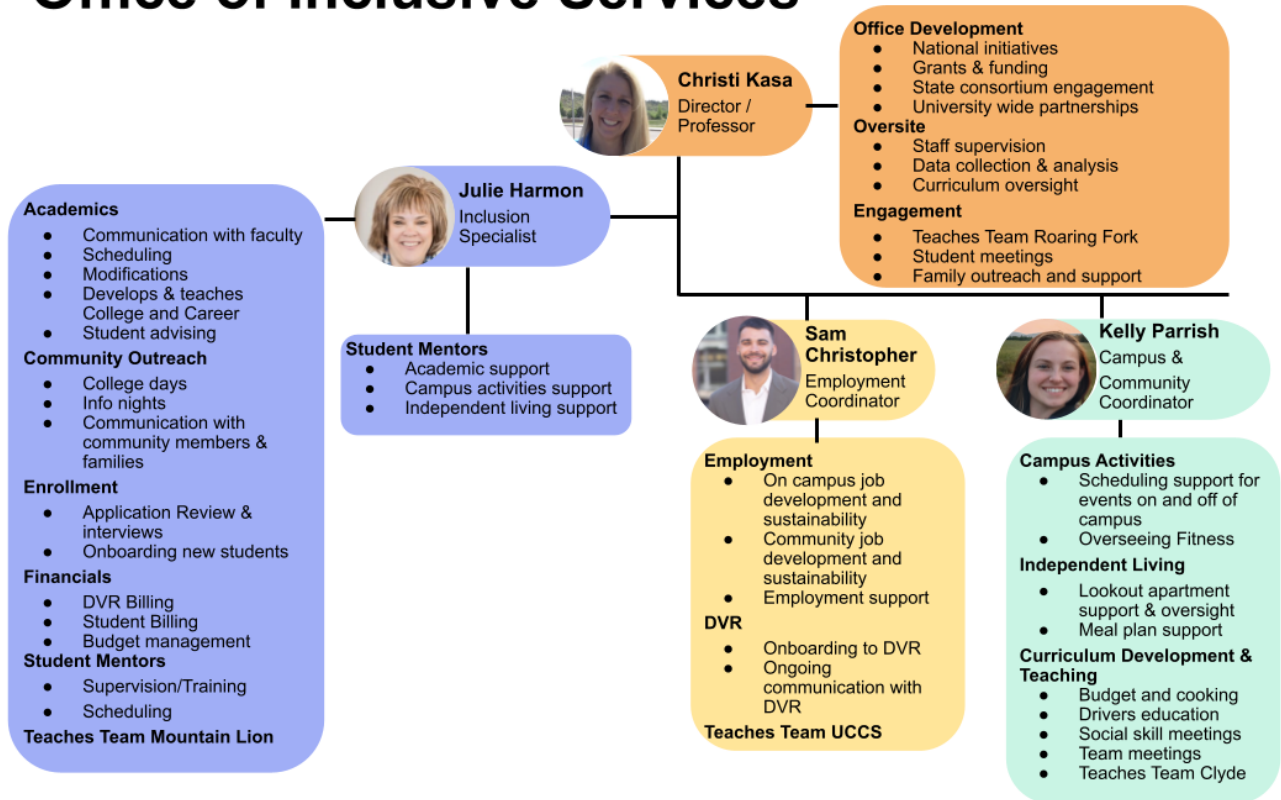
The Office of Inclusive Services was founded to provide inclusive support to access a full college life to those who have historically been excluded. The Office of Inclusive Services follows national standards and best practices in providing services for students with intellectual disabilities to attend college (see: thinkcollege.net). The Office of Inclusive Services is a Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary program (CTP) that delivers services to students in the following four areas: academic, social, independent living, and career development.

**Office of Inclusive Services
Peer Mentor Code of Ethics**

- I will not participate in or tolerate any form of discrimination based on ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, disability, or any other factor.
- I will advocate for my mentee and help them reach their goals to the best of my ability.
- I will respect my mentee's privacy and others enrolled in the Office of Inclusive Services. I will practice confidentiality of all personal information in public and when speaking with friends and family.
- I will not participate in sexual/intimate conduct with my mentee.
- I will not threaten, verbally abuse, intimidate, or use physical force on my mentee.
- I will work to understand my mentee and other individuals with intellectual disabilities.
- I will conduct myself responsibly and professionally when acting as a peer mentor. While working as a peer mentor, I serve as a social role model and model appropriate behavior.
- I will maintain high integrity while mentoring; I will be punctual, honest, keep commitments, and understanding.

Staff Organization Chart

Office of Inclusive Services



High Expectations and Accountability When Working with Students

The students we serve are here to learn and grow, and their time at UCCS will be filled with fun and challenging times. All OIS Staff aim to have high expectations and hold students to attend class, complete assignments, be on time, maintain their calendar, use professional skills at work, interact during social events with kindness and respect, and advocate for themselves throughout their time at UCCS. Staff should provide support and encouragement so students can share their ideas and views and strive to uphold their responsibilities as a student.

