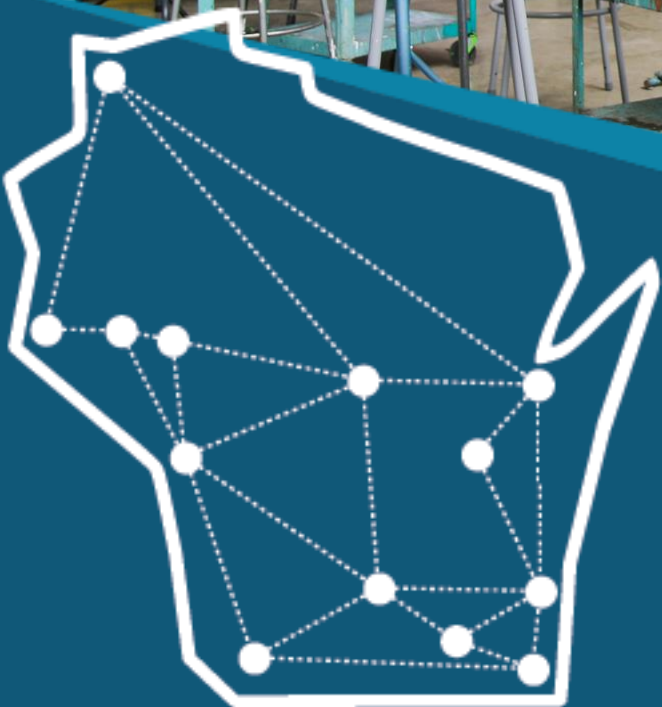




SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

2023-24 Annual Report



Universities of Wisconsin

2023-24 SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ANNUAL REPORT

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Foreword

This annual report highlights the critical work of disability/accessibility services professionals at Universities of Wisconsin (UW) universities to support students with disabilities and advocate for equal access to facilities, programs, and experiences.

This year's report continues to highlight trends in several core areas, including the number of students seeking accommodations, the types of disabilities presented, the types of accommodations approved to provide equal access, and the level of staffing available to support and advocate for students with disabilities. Continuing a trend seen over at least the last decade, more students with disabilities affiliated with disability services offices than the preceding year, despite little change in enrollment systemwide.

Other trends also continued this year, such as an increase in students seeking accommodation for psychological disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and autism. The numbers of accommodations approved to provide access to students with these disabilities also increased, including testing modifications, flexible attendance/due dates, housing accommodations, and emotional support animals, to name a few.

New to the accommodations section of this year's report is data on student use of and feedback about notetaking software, to highlight a shift in recent years from using student notetakers to using technology-based solutions. In the personnel section, find new information about student appointments to shed more light on the ways staff interact with students seeking services. Perhaps the most significant addition is a new section on retention and graduation data. Through collaboration with institutional research professionals at every UW university, the report incorporates preliminary data summarizing how retention and graduation rates for students affiliated with disability services offices compare to the student population as a whole.

I am honored every year to help with telling the story of how disability/accessibility services professionals at UW universities help students with disabilities reach their full potential. I hope the report is both informative and provocative and that it will be used as a resource for conversations about how we can collectively continue to improve efforts at both the individual university and systemwide levels.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Achter'.

John Achter
Senior Director of Student Success and Wellbeing
Office of Enrollment & Student Success
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Executive Summary

- **Total Students with Disabilities:** A total of 15,638 students with disabilities were affiliated with disability services offices across UW universities in 2023-24, representing 9.6% of total UW university enrollment. The total number of students has grown by 95% over the past nine years despite flat or declining enrollment systemwide.
- **Disability Categories:** Qualifying disabilities totaled 26,340, indicating that many students present with more than one disability that is eligible for accommodations. Psychological disabilities remained the most common disability category, representing 37% of total disabilities reported. The other most common and growing disability categories continued to be attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD – 22% of total) and health conditions (16% of total). Among less common disability categories, autism (3.7% of total) has shown the most growth with 19% more autistic students affiliating with disability services offices in 2023-24 compared to last year and 97% more compared to nine years ago.
- **Accommodations:** Disability services professionals approve hundreds of distinct types of accommodations annually based on specific access barriers unique to each student. The five most common accommodation categories are: 1) testing modifications, 2) notetaking assistance, 3) flexible attendance and due dates, 4) alternative communication formats, and 5) housing accommodations. The report highlights the work that goes into providing testing accommodations, as well as feedback from students on technology-assisted notetaking accommodations, which have largely replaced peer notetakers in recent years.
- **Personnel/Staffing:** Overall staffing levels increased slightly in 2023-24; however, with more students once again seeking accommodations, the total student/staff ratio and the average access coordinator caseload did not improve. This year's report includes appointment data for the first time to better understand student/staff interactions in disability services offices. This showed that almost 40% of meetings with students were initial meetings to start the interactive process. The report further discusses the role of staff in managing the ongoing interactive process, partnering with faculty and staff, facilitating grievance/appeal processes, and engaging in professional development.
- **Retention and Graduation:** New to this year's report is data on student retention and graduation rates. Across UWs, the average first- to second-year retention rates (Fall 2022 to Fall 2023) of first-year and transfer students connected with their disability services office was 82%. Six-year graduation rates of first-year and transfer students connected with disability services was 67% (Fall 2017 to Spring 2023). Both retention and graduation rates were identical to general UW university retention and graduation rates during the same time periods. This preliminary data supports the premise that when students with disabilities receive reasonable accommodations to address access barriers, they can succeed at the same rates as other students.

Introduction

This annual report is prepared by the disability and accessibility services directors across the Universities of Wisconsin in accordance with the [UW System Board of Regents Policy 14-10: Nondiscrimination on Basis of Disability](#). The report represents data gathered by the university offices designated to collect student disability documentation, identify reasonable accommodations that ensure access to programs and activities, and provide services according to Section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990; ADAAA, 2008), and UW Regent Policy 14-10.

The directors meet regularly to discuss disability services, trends, and plans for addressing student issues. All UW universities collect data on services provided to students based on agreed-upon data collection and reporting guidelines for consistent aggregate reporting and comparison purposes. Each disability services office uses an accommodation and case management software system designed to manage multiple aspects of providing services to students with disabilities as well as tracking several pieces of information used for reporting purposes both on campus and systemwide.

As in previous years, an annual report committee of disability/accessibility services directors was formed to guide the report writing process. Each report builds on previous years by adding information to better tell the story of the work being done to support students with disabilities. This year, the report added three new areas of focus: 1) UW universities' utilization of technology-supported notetaking and its impact on student services; 2) trends related to personnel and staffing, including information on the interactive process and the wide range of roles and responsibilities performed by staff; and 3) graduation and retention data for students receiving services. The hope is that each iteration of the report continues to provide relevant and useful information to help better understand and advocate for accessible environments at our universities.

Total Enrolled Students with Disabilities

As shown in Table 1, across UW universities in 2023-24, 15,638 students with disabilities were affiliated with disability services offices. This represents 9.6% of total UW university enrollment. This is slightly higher than the 6%-9% of students affiliated with disability services offices across the U.S. in the latest survey by the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD; Scott, 2023).

