

# Disability Service in Higher Education

Kate Shannon

Manhattanville University

# Agenda

Overview of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Overview of how accommodations work in college.

What steps you can take to help your student prepare for college.

What to look for in your college search.

Questions and Answers

# Legal Rights of Students with Disabilities

High School	College
Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• IDEA is about <b>success</b>.</li></ul>	Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and as Amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ASA is about access.</li></ul>
Fundamental modifications of programs and curricula are required.	No fundamental modifications are required- only academic adjustments.
Education is a right and must be provided in an appropriate environment to all individuals.	Education is not a right- students must meet the same admission criteria as their peers.
May have received modifications to the school's behavior code.	Expected to abide by the college's code of conduct, regardless of disability.
Teacher are informed of a student's accommodations/modifications.	Students need to give professors their accommodation letters.

# Differentiation in Responsibilities

High School	College
The <b>school district</b> is responsible for identifying a student's disability.	<b>Student</b> must self-identify with the appropriate campus disability/accessibility office.
The <b>school district</b> develops Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) to define educational services.	<b>Student</b> must identify their needs and request services.
The <b>school district</b> provides free evaluations.	The <b>student</b> needs to obtain evaluations at their own expense.
Primary responsibility for arranging modifications belongs to the <b>school</b> .	Primary responsibility for self-advocacy and arranging academic adjustments belongs to the <b>student</b> (who may seek assistance from Disability Services).
Student is supported by <b>parents and teachers</b> .	<b>Student</b> is responsible for seeking assistance from the <b>Disability Services Office</b> , which exists to ensure equal access to students with disabilities.

# Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Guarantees students with disabilities a free, appropriate, public education.

Emphasizes success by providing specialized instruction and related services to help students meet educational standards.

Schools are required to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities from birth through age 21

# Section 504

Plans are developed by a team that includes parents, teachers, school counselors etc.

Schools are required to ensure that accommodations are implanted and monitored.

Parents have strong involvement and rights to mediation and due process.

# Student Perspective in High School

Teachers receive a copy of the student's IEP/504 Plan at the beginning of the year.



Teachers are responsible for ensuring they follow the IEP or 504 Plan.



Teachers, parents, and special education teacher might discuss student concerns and work to resolve challenges the student is facing.

# High School Parent Perspective

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Parents often take an active role in their student's education.

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Parents attend yearly annual review meetings.

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Parents might reach out to teachers with questions or concerns regarding their child.

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Teachers might reach out to parents with concerns about the student.

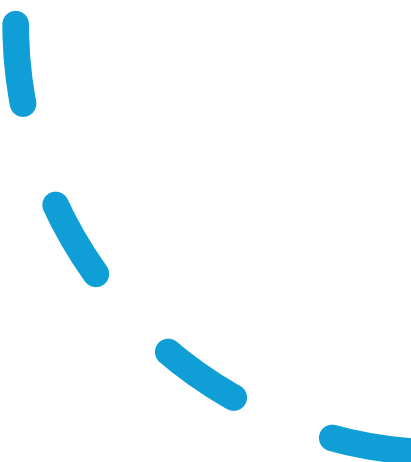


# Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504

- College students with disabilities are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Amendments Act 2008), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- Prohibits the discrimination of **otherwise qualified** individuals with a disability.
- Requires colleges to provide **reasonable accommodations** to remove barriers.
- Your institution, regardless of where you go, is required to provide appropriate academic adjustments/accommodations to ensure that it does not discriminate on the basis of disability.



# Breaking Down the ADA: “Person with a Disability.”

- The ADA defines **disability** as a person with a physical or mental impairment that significantly limits at least one major life activity.
  - **Major life activities** include, but are not limited to, seeing, hearing, walking, breathing, learning, concentrating, speaking etc.
  - Disability is a valuable part of diversity.
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# Breaking Down The ADA: “Otherwise Qualified.”



An “otherwise qualified” individual is a person who, with or without reasonable accommodations, meets the requirements for a program or employment position.



This might mean having a certain GPA, test score, or prerequisite course.

# Breaking Down the ADA: Reasonable Accommodations

**Reasonable accommodations** must be provided to eligible students with disabilities in order for them to **access** essential course content and essential learning activities.