Language – *How to Refer to the Students We Serve*

The language used to refer to people with disabilities is nuanced and not universally agreed upon by the disabled community. Generally, there are two ways of using language:

- People First: The Office of Inclusive Services uses People First Language as the primary way of referring to people with disabilities. Staff should say, “students with disabilities,” “a person with Down syndrome,” or “a young adult with autism.” (see: [Writing Respectfully: Person-First and Identity-First Language | National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#))
- Identity First: Some disabled people prefer terminology that places their disability as a primary identity marker. They prefer people say Autistic, Autistic person, or a Disabled person. This is a sign of embracing their disabled identity. They see it as a valuable part of who they are, not shame or something to shed (see: [Identity-First Language - Autistic Self Advocacy Network](#)).

Please avoid the following language:

- Differently abled
- Special needs
- Handicapable
- Handicapped
- Multi-abled
- Confined to a wheelchair
- Special people
- Wheelchair-bound
- R-word
- Intellectually challenged

Mentor Job Expectations

As an Office of Inclusive Services Mentor, you are expected to maintain high integrity as you work with the students we serve and interact with faculty and staff at UCCS.

Some of the expectations include:

- Work as a **coach** to connect students to their peers and students to their academic work
- Help to maintain a positive academic environment.
 - Example #1: If a student not receiving services from the OIS asks questions about a student receiving services from the OIS, please respectfully support the student in answering the question themselves
 - Example #2: If a faculty member is upset or has questions, please direct them to contact Julie Harmon or Christi Kasa
- Support students to understand **big ideas (main points)** from their classes
- Make sure the students you support complete their homework and turn it in on time
- Assist students with assignments in courses as assigned
- Encourage appropriate college behavior
- Foster student independence.
- Understand that it is okay for students to struggle and get things wrong
- Help students with time management
- Relay communication about student progress to OIS staff through the data collection methods provided
- Work as a member of the team
- Maintain confidentiality regarding disability information and educational records
- Be willing to obtain added training
- Cover for other Student Mentors in the event of an absence as you are able
- Perform other duties and responsibilities as assigned

Guidelines for Supporting Students in Class

- At the beginning of the semester, please sit next to the student. Try to sit on the outside so that the student can also sit next to a fellow classmate
- Do your best not to be a barrier between the student you are supporting and their fellow classmates
- You are working as a coach. Your job is to connect the student with her or his classmates and to the curriculum in the class
- If classmates or the professor ask a question of you that the student can answer, please redirect the question to the student. You might need to support them to answer by making suggestions of what they might say or asking clarifying questions, but please work to let them answer
- Always protect the student's dignity
- Take notes during class. Pay close attention to any information regarding assignments, due dates, class cancellations, and opportunities to work in a group or collaborate
 - Please put class notes in the student's One Drive (if notes are needed)
- If groups are formed, please make sure the student is in a group and that all information is shared
 - Help the student communicate with the group and set up group meetings
 - If you need help coming up with how the student will participate in the group, please reach out to Julie
 - Let Julie know about group projects
- Support the student in taking notes. You may need to provide a graphic organizer (see samples) and print power points ahead of time so the students can take notes (print as handouts). Ask the student to write or draw what they hear
- Support the student to share with partners and respond to professor questions in class
- Support the student in maintaining attention
 - For example, students should not play Pokemon Go in class, line up all of their snacks and eat them, text, watch YouTube, or sleep. Students can take notes alongside you and write the key points they are hearing
 - Help students to get the main points or big ideas

Below are some ideas for note-taking:

Main Idea	Detail 1	Detail 2	Detail 3
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Main Idea	Detail 1	Detail 2	Detail 3
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I Liked...	I Didn't Like...
Reminds Me Of...	Emotions (it made me feel)...

Ideas for Engaging Students in Class

If students struggle to pay attention in class, you can use visual support to help them engage. The OIS has laminated cards that may be helpful to have on hand in class. Please ask if you would like us to print and laminate some for you.

<p>If I am tired I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Take notes● Eat or drink something● Go for a quick walk in the hallway	<p>If I have a question during the lecture, I should write it down</p>
<p>We cannot talk in a normal voice during class; please whisper while the professor is talking</p>	<p>If I have a thought during a lecture, I should write it down</p>

These cards can be rewritten based on individual student needs; please feel free to get creative.