Table 1: Total Enrolled Students with Disabilities, 2023-2024

Total number of students with disabilities connected with disability services ¹	Total university enrollment ²	Percentage of student population with registered disabilities
15,638	162,531	9.6%

¹Summer 2023, Fall 2023, and Spring 2024

²Fall 2023 10th day headcount (including branch campuses, if applicable, and excluding high school special students)

The past nine years have shown a steady increase in the number of students affiliated with disability services offices. As shown in Figure 1, during the 2015-16 academic year, 8,017 students with disabilities were affiliated with these offices across UW universities. Nine years later in 2023-24, this total was 15,638 students, representing 95% growth in the number of UW students connecting with disability services offices. It is important to note that despite most universities experiencing decreasing enrollment over this period, the number of disabled students seeking accommodations continued to grow. Complete nine-year

university-by-university trends regarding students affiliated with disability services can be found in Appendix 1¹.

Figure 1: Total Enrolled Students with Disabilities, Nine-Year Trend

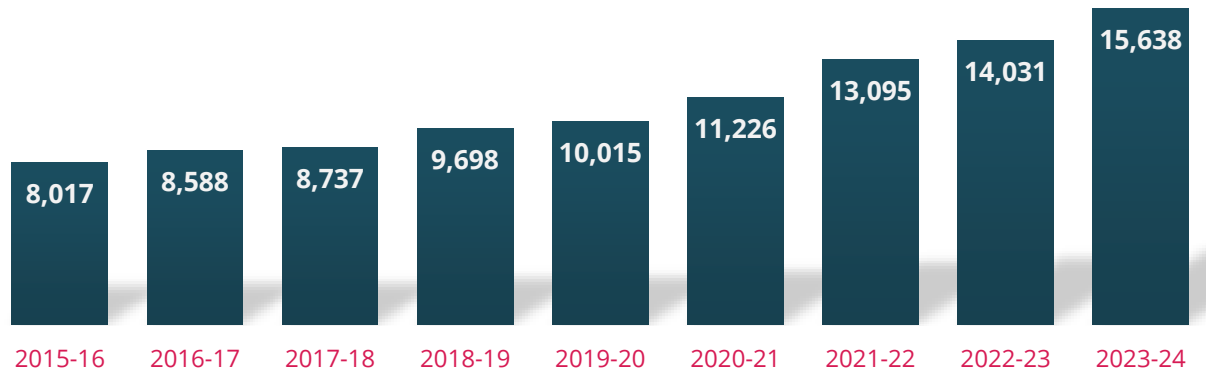


Figure 1 Description: Bar graph identifying the total number of enrolled students with disabilities across UW universities over a nine-year period. 2015-16 (8,017), 2016-17 (8,588), 2017-18 (8,737), 2018-19 (9,698), 2019-20 (10,015), 2020-21 (11,226), 2021-22 (13,095), 2022-23 (14,031), 2023-24 (15,638).

Disability Categories

UW universities collect disability information from every student seeking to initiate the accommodation process, which helps identify trends in major recognized disability categories. Understanding these trends is vital for developing appropriate services, resources, and training. The report includes both primary and co-occurring disabilities reported by students to give a more complete picture of how disability presents itself across UW universities. A total of 26,340 qualifying disabilities were documented in 2023-24, indicating that many students present with more than one disability for which they were eligible for accommodations.

The following 11 categories are used to track primary and co-occurring disability types at all UW universities:

1. Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD)
2. Autism
3. Brain Injury
4. Health Condition
5. Hearing Disability
6. Learning Disability
7. Mobility Disability
8. Psychological Disability
9. Temporary Disability
10. Visual Disability
11. Other Disability

¹As noted in the appendix, one disability services office reported an error that resulted in underreporting in the prior two years. Correcting that error accounts for a disproportionate amount of the reported increase in total students this year.

The pie chart in Figure 2 illustrates the relative percentages of each disability category among the student population seeking disability services in 2023-24. UW-specific reports of these disability categories can be found in Appendix 2.

Figure 2: Percentage of Students by All Disability Categories – Primary & Secondary, 2023-24

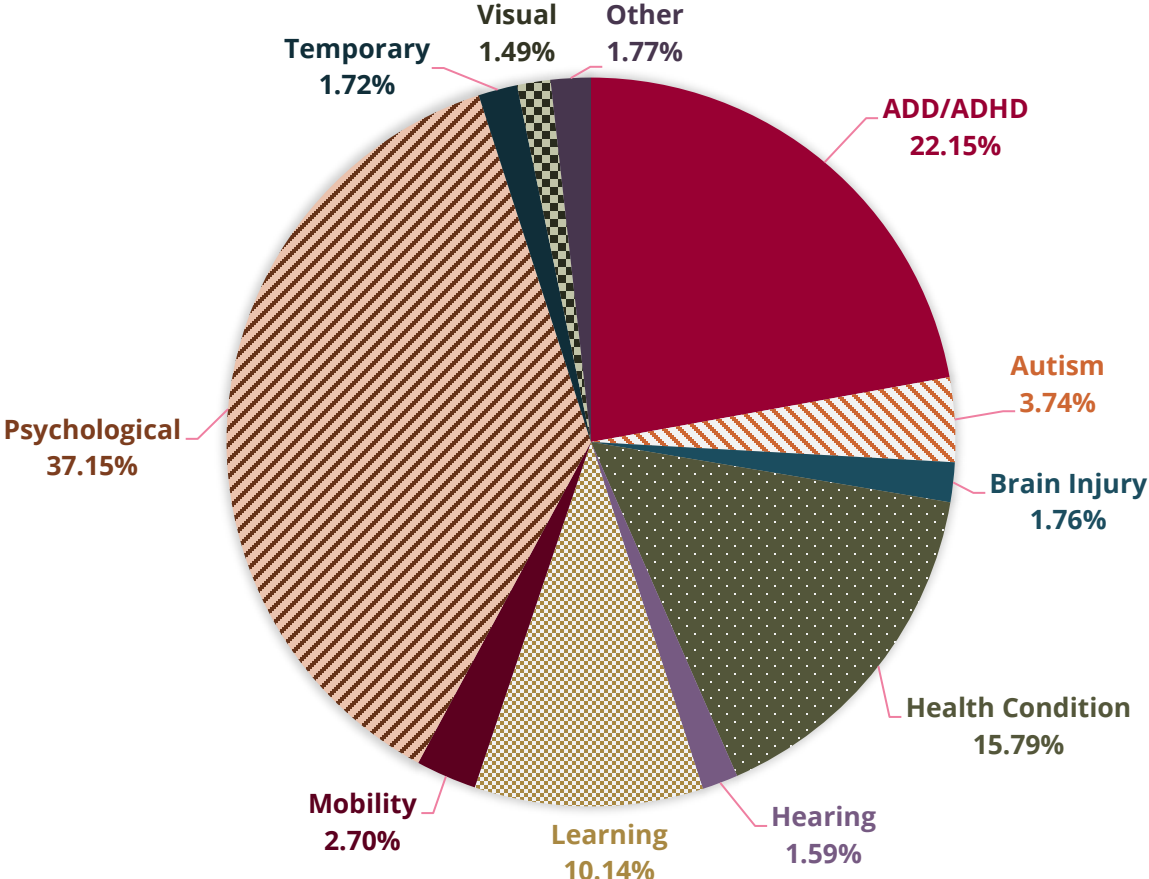


Figure 2 Description: Pie chart displaying Percentage of Students by Disability in 2023-24. ADD/ADHD 22.15%, Autism 3.74%, Brain Injury 1.76%, Health Condition 15.79%, Hearing Disability 1.59%, Learning Disability 10.14%, Mobility Disability 2.70%, Psychological Disability 37.15%, Temporary Disability 1.72%, Visual Disability 1.49%, Other Disability 1.77%

Psychological disabilities remain the most common category for which students seek support in disability services offices, and this category continues to grow as a proportion of total disabilities represented. Including co-occurring disabilities, psychological disabilities represented 37% of the total disabilities reported by students.