**A reasonable** accommodation is one that does not represent a fundamental alteration to a program.

Accommodations must be directly linked to a functional limitation posed by a disability.

Two people with the same diagnosis might qualify for different accommodations.

Reasonable accommodations aim to create an equal playing field; they do not guarantee success.

# Fundamental Alteration

An accommodation can be denied.....

- If it is not related to the disability.
- If it fundamentally alters a program.
- If it is unreasonable.
- If it poses an institutional burden.

Decisions about Fundamental Alterations are made on a case-by-case basis.

# Common Accommodations

- Extended time on exams.
- Separate testing location.
- Closed captioning.
- Use of assistive technology for reading and notetaking.

\*Assistive Technology includes any equipment, software, or product used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

# Assistive Technology

- Any tool used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.
- Includes programs for speech-to-text and text-to-speech.
- The assistive technology offered at colleges will vary.
- Colleges do not need to provide a student with a preferred assistive technology program; they simply need to provide one that meets the student's disability-related needs.
- Colleges are not required to provide personal care items.

# Requesting Accommodations in College

Students are responsible for self-identifying by reaching out to the college office that handles disability accommodations/accessibility (please note that office names vary widely).

Students will likely need to complete a short intake application and attend a meeting with a representative from the office.

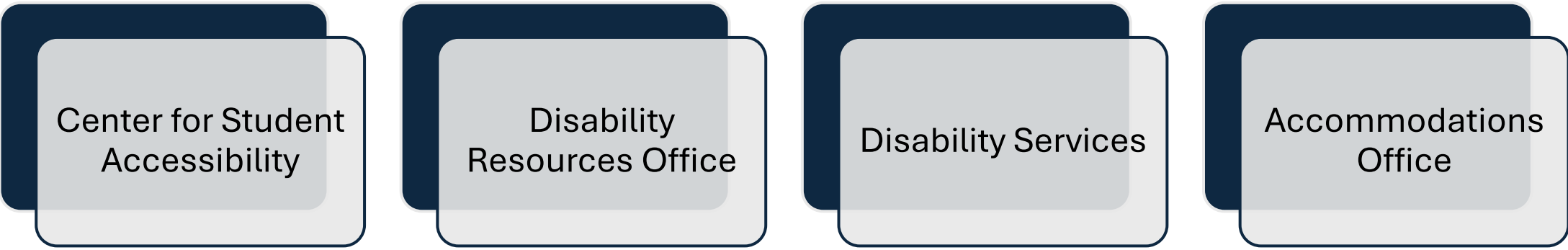
The student should come to this meeting prepared to discuss their disability, previous accommodations they have received, and what they are requesting.

Student should come with documentation (if this has not already been uploaded).





# Names of Disability Services Offices



Center for Student  
Accessibility

Disability  
Resources Office

Disability Services

Accommodations  
Office

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# Common Intake Meeting Questions

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- What is your disability or disabling condition?
- How does your disability impact your academics?
- How does your disability impact your daily life?
- What previous accommodations have you received?
- What accommodations are you requesting and how do these accommodations remove barriers posed by your disability?





# Documentation Requirements

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- The student is responsible for providing documentation.
- Institutions may set their own requirements for documentation as long as they are reasonable and comply with Section 504 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Specific standards often vary between institutions.
- The primary purpose of documentation is to establish the presence of a disability and the functional limitations it imposes.

## Is a student's IEP Plan or 504 Plan sufficient documentation?

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Often these documents are insufficient alone because they do not provide enough information to support the existence of a current disability and the need for academic adjustments.

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Information can still be helpful when paired with documentation that explains the disability, the process through which the disability was diagnosed, and the functional limitations posed by the disability.

# Decisions about Accommodations

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Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

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There are no blanket accommodations tied to specific diagnoses because the same disability can present differently from one student to another.

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Providers look for a clear connection (not “nexus”) between the functional limitation posed by a disability and the requested accommodation.

This may vary from institution to institution, but generally, your college will generate a letter for you. On this letter, it will have your name, ID#, and a list of all accommodations you've been approved to utilize.



You then can provide this letter to any, all, or none of your instructors for the semester. Remember: the responsibility to disclose always lies with you.

