

Resources for Students with Disabilities Transitioning to College



References:

College Transition for Students with Disabilities Symposium, Students Accessibility Support Center. [Google Slides Presentations]. SUNY Stonybrook University

Hamblet, Elizabeth, C., National Professional Resources, Transitioning to College, A Guide for Students with Disabilities, 3rd Edition, 2023

Minnesota State College & Universities. Post Secondary Guide, Successfully Preparing Students with Disabilities for the Postsecondary Environment, 2014.

High School vs. Post-Secondary Education: What is Different?

In high school, students are entitled to receive special education services under IDEA. Accommodation requests fall under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) at college, postsecondary school, vocational training programs, and/or workplace. Accommodations need to be initiated by the student. The following chart highlights some differences.

Accommodations In College

High School (IDEA)	Post-Secondary (ADA)
Services are provided under IDEA, or section 504 Rehabilitation Act	Services are provided under ADA or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
Parents/Family members and students advocate	Students self-identify by communicating their needs
Parents/Family members have access to student's records	Students have sole access to their records unless consent is given
School district provides educational evaluations	Students are responsible for obtaining their own evaluation
Parents/Family members and teachers set goals and management needs for students and organization	Students must organize and structure their own time
State safety nets are in place for graduation	No state safety nets in place for graduation
Provides related services such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech services	Students are responsible for seeking out needed supports
Transportation is provided if necessary	Transportation is the students responsibility

Accessing Accommodations In College

- It is the student's responsibility to obtain and maintain accommodations.
- Some colleges may have the student reapply for accommodations every semester or year.
- Students may have to submit accommodation requests for exams to their college's accessibility office to receive certain testing accommodations.
- Students should research the accommodations available at their potential college with an accessibility counselor prior to enrollment.

Common Accommodations

- Extended time on assessments, e.g. quizzes, midterms, and final exams
- Testing in an alternative location
- Breaks during exams
- Calculator or laptop access
- Assistive Technology
- Accessible specific classroom seating/layout
- Accessible specific housing/dorming
- American Sign Language interpreters

Researching and Choosing the Right College

- Does the college offer the support I need?
- Does the campus fit my needs? Class size?
- Do you want to be able to travel home from school easily?
- Some schools may offer specific summer transition programs.
- Inquire about adaptive tech, tutors, test-taking accommodations, and test center availability, ask how you receive accommodations if no test center is available
- Register for your accommodations.
- Arrive as early as possible before the first day of class
 - Having a contact person is key to long term success.
 - Ask early if you need specific accommodations.

Preparing for Postsecondary Education

- Self-advocacy in knowing how to make decisions, and identifying resources in the college.
- Learn how to access resources such as career, academic, and health services.
- Students must understand their disability and what specific things they need to succeed. Encourage students to participate in IEP meetings. Students should have an understanding of their learning style
- Keep updated documents of disability readily available to provide if requested.
- Establish a system of how to appropriately communicate and interact with professors and college staff.

College Disability /Student Access Services & Resources

Levels of College Disability Services

- **Basic Accommodations:** The disability office may offer accommodations such as extended time for exams and permission to record lectures.
- **Enhanced Supports:** Some schools offer free or paid weekly meetings with a learning coach or specialist.
- **Colleges that exclusively serve students with disabilities:** Schools where all students have learning differences.

Connecting with the College Disability/Student Access Service Office

- Students must initiate contact to access Disability Services.
- Submit paperwork including most recent medical documentation and evaluations to support the need for accommodations.
- Set up an appointment to discuss your needs.

Role of the College Disability Services Counselor

- Facilitating accommodations for students with disabilities.
- Providing accessibility information about their disability services.
- Protecting students confidentiality.

What documents will College Disabilities/Student Access Services need?

Each college is unique in what they require to access student accommodations. In general, universities do not accept high school IEPs as sufficient documentation for a disability. Colleges typically accept the educational evaluation results from high school, including report results of psychological and educational testing administered within three years. In addition, any specific medical diagnosis needs to be documented by a health care provider, licensed psychologist or other qualified health professional within the past year.

Reasonable Housing Accommodations

Documentation is needed to request any accommodations. Residential accommodation must be directly related to students' disability or medical condition. Students need to clearly specify how their disability or medical condition affects them and which residential accommodations are helpful.

Examples of Residential Accommodations:

- A Single Room (students needing more space for independent living/medical reasons.)
- Access to a private bathroom (medical reasons)
- First-floor room (mobility reasons)
- Dietary request in dining hall (allergies/dietary restrictions)
- Keypad entry for room and mailbox (students with physical limitations)
- Flashing fire alarms (students with auditory limitations)

Campus Resources



Office of Student Services

Academic Advisors

Student Health and Wellness Centers