As displayed in Figures 3 and 4, the number of students in certain primary disability categories have grown over the past several years, while others have remained stable. Among the four most common disability categories shown in Figure 3, the trends reported last year continued, with the number of students with psychological disabilities increasing by 158% between the 2015-16 and 2023-24 academic years and the number of students with chronic health conditions and ADHD increasing 147% and 116%, respectively.

Figure 3: Number of Students by Primary Disability, Nine-Year Trends (1)

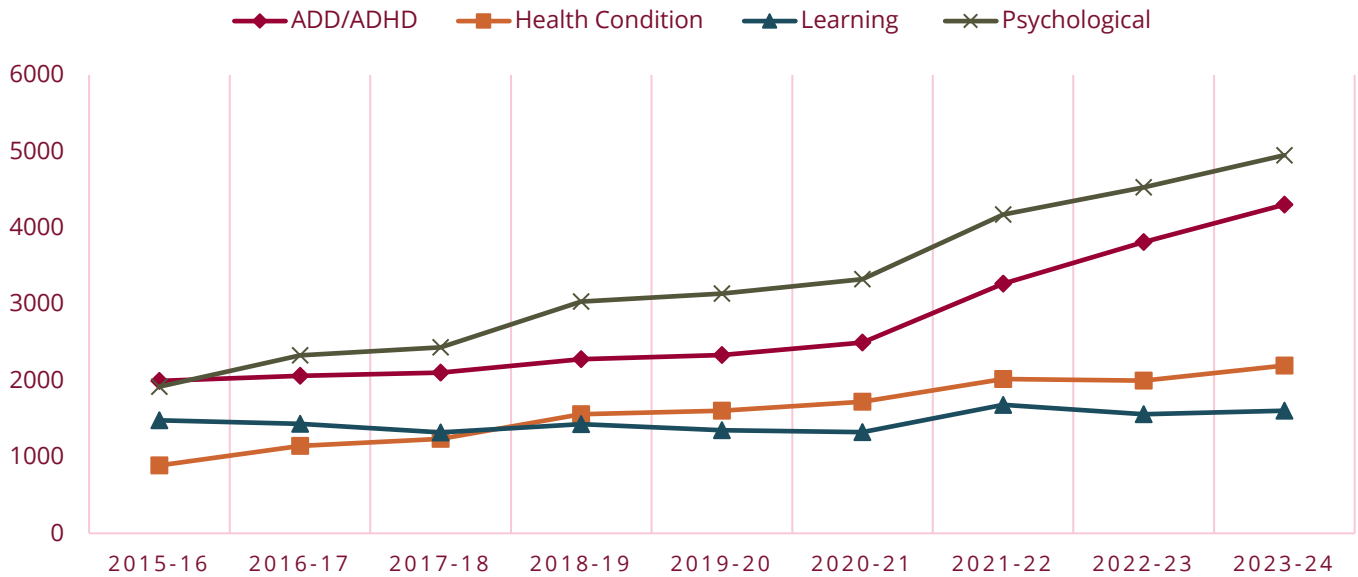


Figure 3 Description: Line graph displaying change from 2015-16 to 2023-24 in the number of students in the four most common disability categories: ADD/ADHD, Health Condition, Learning, and Psychological. Table includes data displayed in Figure 3.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
ADD/ADHD	1,995	2,061	2,102	2,278	2,335	2,497	3,268	3,814	4,302
Health Condition	889	1,144	1,237	1,560	1,606	1,721	2,021	2,000	2,196
Learning Disability	1,480	1,432	1,321	1,429	1,348	1,324	1,682	1,560	1,603
Psychological Disability	1,920	2,329	2,436	3,034	3,138	3,327	4,173	4,528	4,949

Among less commonly reported disability categories shown in Figure 4, the number of students with autism continued to trend upward, the number of students needing temporary accommodations has begun to decline since the pandemic, and the number of students in all other categories have shown little change. The number of autistic students has increased by 19% over the last year and 97% compared to nine years ago. The decline in students reporting temporary disabilities in the past two years may be attributable to the decrease in the need for COVID-19–related accommodations.

Figure 4: Number of Students by Primary Disability, Nine-Year Trends (2)

