

2023 - 2024

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# *Student Handbook*

## **THE BRIDGE**

An inclusive support program  
for students with autism



THE UNIVERSITY of  
**MISSISSIPPI**

School of  
**Education**

\*Revisions may be ongoing throughout the year. The current handbook may be found live on the School of Education homepage [education.olemiss.edu/](http://education.olemiss.edu/)

## PREFACE

This handbook clarifies policies, expectations, and guidelines for individuals involved as a student member of The Bridge Program at The University of Mississippi School of Education.

**The Bridge program office is located in Guyton 231. Communication concerning experiences should be directed to:**

### **The Bridge Program Office**

Guyton 231

662-915-6507

Email: [soebridge@olemiss.edu](mailto:soebridge@olemiss.edu)

The University of Mississippi does not discriminate against any student protected by law based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, veteran status, sexual orientation, or genetic information.

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# **The Bridge Program**

## **Welcome**

The staff of the Bridge program at Ole Miss are delighted that you have chosen to be a part of this support program. We want to make your transition to college easier by placing mentors into your network that understand disabilities and the challenges you may encounter. You will gain a circle of supporters that you can count on when you need a hand. We hope you leave the program with increased self-advocacy skills and also expand your academic, functional, and social skills. The Bridge program looks to provide an inclusive environment at Ole Miss where students with autism can feel like they are a part of a larger community.

## **Vision**

We work to empower students with disabilities, so that they can become successful, independent, self-advocating members of society.

## **Mission**

The mission of the Bridge program is to create an inclusive environment for students with autism, and to uplift and support them so they can develop the social and functional skills needed to transition into adulthood.

## **Program Contacts**

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## Why do you need a mentor?

- ◆ Do you need a study buddy?
- ◆ Do you have anxiety walking into class or engaging in group work?
- ◆ Do you want to have friends to hang out with that share the same interests as you?
- ◆ Do you know how to cook anything in the microwave in the dorm?
- ◆ Do you know how to use the washer and dryer in the dorm?
- ◆ Do you want to eat lunch at Rebel Market or in the Union but are overwhelmed with the experience and don't want to sit by yourself?
- ◆ Do you want to try out an exercise class but have anxiety about going by yourself?
- ◆ Do you wish you had a group of friends to play video games in the dorm with?
- ◆ Do you know how to use your student ID to access your meal plan to get food?
- ◆ Do you need help getting organized for class or organizing your assignments?

If you answered yes to any of these questions and have a diagnosis of autism, you may want to look into the Bridge program at Ole Miss.

## Student Expectations

- ◆ Be open to assistance and ask for help when you need it! Make sure your program contact numbers are readily available. You will have mentors every step of the way.
- ◆ Mentors are responsible for assisting with skills and can study with you; however, you will be responsible for your own work and take your own quizzes, tests, exams, etc.
- ◆ It is your responsibility to visit Student Disability Services (SDS) for your specific accommodations if you need them. Your mentor or a program contact can assist.
- ◆ Make sure to refer to *The University M Book* for general policy governing the University of Mississippi.

## How A Mentor Can Help

You may request a mentor in any of the following settings. You will work with the program coordinator and manager to determine the best fit for you.

### ◆ **Classroom**

A classroom mentor gives support by teaching organizational skills, how to prepare for deadlines, communication techniques with professors, following a syllabus, note taking, and preparing for exams and assignments. A mentor is not there to complete work for you, but to guide you. They can help rephrase information so you can understand it better. You can study together, but you are expected to take exams or quizzes on your own. You may have accommodations that are provided through Student Disability Services (SDS). It is your responsibility to contact SDS to obtain those. Your mentor can go with you and help you through this process.

### ◆ **Social**

You may want a mentor to meet you for a social event on campus. Ex: function on the union plaza, concert in the grove, game day in the grove, breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Their goals may be to help you get registered for events and be there as a support. For some students, social gatherings, especially large ones, can be intimidating. Take a buddy with you.

### ◆ **Dorm**

A dorm buddy can serve as a point of contact for help navigating dorm life. Do you need help with things like organization, routines, using microwaves, washing clothes, grabbing a snack at night, occupying idle time, safety, and evacuation procedures? Is it hard for you to make friends in the dorm? Mentors are a bridge to help you expand your network.

### ◆ **Workplace**

A mentor can assist in an internship or job setting. They can teach you the skills necessary to become successful in your workplace. Ex: the importance of punctuality, procedures, how to respond appropriately to your supervisor and co-workers, accept critique or direction appropriately, and speak to customers if applicable. Your mentor is not there to complete the work for you, but help you navigate the ins/outs and stressors of a new position.



## Resources

<b>University of Mississippi M Book</b>	<a href="https://olemiss.edu/info/2023-2024_Accessible_MBook_1.0_Aug_2023.pdf">https://olemiss.edu/info/2023-2024_Accessible_MBook_1.0_Aug_2023.pdf</a>
<b>Wellness and Counseling Services on Campus</b>	<b>COPE</b> <a href="http://cope.olemiss.edu/">http://cope.olemiss.edu/</a> <b>University Counseling</b> <a href="https://counseling.olemiss.edu/">https://counseling.olemiss.edu/</a> <b>William Magee Center</b> <a href="https://magee-center.olemiss.edu/">https://magee-center.olemiss.edu/</a> <b>Student Health Center</b> <a href="https://healthcenter.olemiss.edu/">https://healthcenter.olemiss.edu/</a> <b>UMatter</b> <a href="https://umatter.olemiss.edu/">https://umatter.olemiss.edu/</a>
<b>Student Disability Services</b>	<a href="https://sds.olemiss.edu/">https://sds.olemiss.edu/</a>
<b>The Writing Center</b>	<a href="https://writingcenter.olemiss.edu/">https://writingcenter.olemiss.edu/</a>