How to DO-IT: An Overview

> "I hope DO-IT will help me learn how to get the accommodations I need to help me reach my goals."
> *–DO-IT Scholar*

Creating and running the *DO-IT Scholars* program takes a team! This chapter includes details about student recruitment, the application and selection processes, and the overall program sequence for participants. The content is adapted from the publication *DO-IT Scholars* (DO-IT, 2006a). View the video *How DO-IT Does It* to better understand planning and implementation steps. It can be purchased from DO-IT in DVD format or freely viewed online at *http://www.washington.edu/doit/Brochures/*.

The *DO-IT Scholars*

DO-IT Scholars are college-capable students with disabilities who have leadership potential. They typically begin their participation as *Scholars* at the end of their sophomore year of high school. *Scholars* have a variety of disabilities, including visual impairments, hearing impairments, mobility impairments, health impairments, attention deficits, Asperger's Syndrome, and learning disabilities. Some students receive special education services in their schools. Many use academic accommodations to access curriculum materials and classroom activities.

As part of the *DO-IT Scholars* program, high school students

- learn to select and use adaptive technology,
- experience college life on a university campus,
- network with peers and working professionals with disabilities,
- learn to identify reasonable accommodations at school and in the workplace,
- explore careers and the world of work, and
- gain prerequisite knowledge to enter and succeed in college and challenging careers.

The video and complementary publication entitled *Snapshots: The DO-IT Scholars* provide an overview of the program. They are freely available from DO-IT (with video in DVD format) or online at *http://www.washington.edu/doit/Brochures/*.

Recruitment

To recruit students, email messages and information packets with applications are sent to high schools, school districts, and community organizations throughout Washington State, the region for which the *DO-IT Scholars* program is currently funded. DO-IT staff members participate in conferences year-round to distribute additional applications and brochures. Press releases are sent to relevant media to announce the application process and encourage students to apply. Staff members also make personal phone calls to under-represented areas of the state to speak with special education teachers and other educators about the *DO-IT Scholars* program. Since many *Scholars*, *Mentors*, and parents know other people who have disabilities, the entire DO-IT community is encouraged to recruit applicants.

Application

High school sophomores and juniors with disabilities who are residents of Washington State are encouraged to apply by January to be considered in the first round of selection by the DO-IT Advisory Board. Priority is given to students in their sophomore year of high school. Twenty *Scholars* are accepted each year, and their multiple years of program involvement are funded by Washington State. Occasionally an organization chooses to fund an additional *Scholar* from another state.

Each student who applies to be a *DO-IT Scholar* must complete a student application and provide a (a) school transcript, (b) recommendation from a high school teacher or administrator, and (c) letter of recommendation and consent from a parent or guardian. A sample DO-IT application form can be found in Appendix A.

Selection

The DO-IT Advisory Board selects the *DO-IT Scholars*. The Board consists of community members, professionals, and parents of students with disabilities. Each Board member reviews applications and recommends participants according to the following criteria:

- *Interest* in pursuing college and a challenging career, as evidenced by personal responses to application questions and by letters of recommendation.
- *Aptitude* to succeed in college, as determined by letters of recommendation and by academic record.
- *Motivation* to participate in the program, as evidenced by personal responses to a question about desire to participate and by letters of recommendation.
- *Potential benefit* to be gained from the program and contribute to diversity of the participant pool, as evidenced by all application materials.

DO-IT Advisory Board members choose participants who will benefit the most from the program and represent a wide variety of disabilities and other characteristics. Selected applicants are notified in the spring by phone and mail. Applicants who are not accepted are

> "DO-IT will help me see what living on a college campus is like for a person with Cerebral Palsy. I hope to determine whether I want to live on campus or continue living at home while going to school."
> *–DO-IT Scholar*