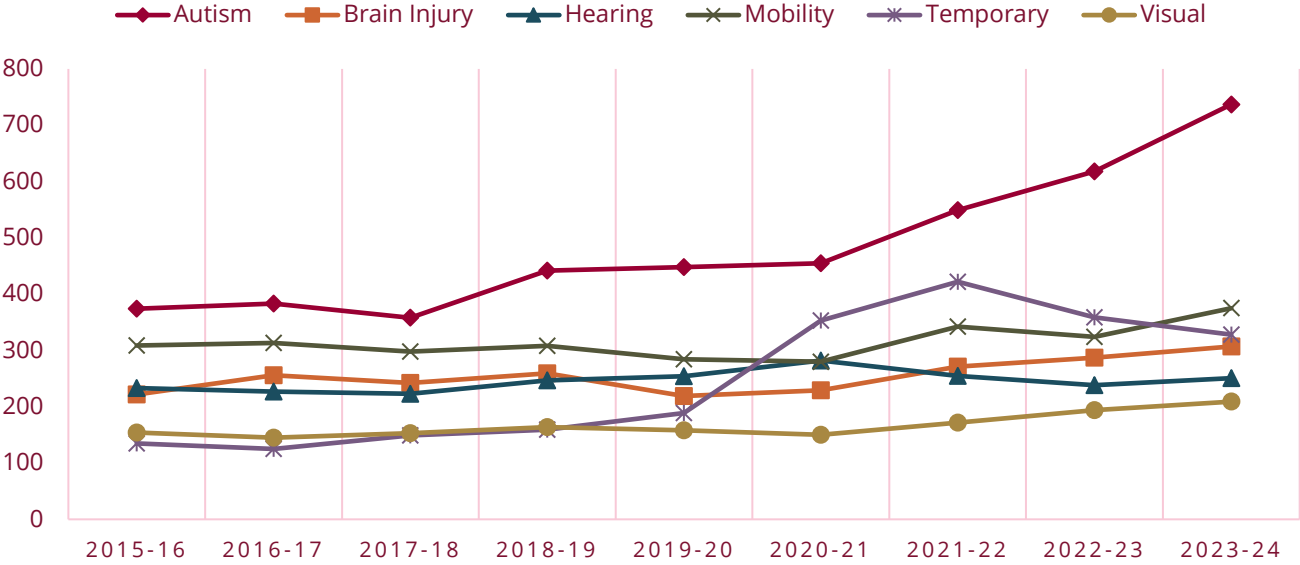


Figure 4 Description: Line graph displaying change from 2015-16 to 2023-24 in the number of students in all other disability categories: Autism, Brain Injury, Hearing, Mobility, Temporary, and Visual. Table includes data displayed in Figure 4.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Autism	374	838	358	442	448	455	549	618	737
Brain Injury	222	256	242	259	219	229	271	287	307
Hearing	233	227	223	247	254	282	255	238	251
Mobility	309	313	298	208	284	280	342	324	375
Temporary	135	125	149	159	189	353	422	359	328
Visual	154	145	153	164	158	150	172	194	209

Accommodations

This report includes information about the range of accommodation services provided to support access and inclusion in all programs and activities for students with disabilities. Each UW university reports on 13 of the more common accommodation groupings. Figures 5 and 6 show an overview of the groupings and accommodation totals for all UW universities over the past four years. This is not an exhaustive list, as universities implement a multitude of individualized accommodations for students as a result of the specific barriers to access that students experience based on their disabilities. Alternative testing is the most commonly approved accommodation across UW universities this year, as it has been historically. Notetaking accommodations continue to be the second most prevalent.

Figure 5: Common Accommodations (1)

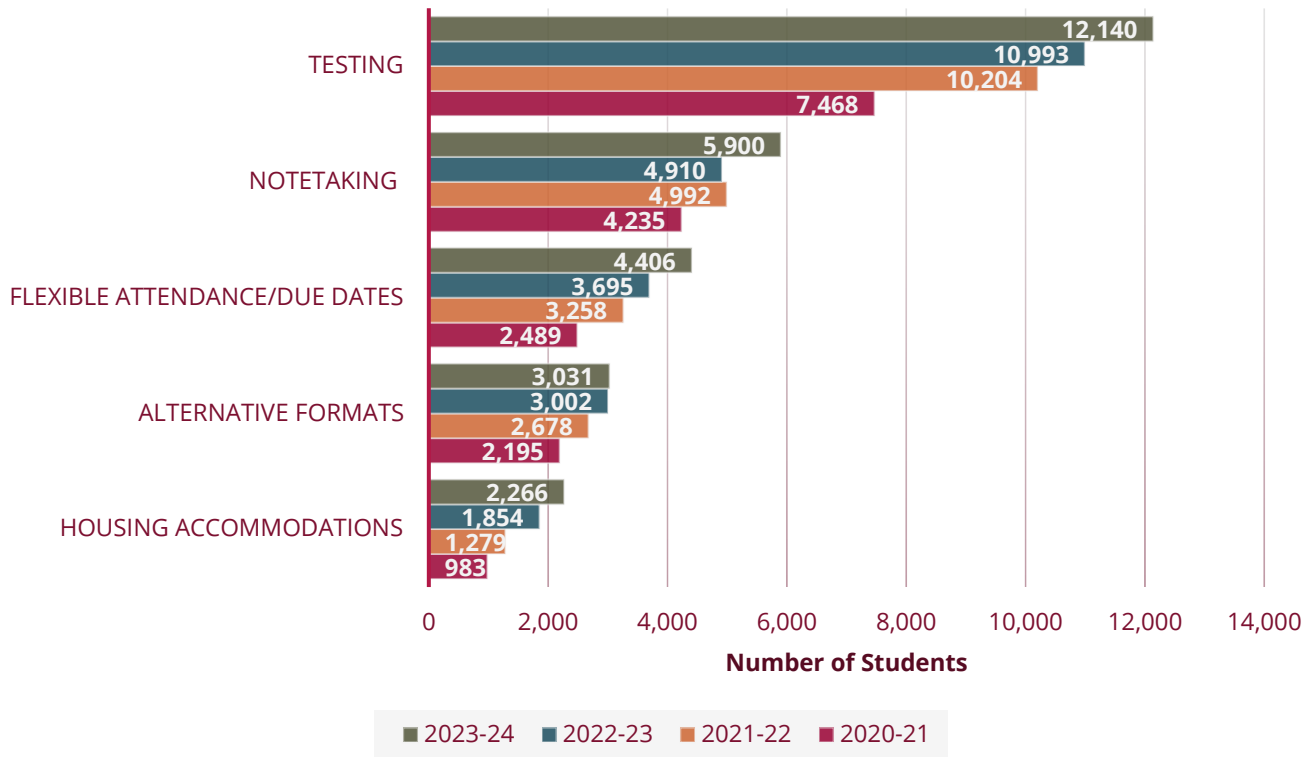


Figure 5 Description: Bar graph identifying the total number of students 2020-21 through 2023-24 approved for the following accommodation types for the total number of students affiliated with the disability services offices. Table includes data displayed in Figure 5.

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Testing	7,468	10,204	10,993	12,140
Notetaking	4,235	4,992	4,910	5,900
Flexible Attendance/Due Dates	2,489	3,258	3,695	4,406
Alternative Formats	2,195	2,678	3,002	3,031
Housing Accommodations	983	1,279	1,854	2,266

Figure 6: Common Accommodations (2)

