

Transitioning to College

Successful Access for Students who are Disabled

Young people with learning, mental health, and/or physical disabilities have the same rights to access college programs as their non-disabled peers.

Colleges and post-secondary programs are required to provide accommodations to students with disabilities (section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973).

Parents and students have an important role in working to create an environment that allows the student to have a positive and successful experience in college.

Steps for Successful Transition

Start in High School

Make certain that transition meetings begin when the student is between ages 14 - 16. Discuss post-secondary plans. Discuss services and supports required so student has the academic and social tools to transition.

Access the 504 Plan

Students with disabilities have "504 Plans" and these accommodations will be relevant to the student's college experience. Get a copy of the 504 Plan and discuss potential additional needs before the student graduates from high school.



Accommodations in College - Burden is on Student and Family

Students and families are responsible for seeking accommodations for the student's disabilities. Tips for patients:

- Identify appropriate department at the college
- Schedule a meeting to discuss required accommodations before start of academic year. Find out what information is required for the meeting, such as required medical documentation of the disability.
- Before the meeting, write a list accommodations that might be necessary to discuss at meeting.
- Contact medical provider for suggestions, such as new medical needs for student living away from home.
- Think about everything: accessing classes, class schedule, making up work in event of illness or hospitalization, housing, transportation, medical plans, food services, etc.

Colleges are required to accommodate to the student with a disability. All students should have access to college programs.

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Guide to Access for Students and Families

The Obligation to Ask for Accommodations is on the Student - Not on the College

Unlike in elementary school or high school, college students who are disabled must seek out the accommodations they need and ask for them.

Students and Families Must Ask for Accommodations

Students and families should:

1. Call the college and find out which person or department is in charge of accommodations for students.
2. Student/parent must arrange to meet with the person or department before school starts to develop an accommodation plan.
3. Medical documentation of the student's disability must be provided to the college.

The College is Not Required to Change the Curriculum or Academic Requirements

The college is not required to change the curriculum or academic requirements of their classes even for students with disabilities.

The College Must Make Programming Accessible to a Student with a Disability

The college is required to make academic programming accessible to the student, regardless of disability.

Possible Accommodations

There is no pre-existing list of accommodations for college students who are disabled. Accommodations are based on the student's specific disability.

The college is required to provide accommodations for all aspects of a student's college experience, including class attendance, housing, transportation, medical access, etc.

Here are some possible accommodations a student may ask for:

Classes

- Class recorded
- Remote attendance (Skype, etc) or online classes
- Help to take notes
- Assisted technology
- Tutor or Interpreter

Housing and Access

- Housing with accommodations (handicapped access, near classroom buildings, dining hall, etc)
- Transportation on campus
- Priority parking

Medical

- Emergency plan
- Access to medical services
- Transportation to physician and hospital

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