notified by mail and given the option of applying the following year if they continue to meet eligibility requirements. All applicants who are not accepted as *DO-IT Scholars* are urged to join the *DO-IT Pals* online community (*http://www.washington. edu/doit/Brochures/Programs/pals.html*) and participate in other DO-IT activities.
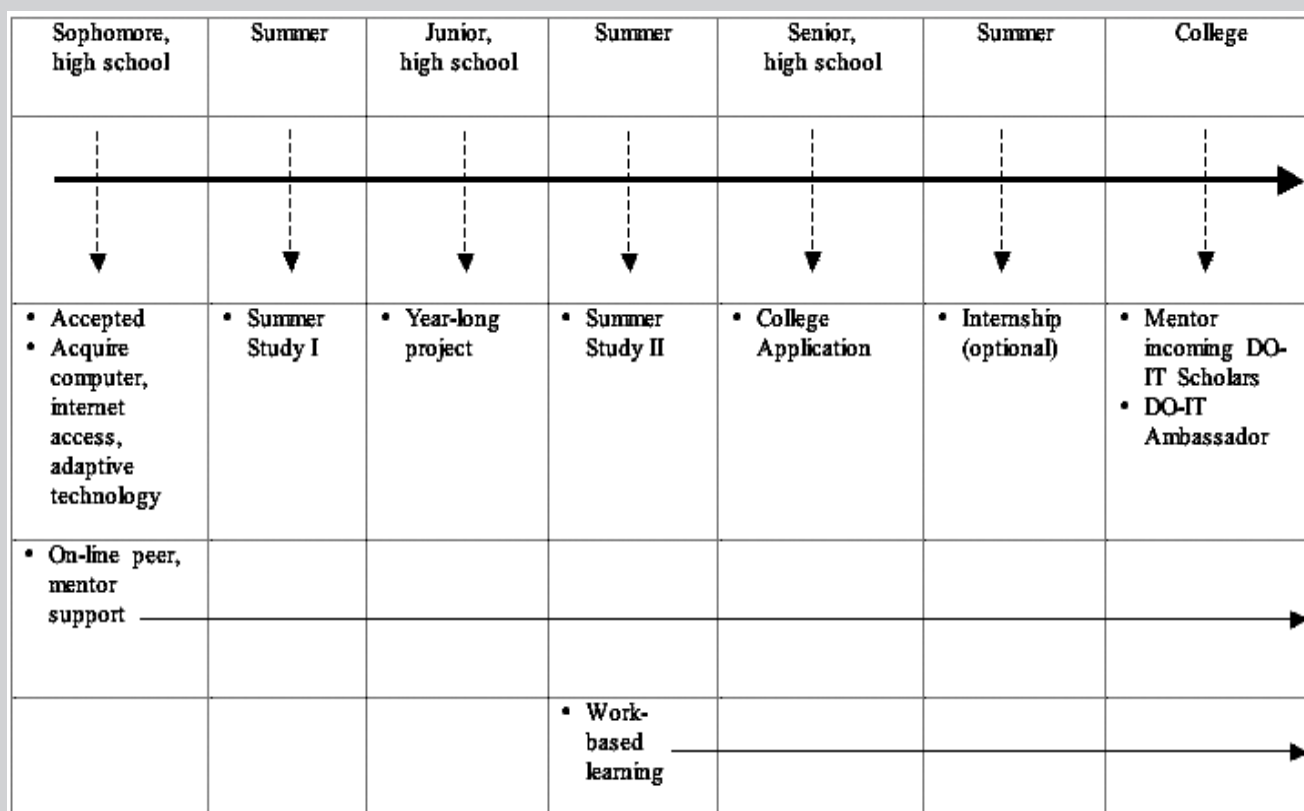
Students become Phase I *DO-IT Scholars* once accepted into the program. Phase I

Scholars begin interactions with DO-IT staff members, receive computer technology in their homes, and are introduced by email to the electronic community of peers and mentors.

DO-IT Scholar Activities

The figure below illustrates a *DO-IT Scholar's* typical progression through the program. The following section describes program components in more detail.

DO-IT Scholar Typical Participation Timeline

Sophomore, high school	Summer	Junior, high school	Summer	Senior, high school	Summer	College
• Accepted • Acquire computer, internet access, adaptive technology	• Summer Study I	• Year-long project	• Summer Study II	• College Application	• Internship (optional)	• Mentor incoming DO-IT Scholars • DO-IT Ambassador
• On-line peer, mentor support						→
			• Work-based learning			→

The *DO-IT Scholars* program consists of three phases. After *Scholars* graduate from high school and begin college they become *DO-IT Ambassadors*, mentor the younger Scholars, and assist with DO-IT activities. *Scholars* and *Ambassadors* engage in internships and other work-based learning activities throughout their participation in DO-IT. This diagram was adapted from the one originally published by Kim-Rupnow and Burgstahler (2004).

Phase I (Year One)
Scholars
Phase I *Scholars* are high school students in their sophomore or junior year. In Phase I, *DO-IT Scholars* participate in the following activities:

Internetworking. *DO-IT Scholars* learn to use computers to enrich their education and to explore academic and career interests via the Internet. From home, they communicate electronically with *DO-IT Mentors* and other participants using computers, the Internet, and, as needed, special assistive technology. *DO-IT Scholars* who do not have the necessary technology are loaned computer equipment and software while they participate in program activities.