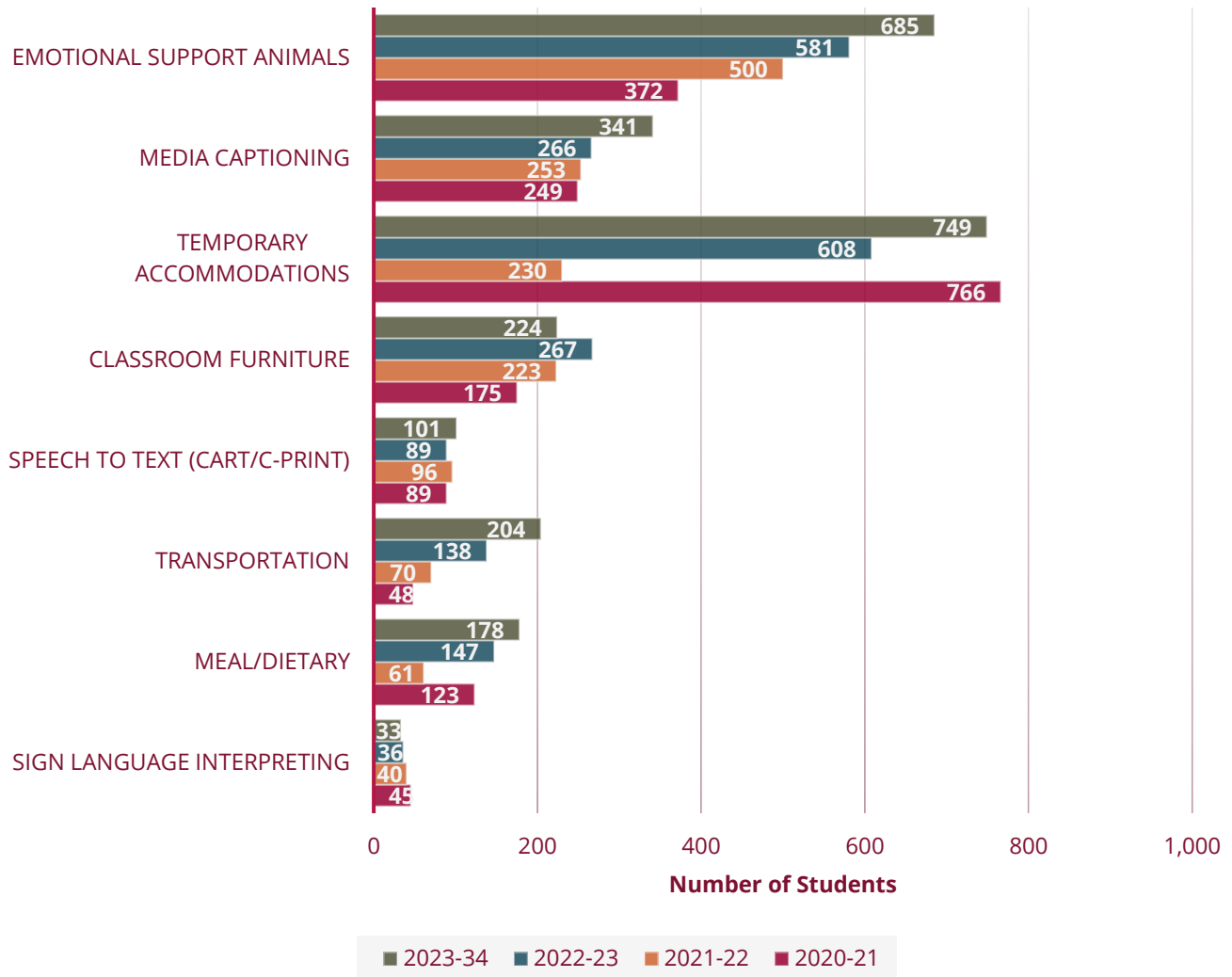


Figure 6 Description: Bar graph identifying the number of students approved for the following accommodation types in 2020-21 through 2023-24. Table includes data shown in Figure 6.

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Emotional Support Animals	372	500	581	685
Media Captioning	249	253	266	341
Temporary Accommodations	766	230	608	749
Classroom Furniture	175	223	267	224
Speech to Text (CART/C-Print)	89	96	89	101
Transportation	48	70	138	204
Meal/Dietary	123	61	147	178
Sign Language Interpreting	45	40	36	33

Alternative testing services generally include extended time and a reduced-distraction environment, though there are other types of testing accommodations. All UW disability services offices coordinate and proctor accommodated exams, except Madison where a separate testing and evaluation service exists. As described by Scott et al. (2024), the time commitment to coordinate testing accommodations is often underestimated and under resourced. Effectively managing multiple demands in disability services offices while coordinating proctors, scheduling, receiving and returning exams and, for some universities, identifying a minimally distracting environment, adds to staff members' busy workloads.

In recent years, notetaking accommodations for students with disabilities has shifted from primarily using peer notetakers to using more technology-supported notetaking. This change has been driven by challenges obtaining peer notetakers, concerns about the quality of the notes provided by peers, improvements in notetaking technology, and students embracing the use of technology for notetaking. Students with disabilities use smartpens and software programs to aid with recording lectures and syncing the audio with their handwritten or typed notes. Of the 5,900 students approved for notetaking accommodations in 2023-24, nearly 85% used technology-supported notetaking. A particular notetaking software, Glean, is available for notetaking accommodations at all UW universities. Feedback and data collected by the vendor from 62 UW students using Glean in 2023-24 are promising; a summary is included below.

Notetaking Software: Student Testimonials

- Glean helped me with reviewing content, and making sure I did not miss anything, in end helping my confidence. – UW-Eau Claire
- Glean allows me to better keep track of my notes, which helps takes some stress off my shoulders. – UW-Madison
- I was able to fully listen to lectures without the worry of missing anything when taking notes. – UW-River Falls
- It is really nice to have to be able to not feel pressure to not have to write everything down, I am able to focus on what is being said and focus on taking notes. – UW-Stevens Point
- Glean holds all of the recordings needed to look back on, reflect, and prepare for studying. Offering an organized workspace specific to class and content. – UW-Stout

Notetaking Software: Survey Data

Glean has helped me:

- Improve how I learn (93%)
- Become more confident in my studies (89%)
- Achieve better grades (89%)

Using Glean:

- I can better manage an overload of information (93%)
- I have become more confident in preparing for exams (88%)
- I find studying less stressful (85%)

All UW universities share a contract for Glean, making it available for students with disabilities systemwide. It is expected that this and other technology-supported notetaking solutions will continue to be an important part of the accommodation landscape.

Personnel/Staffing

Continuing the discussion about appropriately staffing disability services offices remains a national priority, especially in a time of increased professional burnout impacting higher education. In July 2024, the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) published a White Paper titled, *Understanding and Assessing Disability Resource Office Staffing Needs* (Scott et al., 2024). Notably, the Universities of Wisconsin disability and accessibility services directors received recognition for providing feedback and suggestions toward this document.

Due to the unique needs of diverse institutions, it can be difficult to quantify reasonable staffing patterns. Scott, et al. (2024) defined a reasonable staffing level as “one that provides enough professional staff to meet the office workload in such a way that:

- (a) the needs of students are addressed in a timely way,
- (b) faculty and staff receive responsive and suitable guidance regarding access and accommodation implementation, and
- (c) staff are not chronically overworked to meet basic office requirements.” (p. 7)

During 2023-2024, total staffing and access coordinator FTE (full-time equivalent) increased slightly across disability services offices, in part due to vacancies being filled across UW universities. As a reminder, Access coordinators are frontline positions that take the lead in assisting students with the interactive process and implementing accommodations. Despite the increase in FTE, the ratio of students to access coordinators—shown in Table 2 as access coordinator caseload—rose slightly from 395 to 398, due to more students accessing services. The average total staff to student ratio of 156:1, with a range from 106 to 228, is similar to staffing levels reported in recent national surveys—where the range was 105 to 207 students per staff member, depending on office size (Scott et al., 2024).

Table 2: Disability Services Staffing

Academic Year	Total Staff FTE	Ratio of Students to Total Staff	Access Coordinator FTE	Average Access Coordinator Caseload	Range of Access Coordinator Caseload
2019-20	79	127:1	32	310	132 to 795
2020-21	83	135:1	31	368	148 to 896
2021-22	94	139:1	35	372	192 to 555
2022-23	94	150:1	35	395	128 to 724
2023-24	100.2	156:1	39.3	398	259 to 728

Appendix 5 shows individual UW university staffing trends. Notable year-over-year changes in students to staff (an increase of 30 or more) were seen at UW-Superior (+88), UW Oshkosh (+45), and UW-Stevens Point (+33), which indicate a heavier workload burden on those disability services offices this year. Two UW universities—Oshkosh and Platteville—experienced large budget cuts and reorganization to their disability service offices during the year, which is likely to impact staffing numbers reported in 2024-2025.