Preparing to Support Students

Activities to do to get ready:

- Prepare assignments or materials for class
- Check Canvas for new class announcements, articles, videos, or class materials
- Share, organize, and keep all class materials up to date
- Make sure all communication is delivered completely
 - Make sure you are keeping Julie in the loop on any concerning events
 - Communicate any changes or needed information for classes or on-campus activities

Supporting students outside of class:

- Make sure all course assignments are completed
- Check Canvas for new class announcements, articles, videos, or class materials. When you are doing this, you should be teaching the student to access Canvas; please coach them on the steps they need to take. You could also make a step-by-step list of how to access Canvas that they can refer to.
- Go to the gym (please communicate this ahead of time so that the student has the clothes they need)
- Go to the library:
 - Find an interesting book to read and spend time reading
 - Some students can read independently, others need access to digital books so they can listen, and some need encouragement to stay focused.
 - Return emails
- Go to the student center and check out any possible clubs to join
- Go to the game room at the University Center
- Have lunch
- Schedule time to hang out with friends and/or people they have met in class
- Participate in on-campus activities (fairs, music, and other special events)

When you are supporting the student when not in class, it is **not** ok to

- Do nothing
- **Work on your own homework**
- Hang out in the OIS offices
- Take care of personal business
- Ignore the student and engage with your phone

General Guidelines:

- Treat the student like an adult and with respect
- Make sure that you are seeking student input
- If you have a hard time understanding the student's speech, make sure you ask them to repeat, slow down, and look up
- Never scold or talk down to the student
- If there is something to be corrected, please do so gently and respectfully

Completing Course Assignments

Below are the expectations for supporting students in completing course assignments:

- You are in charge of the following:
 - Knowing what homework needs to be completed for each of the students you are working with
 - Keeping track of due dates
 - Using Time on Campus to work on course assignments
 - Ensuring that course assignments are turned in on time
 - Teaching the student to complete course assignments as independently as possible
 - Using the Assignment Form to submit information on assignments not completed during your time on campus

Remember that we are a team. Please communicate with Julie if you need help or have questions about what to do. The OIS Staff is here to help.

Strategies for Completing Assignments

- Sometimes, students have trouble giving answers and sharing their ideas
- We cannot assume that they are avoiding answering, being lazy, or do not know
- We have to work to teach them how to get to the answer
- Use the following steps to support students in learning to share their answers

Step 1: Ask Open-Ended Questions

- What topic do you want for your persuasive speech?
- Name a Goal that you have.
- What do you think the FITT principle stands for?

Step 2: Provide Sentence Starters

- Next semester, I want to take _____
- My persuasive speech topic will be _____
- Something that might make it hard is _____
- The FITT Principle stands for _____

Step 3: Share Full Ideas

- To introduce this, say something like...“If I were answering this question, I would say...”,
- “One thing that could be said about this is...”
 - Then, follow this up with another question. “Would you agree with that?”
- “If I had your weekend, I think I would say it was adventurous.”
- “I’ve heard other students say they would like to take theater and photography.”

Step 4: Use a Word Board

Write word selections on a dry-erase board or piece of paper. Or print out pictures. Divide the area into two, four, or six sections, and write a word or phrase option in each of the sections. Be sure to have a section that says, “None of these” or “Something else.”

Example: If you want to talk with the student about spending time at the rec center you might ask, “What would you like to do at the rec center?” If they do not answer verbally, you can give them some written choices:

I need a partner to work out with	Sign up for a fitness class at the gym
Walk on the indoor track	Something else

The student can point to their selection, circle it with a pen, or tell you verbally. The written ideas support their communication.

What can we do during Time on Campus?

YES--DO THIS!!!	NO--DON'T DO THIS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work on assignments ● Read for class and write down big ideas ● Update the To Do list or teach the student to use a To Do list ● Work on specific goals for the individual student (Student goals are in Canvas) ● Research and schedule to join a club meeting ● Attend something fun happening on campus ● Go to the rec center and work out, play ping pong, climb the rock wall, shoot hoops, walk the track, and talk ● Play games in the game room ● Get a sketchbook, adult coloring book, game, frisbee, soccer ball, and enjoy ● Use the chat packs or table topics to have conversations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hangout in the student's apartment ● Watch TV (Netflix, movies, etc.) ● Play video games in the apartment ● Search YouTube that is not related to class research ● Do nothing ● Hang out and mess around on phones ● Ignore the student while you do your homework ● Ignore the student while you speak with your friends ● Tell the student to mess around on their computer while you do something else ● End the student's time early and call their parents to pick them up or send them back to their apartment

Activity Menu for Time on Campus

When spending time on campus:

1. Always check to see if this student has course assignments to complete FIRST
2. Work on student goals (located in the mentor Canvas shell)
3. Consult the menu below

Fitness	Campus Activities
Work out at the gym	Research a club
Shoot hoops	Play frisbee, kick a soccer ball, or read on the lawn (when it is warm)
Play ping pong	Find a campus activity and participate
Climb the rock wall	Visit GOCA and see what events are happening
Take a fitness class	Play pool or video games in the Game Room
Play ping-pong	Grab a sketchbook and draw
Take a walk around campus	Play a game
Go for a swim or soak in the hot tub	Grab the conversation cards and talk about new topics
Learn to use a new fitness machine	Find the swings on campus and have fun

There are often great things happening on campus! Get creative and have fun!!