# I've Been Approved for Accommodations: Now What?

# I've Decided I Have Different Accommodati on Needs After my Intake: What Can I do?

- Reach back out to your disability/access/accommodation office! Accommodations are not set in stone for your entire time at the institution
  - This is kind of the point of the accommodations “process”: We want you to advocate for yourself and speak openly about your needs, and we understand that this may be the first time you’ve ever had to do that. Don’t be afraid to say that an accommodation isn’t working for you, and you’d like to explore further options.
- The most important part of the intake process is the student’s point of view – your documentation is an important piece, but you are the first and foremost expert on your needs.
- You can reach out the next day, or 4 years from your intake – situations change and nothing is set in stone

# Role of Post-Secondary Disability Services Provider

- Most institutions have one or two staff members who attend the needs of all students with disabilities attending the institution.
- The disability coordinator evaluates documentation, works with students to determine appropriate services, assists students in arranging services or testing modifications, and deals with problems as they arise.
- May connect with a student two or three times a semester.
- Usually do not provide direct academic support or tutoring (i.e. Disability Offices are not equivalent to HS Resource Rooms or Learning Centers).



# Accommodations can Go Beyond the Classroom

If the college offers it, it most likely needs to be accessible

- Residence halls.
- Events.
- Clubs.
- Dining Services.
- Facilities.
- Student Services
- Etc.



# Code of Conduct

All students must follow their college's Code of Conduct, regardless of disability status.

Students may request a reasonable accommodation to help them adhere to the Code of Conduct, but they cannot be excused from these rules because of disability.

Students with disabilities who violate these codes are subject to the same disciplinary measures as all students.

They may request reasonable accommodations during any required conduct hearings.



# Student Perspective of College

- Student needs to disclose their disability to their university's disability services office.
  - Student will likely need to give their professor an accommodation letter or grant the disability services office permission to do so.
  - Student might need to schedule exams for which they will be using their accommodations.
  - Student must reach out to get support if they are struggling.
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# Parent Perspective of College

- As an adult, your child is protected by the Family Educational Records Privacy Act (FERPA).
  - Staff will likely communicate directly with students when issues arise and are generally not required to interact with students' parents
  - Parents cannot speak with anyone from campus about their child's grades or academic progress unless they receive explicit permission from their child in the form of a proxy waiver.
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# College Readiness

## Critical Skills

- Self Advocacy and Wellness
- Time Management
- Study Skills
- Daily Living
- Geographic orientation for accessible routes to, and within, campus buildings.
- Digital Literacy.

# Knowledge of Disability

Students should know the functional limitations that result from their disabilities.



Understand their strengths and weaknesses.



Students should feel comfortable discussing this information in a professional setting.





# Self-Advocacy

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- Encourage your child to start advocating for themselves.
- Get your student used to checking their email.
- Encourage your student to become familiar with technology.



# How Can I Help Prepare my Student

- Encourage your student to participate in their IEP or Section 504 meetings.
- Have your child email their teachers when they have questions or concerns about class material.
- Make sure your student is comfortable speaking with others about their needs.



# Disability-Related Clubs and Activities

Disability advocacy clubs (example: Manhattanville has the Manhattanville Valiant Access Club).

Delta Alpha Pi (International Disability honor society).

Neurodiversity groups.

Mental health awareness clubs, such as Active Minds.

# Paid Programming

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Some colleges offer paid programs to support students with disabilities.

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These might include programs for tutoring, skill-building, executive functioning coaching, or social skills support.

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Manhattanville University offers the Valiant Learning Support Program and the Pathways and Connections Program.

# Summer Transition Programs

- Some colleges offer summer bridge or transition programs.
- Programs may be open to high school students in general or just incoming students.
- Programs focus on skill-building for a successful high-school-to-college transition.
- Some college, such as Manhattanville, offer early move in and a special orientation for students enrolled in paid support programs.



# Additional Campus Resources



- Most colleges has resources that are available to all students, such as Writing Centers, Peer Tutoring, Professional Tutoring, Workshops, etc.
- Services might be provided in different formats (i.e. in-person or virtually).
- Faculty office hours.
- Most colleges also provide health and counseling services to all full-time undergraduate students.

# Questions?

**Kate Shannon, MA, MS.**

Assistant Director of the Center for Student Accessibility

Manhattanville University

[Kate.Shannon@mville.edu](mailto:Kate.Shannon@mville.edu)