Staffing to Meet Student Needs

An essential part of disability services staffing is assessing and meeting student needs within the university context. For access coordinators, much of the work is put toward managing the ongoing interactive process, which includes meeting with students to discuss accommodation requests. As summarized by Scott et al. (2024), the interactive process includes many interrelated tasks including:

- Reviewing documentation provided by the student
- Formulating questions and a meeting strategy
- Sending follow-up emails
- Contacting university stakeholders, such as faculty and housing or dining staff
- Consulting with colleagues about reasonable accommodation options
- Working with instructors to address course-specific implementation questions or concerns
- Making referrals to other university resources
- Documenting notes within the accommodation management system
- Other steps based on situational need, such as assessing specific environments for accessibility (for example, labs), purchasing equipment or technology necessary for access, etc.

Ideal staffing patterns provide ample time to complete all of these tasks while also building in flexibility for staff to take vacation and sick time without significantly altering services and to accommodate meaningful contingency plans when staffing changes occur.

This year, disability services offices reported appointment data to establish a baseline and develop a deeper understanding of staff and student interactions. (See Appendix 6 for complete data.) Across UW disability services offices, 13,635 appointments were scheduled with 9,348 students. Of those meetings, 5,256 (39%) were initial meetings with students starting the interactive process. This high percentage of time spent with new students as they register for and initiate services is likely a function of utilization growing at a faster pace than staffing over the past several years—resulting in less time available for follow-up meetings. With rising student-to-staff ratios, more administrative time is needed to effectively manage the interactive process for greater numbers of students. By reviewing appointment data over time, disability services professionals hope to better understand student appointment patterns to optimize student-staff interactions and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of services.

A less often discussed aspect of the interactive process is facilitating grievance/appeal processes. Disability services staff work diligently to ensure that disabled students receive reasonable accommodations in their living and learning environments and also are aware of their appeal rights when they disagree with decisions made. One of the growing areas for appeals is related to housing accommodation requests (such as requests for single rooms or emotional support animals). Navigating these appeals involves communicating with students, their families, housing staff, legal counsel and, ultimately, with an ADA coordinator or other administrator charged with making final decisions. Considering this growing area of activity, this year the Universities of Wisconsin held a housing accommodation summit attended by both disability services and housing professionals, intended to strengthen relationships and discuss best practices for managing these complex requests and appeal processes.

Finally, continued investment in the professional development of staff is also essential to ensure they are making informed decisions about reasonable accommodations. Staff must be up to date with local, state, and federal laws and regulations as they relate to disability protections. Disability services staff expertise is required for universities to meet their compliance efforts and is supported by AHEAD's (2022) code of ethics and professional competencies for postsecondary disability resource professionals.

Partnering with Faculty & Staff

Accommodation implementation requires partnerships across the university, and disability services staff spend considerable time collaborating with faculty and staff to implement accommodations. These partnerships support implementation of testing accommodations, assistive technology (such as technology-supported note taking), physical access (such as accessible furniture), and communication services (American Sign Language interpreting and real-time captioning).

Many disability services offices are also tasked with facilitating university-wide access more broadly (Scott et al., 2024). For example, some staff participate in university-wide advisory committees, educate the university community about universal design, and offer 1:1 consultation regarding accessibility. Below are some additional ways that disability services staff play a vital role in supporting student access across our universities:

- leading transition and orientation activities for prospective and incoming students;
- planning and facilitating programming related to disability identity, culture, and belonging;
- participating in a variety of university committees including search and screens, accessibility, Behavior Intervention Teams, advisory boards and more;
- providing education to university faculty and staff around shared compliance responsibilities, academic accommodations and implementation, and how to engage additional support for students when needed.

Retention and Graduation

In summer 2024, disability services directors worked with their institutional research and assessment offices to gather data on graduation and retention of students connected with their respective offices. A snapshot of the collected data is included in Figure 7. The average first- to second-year retention rate (Fall 2022 to Fall 2023) of first-year students connected with their disability services office was 83% for all UWs, and 78% for all UWs excluding Madison. Six-year graduation rates of students connected with their disability services office (Fall 2017 to Spring 2023) was 66% for all UWs, and 59% for all UWs excluding Madison. Note that both retention and graduation rates for students affiliated with disability services were very similar to overall UW university retention and graduation rates during the same time periods. Aggregate data for all UW universities, broken down by first-time and transfer students, can be found in Appendix 7.

Figure 7: First- to Second-Year Retention & Six-Year Graduation Rates

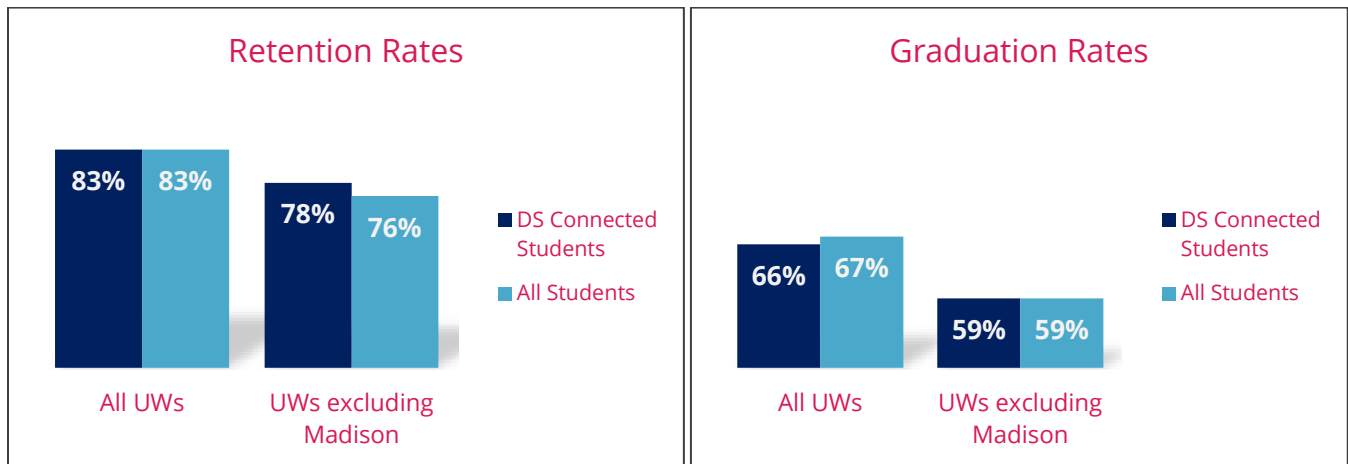


Figure 7 Description: Bar graphs displaying first- to second-year retention rates for students connected with disability services (including Madison, 83%; excluding Madison, 78%) compared to the overall student population (including Madison, 83%; excluding Madison, 76%); and six-year graduation rates for students connected with disability services (including Madison, 66%; excluding Madison, 59%) compared to the overall student population (including Madison, 67%; excluding Madison, 59%)

For point of reference, the National Center for Education Statistics in the U.S. Department of Education (Hinz et al., 2017) reported a first- to second-year retention rate of 64.1% for students with disabilities (compared to 74.3% for all students). They also reported a six-year graduation rate for students with disabilities of 54.2% in four-year institutions and 43.5% for students in two-year institutions². The initial UW data far exceeds these national benchmarks. Gathering this data for the first time was a time-consuming effort and produced some lessons learned regarding data coding practices that will make it easier to extract consistent cohorts for comparison in future reports.