Mentoring. Frequent electronic communications and personal contacts bring *Scholars* together with *DO-IT Mentors* to facilitate academic, career, and personal achievements. *Mentors* are college students, faculty, and professionals in technology and other challenging fields, many with disabilities themselves.

"In Summer Study I saw what college life is really like, and met people who are going through similar situations to mine."
–DO-IT Scholar

Summer Study I. During a two-week, live-in summer program at the University of Washington in Seattle, *DO-IT Scholars* participate in academic lectures and labs, live in residence halls, learn about how to secure postsecondary accommodations, and practice skills that will help them be independent and successful in a college setting.

Phase II (Year Two) *Scholars*
Phase II *DO-IT Scholars* are high school juniors or seniors. Phase II *Scholars* are supported with information about college application procedures, entrance requirements, scholarships, and additional tips and resources to help them prepare for college. They participate in the following activities:

"I am looking forward to being a part of the DO-IT program so that I can learn about technology that will assist me with my disabilities and meet new people."
–DO-IT Scholar

Projects. *DO-IT Scholars* apply their interests, skills, and knowledge to design and complete independent and team projects. *DO-IT Mentors* and staff act as resources.

Internetworking and Mentoring. *DO-IT Scholars* develop and practice communication and leadership skills by acting as peer mentors for incoming Phase I *DO-IT Scholars*. Communication occurs in-person during the Summer Study program and electronically throughout the year.

Summer Study II. *DO-IT Scholars* return to the University of Washington campus for a one-week, live-in summer program to create and complete group projects of personal interest. They also continue to prepare for college and explore careers.

Phase III (Year Three) *Scholars*

Phase III includes opportunities for *DO-IT Scholars* to mentor younger *Scholars* and otherwise contribute to the DO-IT community. Examples of individual activities include developing campus programs for students with disabilities, participating on DO-IT panels, contributing to the DO-IT newsletter, and assisting with summer camps.

Life Stages of DO-IT Participants	
Level	Participants
High School	*DO-IT Scholars*
College	*DO-IT Ambassadors* *DO-IT Mentors*
Careers	*DO-IT Ambassadors* *DO-IT Mentors*

Ambassadors (after high school graduation)

A *Scholar* who graduates from high school can become a *DO-IT Ambassador*. An *Ambassador* helps with program activities, participates in electronic communications, and mentors *Scholars*. *Ambassadors* are eligible to become interns during the live-in Summer Study program. Interns serve as peer mentors and support DO-IT staff with a range of duties and responsibilities during the summer program.

For more information about the *DO-IT Scholars* program, view the video and consult the publication titled *DO-IT Scholars*. They can be found online, along with other DO-IT videos and publications, at *http://www.washington.edu/doit/Brochures/*. They can also be obtained (with video in DVD format) from DO-IT.

Sample Documents

Consult the following Appendices for samples of application forms and information sheets for the *DO-IT Scholars* Program.

- Appendix A: Program Application and Parent/Guardian Consent

- Appendix B: Participant Information

- Appendix C: Parent/Guardian Consent for Summer Study Activities

- Appendix D: Media Release

- Appendix E: Volunteer Application Form

- Appendix F: Publications Release

What's Next

The next chapters describe how staff prepare DO-IT Scholars for participation and how major components of the program are developed, organized, and implemented.
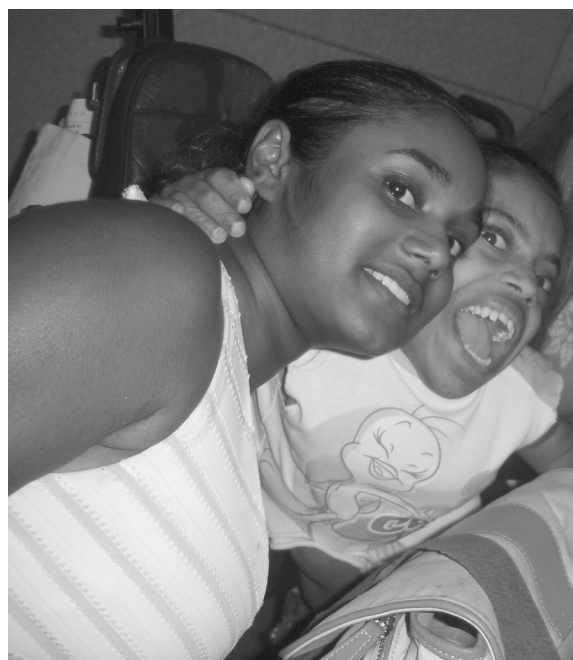
'02 Scholars

'04 Scholars

'05 Scholars

'06 Scholars