

Accommodations in College: Successfully Navigating the Transition

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Objectives

- Discuss the transition from high school to college
- Explain differences in accommodations in high school and college
- Explain how to access accommodations in college
- Review students' rights and responsibilities related to their accommodations in college

The Transition

- It's a big step for all students and their parents.
- Disabled students will experience all the same challenges as their peers including:
 - Admissions questions/challenges
 - Paying for college
 - Learning time management
 - Learning study skills
 - Adapting to more challenging content in classes
 - Selecting a major
 - Learning how to access resources (tutoring, counseling, meetings with professors, etc.)

The Transition

Disabled students will face some additional barriers

- Figuring out the accommodation process
- Understanding new/different accommodations than they have previously used
- Possibly learning new software as part of their accommodations
- Learning the testing center process on campus (if using testing accommodations)
- Learning what to do if they encounter inaccessible course content or other access barriers on campus

Differences in high school and college accommodations

HIGH SCHOOL

Governed by IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

- Purpose is to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free and appropriate public education that is designed to meet their unique needs

COLLEGE

Governed by ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

- Purpose is to provide equitable access to disabled students otherwise qualified for the program, activity, etc.

Differences in high school and college accommodations

So what does all that mean?

- In college, all students must be able to meet the same learning outcomes/objectives, either with or without an accommodation.
- In college, accommodations cannot fundamentally alter the class, program, or activity or its requirements.
- This means that a person's accommodations might be different than they were in high school.
- Keep in mind that college may have settings that high school didn't as well, such as Residence Halls.
- Some examples: different exam formats, less answer choices

Where do you go for accommodations?

- Typically typing “disability” and the college or university name into a search will produce the right office
- Sample office names - Disability Resource Center, Accessibility Services and Resources, Services for Students with Disabilities, Office for Disability Access
- The correct office usually has “disability,” “access,” or “accessibility” in the name
- Academic advisors or other university personnel should be able to help you find the office

When do you ask for accommodations?

- It is usually best to submit information no later than the summer prior to starting.
- Some schools will allow you to send information in as soon as you make the decision to attend (accept your offer of admission)
- You can always call or email to ask questions, especially once you are admitted

How to access accommodations in college

Students should contact the Disability Resources Office at their college

- Students generally fill out a form/online form and submit appropriate documentation

What does “appropriate documentation” mean?

- Each college can set their own policies for documentation requirements.
- Generally, documentation must be:
 - current,
 - provided/signed by a qualified evaluator, and
 - describe the disability and its impact such that barriers to access can be understood

Students' Responsibilities

- Students must self-identify as early as possible - accommodations are not retroactive
 - Students must complete the process at their chosen college to set up the accommodations - submitting required paperwork, meeting with Disability Resources staff, communicating with professors, and scheduling exams in the testing center
 - Students are responsible for letting Disability Resources know if there are any issues with their accommodations during the semester
 - Students must renew their requests each semester
- *This process may look a little different on each campus

Students' Rights

- Students can submit new requests/documentation at any time but are encouraged to do so as early as possible
 - Remember...accommodations are not retroactive
- Students can expect their disability information including connection with the Disability Resources Office to remain confidential
 - The students' information is confidential even from parents, as the students are now adults
- Accommodations approved by the Disability Resource Center must be provided unless they are determined to be a fundamental alteration of the course

Common Accommodations

- Extended testing time
- Reduced distraction environment for testing
- Breaks
- Recording lectures (digital recorders, Smart Pens, apps on computer or phone)
- Copies of PowerPoints
- Alternate Formats (often referred to as audiobooks, but there are multiple formats) and use of any related software (Jaws, Kurzweil, Read & Write)
- Sign Language Interpreters/Real-time Transcription
- Disability Related Absences/Flexible Attendance

Questions???

Please put any questions in the Q&A box.

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