Conclusion and Future Directions

Universities of Wisconsin disability services offices continue to see a trend of more students seeking accommodations, increasingly complex disability presentations, and higher workloads for staff. These offices continually seek innovative ways to use technology to meet student needs and alleviate staff workloads. This report highlighted one example of a transition from using peer notetakers to leveraging notetaking technology.

Like other areas of higher education and society, technology provides both unique benefits and unique challenges when supporting students with disabilities. In May 2023, the Department of Education and Department of Justice issued a “Dear Colleague” letter outlining a renewed call for digital accessibility stating, “online accessibility for people with disabilities cannot be an afterthought” (p. 4). Following this, in April 2024, the Department of Justice issued revised rules under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act to more specifically outline standards for digital accessibility and specifying a two-year timeline for compliance. Thanks to the efforts of the UW President’s Advisory Committee on Disability Issues (PACDI, 2024), UW universities recently completed a multidisciplinary effort to assess their digital accessibility

²Little data exists on national graduation and retention rates of students with disabilities and 2017 was the most recent report from the Department of Education. The 2nd year retention rate is from students who began their post-secondary education in 2011 and 2012. The six-year graduation rate represents students who started in 2003-2004.

ecosystem. As an outcome of the self-assessment, each university received recommendations to help them lay a foundation for ensuring their digital spaces remain accessible now and into the future.

More recently, the Universities of Wisconsin has established an ADA Title II working group to assist all UW universities in complying with the new rules by April 2026. Digital accessibility will continue to influence the landscape of disability services over the next two years and beyond. Ultimately, these changes hold promise to shift a paradigm in digital content delivery, which calls for state and local governments to ensure that web content is accessible to all individuals immediately, without requiring accommodation. As technology is integrated into the student, staff, and faculty experience, this effort will ensure everyone has access.

Ensuring access to digital content requires disabled student experiences as part of decision-making processes. Higher education is being transformed by the possibilities and challenges of generative artificial intelligence (see *Inside Higher Education's [2024] artificial intelligence page*). Artificial intelligence can increase access and, paradoxically, increase instances of disability discrimination (Access Board, 2024). Students with disabilities may encounter bans on artificial intelligence or assignments built around the use of artificial intelligence. From a disability rights perspective, flexibility and access should be the guiding principles when determining use cases for artificial intelligence in educational settings. For example, blanket bans on artificial intelligence in the classroom may affect student access to assistive technology, which can use artificial intelligence to enhance use. As for assignments, instructors must ensure that generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT or Co-Pilot, meet web accessibility standards for screen readers and other assistive technologies. New technologies typically exclude the disabled experience (Access Board, 2024); however, they also have the potential to increase access and promote disabled student success.

Last year's report closed with an endorsement of a PACDI recommendation for creating accessibility training for faculty and staff to assist them in understanding their obligations for creating welcoming and accessible environments for individuals with disabilities. We are happy to report that workgroups have been established to initiate this work during the 2024-25 academic year, with plans to produce several training videos that will be accessible through digital learning management and or HR systems sometime by the 2025-26 academic year.

The landscape for providing disability services and advocating for equal access for disabled students is constantly evolving. This report will continue to share the latest data on students seeking accommodations and the resources needed to serve their needs. We hope it informs both university-level and system-level conversations as together we continue to strive to provide equal access in all university living and learning environments.

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Appendix 1: Total Students with Disabilities by Campus, Nine-Year Trends

ANNUAL TOTALS BY UNIVERSITY/ YEAR	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Eau Claire	495	529	576	662	664	806	730	700	808
Green Bay	239	285	300	323	344	336	357	441	439
La Crosse	445	586	644	721	748	732	871	1,002	1,027
Madison	1,660	1,945	2,220	2,622	2,932	3,667	4,524	5,160	5,410
Milwaukee	883	711	627	971	1,230	1,372	1,370	1,447	1,513
Oshkosh^{1,2}	264	276	491	517	225	357	845	639	1,274
Parkside	335	320	256	368	309	309	385	412	449
Platteville	360	376	377	409	423	445	480	506	564
River Falls	329	352	362	402	434	462	555	671	705
Stevens Point	554	599	638	756	730	673	804	881	1,030
Stout	798	862	564	682	616	657	745	723	756
Superior	111	130	176	131	159	140	149	154	259
Whitewater	951	1,056	1,069	1,134	1,201	1,270	1,256	1,295	1,404
UW Colleges³	593	560	437	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
TOTAL	8,017	8,588	8,737	9,698	1,015	11,226	13,098	14,031	15,638

¹Total students reported for UW Oshkosh from 2017-18 to 2020-21 were from the Accessibility Center only. Beginning in 2021-22, totals also include students served by Project Success. The two offices will merge beginning in Fall 2024.

²UW Oshkosh reported corrected student totals for 2021-22 (851) and 2022-23 (1093) to adjust for an error that resulted in undercounting. Revised totals are not represented in tables and graphs because they would affect all student data reported in prior years.

³UW Colleges totals subsumed into associated four-year campuses beginning 2018-19.

Appendix 2: Disability Categories by University, 2023-24

TOTAL BY DISABILITY CATEGORY/ UNIVERSITY	ADD/ ADHD	AUTISM	BRAIN INJURY	HEALTH CONDITION	HEARING	LEARNING	MOBILITY	PSYCHOLOGICAL	TEMPORARY	VISUAL	OTHER
Eau Claire	350	53	0	162	22	114	5	480	24	11	0
Green Bay	194	42	27	112	24	116	31	331	0	15	4
La Crosse	363	38	56	507	29	196	85	969	40	35	47
Madison	2,008	194	155	1,468	122	697	198	3,366	1669	132	79
Milwaukee	721	136	55	520	55	251	110	1,245	13	62	0
Oshkosh	298	37	81	173	25	272	55	370	29	12	242
Parkside	140	26	6	87	7	54	16	206	32	19	27
Platteville	262	55	8	172	17	121	30	335	11	10	3
River Falls	252	56	9	255	25	213	26	741	10	14	0
Stevens Point	396	84	21	189	32	166	29	609	91	20	0
Stout	284	99	14	109	18	144	22	263	5	10	0
Superior	75	24	19	24	4	56	11	111	18	10	32
Whitewater	492	141	13	380	40	270	92	764	15	42	33
TOTAL	5,835	985	464	4,158	420	2,670	710	9,790	454	392	467

Appendix 3: Primary Disability Categories, Nine-Year Trends

Primary Disability	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Total Change	Percent Change
ADD/ADHD	1,995	2,061	2,102	2,278	2,335	2,497	3,268	3,814	4,403	2,308	116%
Autism	374	383	358	442	448	455	549	618	737	363	97%
Brain Injury	222	256	242	259	219	229	271	287	307	85	38%
Health Condition	889	1,144	1,237	1,560	1,606	1,721	2,021	2,000	2,196	1,307	147%
Hearing	233	227	223	247	254	282	255	238	251	18	8%
Learning	4,180	1,432	1,321	1,429	1,348	1,324	1,682	1,560	1,603	123	8%
Mobility	309	313	298	308	284	280	342	324	375	66	21%
Psychological	1,920	2,329	2,436	3,024	3,138	3,327	4,173	4,528	4,953	3,033	158%
Temporary	135	125	149	159	189	353	422	359	328	193	143%
Visual	154	145	153	164	158	150	172	194	209	55	36%
Other	319	190	293	255	102	116	134	89	334	15	5%
TOTAL	8,030	8,065	8,812	10,135	10,081	10,734	13,289	14,011	15,596	5,981	74%

Appendix 4: Accommodation Data by University, 2023-24

UW University	Testing	Note-Taking	Flex Attend/ Due Dates	Alt. Formats	Housing	Temp.	Emotional Support Animals	Media Captions	Classroom Furniture	Meal/Diet	Speech to Text	Transportation	Sign Lang. Interp.
Eau Claire	674	336	115	222	87	24	0	19	5	10	0	50	1
Green Bay	404	232	102	52	34	0	35	8	3	0	1	0	0
La Crosse	673	295	171	172	113	27	14	6	4	34	0	0	1
Madison	4,238	1,572	1,516	760	625	365	151	85	64	0	43	0	3
Milwaukee	1,235	659	777	364	275	0	96	38	14	0	19	0	10
Oshkosh	1,027	440	332	90	193	74	63	74	65	49	14	123	2
Parkside	218	91	169	51	20	29	18	0	10	1	0	0	0
Platteville	463	312	56	149	153	17	34	10	6	0	2	1	0
River Falls	570	327	364	236	101	24	73	13	9	3	10	15	2
Stevens Point	847	432	373	241	0	82	67	21	6	0	7	0	1
Stout	516	306	18	97	147	0	24	10	0	1	0	0	2
Superior	113	85	147	65	26	95	37	11	0	10	0	0	1
Whitewater	1,162	813	266	532	492	73	73	46	38	70	5	15	10
TOTAL	12,140	5,900	4,406	3,031	2,266	608	685	341	267	178	101	204	33

Appendix 5: Enrollment and Staffing Data by University, 2023-24

UW University	Enrollment	Percentage of Students with Registered Disabilities	Total Staff FTE	Student/Staff Ratio	Access Coordinator FTE ¹	Average Caseload ²
Eau Claire	9,949	8.1%	4.8	170.1	2.0	404
Green Bay	10,338	4.2%	3.0	146.3	1.0	439
La Crosse	10,275	10.0%	5.0	205.4	2.8	373
Madison	50,335	10.7%	32.0	169.1	15.5	349
Milwaukee	22,703	6.7%	14.3	106.2	4.0	378
Oshkosh	13,778	9.2%	8.6	148.3	1.8	728
Parkside	4,030	11.1%	2.0	224.5	1.0	449
Platteville	6,700	8.4%	4.8	118.7	1.5	376
River Falls	5,058	13.9%	2.9	243.1	1.2	588
Stevens Point	8,184	12.6%	4.5	228.9	1.5	687
Stout	6,938	10.9%	4.8	159.2	2.0	378
Superior	2,721	9.5%	1.2	215.8	1.0	259
Whitewater	11,522	12.2%	12.5	112.3	4.1	344
TOTAL	162,531		100.2		39.3	
UW AVERAGE		9.6%		156		389

¹Amount of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff devoted to access coordinator duties

²Students with disabilities served/access coordinator FTE

Appendix 6: Appointment Data, 2023-24

UW University	Total Number of Student Appointments	Total Scheduled Duration of all Appointments (in minutes)	Total Number of Appointments Scheduled with Access Coordinators	Total Scheduled Duration of Access Coordination Appointments (in minutes)	Total Number of Student Appointments for Initial Meetings	Total Scheduled Duration of Initial Meetings (in minutes)
Eau Claire	931	20,510	582	15,030	264	8,950
Green Bay	343	15,385	150		239	12,285
La Crosse	696	38,230	592	32,425	390	11,700
Madison	4,887	247,640	4,414	248,425	2,232	122,505
Milwaukee	1,272	49,580	1059	42,045		
Oshkosh	1,660	104,130	161	9,660	195	5,460
Parkside			264	7920	171	5460
Platteville	822	42,480	822	42,480	250	21,265
River Falls	566	32,380	363	20,500	264	16,180
Stevens Point	1,703	69,337	997	32,235	464	14,760
Stout	479	27,870	416	24,270	194	11,640
Superior	276	8,280	276	8,280	81	2,430
Whitewater			1,673	75,285	512	46,080
Total	13,635	647,542	11,769	558,555	5,256	306,604
UW Average	1,049	49,811	905	42,966	404	23,585

Appendix 7: Retention & Graduation Data

Retention Rates of Students Connected with Disability Services

New Fall 2022 First-Time, First-Year Students			New Fall 2022 Transfer Students		
Number of students	Number retained to Fall 2023	Retention rate	Number of students	Number retained to Fall 2023	Retention rate
2,182	1,821	83%	410	315	77%

Overall Universities Retention Rates

New Fall 2022 First-Time First-Year Students			New Fall 2022 Transfer Students		
Number of students overall	Number retained to Fall 2023	Retention rate	Number of students overall	Number retained to Fall 2023	Retention rate
25,957	21,354	82%	5,476	4,466	82%

Six-Year Graduation Rates of Students Connected with Disability Services

New Fall 2017 First-Time First-Year Students			New Fall 2017 Transfer Students		
Number of students	Number who graduated by Spring 2023	Six-year graduation rate	Number of students	Number who graduated by Spring 2023	Six-year graduation rate
1,199	792	66%	296	204	69%

Overall Universities Six-Year Graduation Rates

New Fall 2017 First-Time First-Year Students			New Fall 2017 Transfer Students		
Number of students	Number who graduated by Spring 2023	Six-year graduation rate	Number of students	Number who graduated by Spring 2023	Six-year graduation rate
25,545	17,068	67%	7,563	5,239	69%

Note: Overall retention and graduation rates are meant to be used as a point of reference. Due to the way in which data on students who use disability services is collected, the retention and graduation rates of test populations may not be directly comparable to the overall student population rates.

Prepared by UW-La Crosse Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning on September 4, 2024

Sources: UW University Institutional Research Offices and Coordinators of Services for Students with Disabilities