

# *Additional Considerations*

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## **Services for Students with Learning Disabilities**

All colleges and universities have programs or services that respond to the needs of students with learning disabilities. This page will help you gather the necessary information to find a match between your needs and the array of options available.

Before starting your college search, you and your parents should talk to your School Counselor, classroom teachers, and special education teacher if applicable; to be clear about the specific services you will need in a college. The best college or university for you is the one that meets your individual needs and academic goals.

### ***Accommodations - Without Fee***

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, accommodations for eligible students are available without fee at all colleges. Eligibility under these statutes is determined case-by-case based on documentation of a learning disability or AD/HD. The disability must currently substantially limit a major life activity, including learning.

### ***Fee-For-Service Programs***

In addition to these accommodations, many universities also offer a comprehensive fee-for-service program staffed by professionals with advanced degrees. The following questions are designed to help you explore resources, services, and comprehensive programs at your prospective colleges and universities.

### ***Questions for Schools that Do Not Have a Special Program for Students with Learning Disabilities***

List the services you will need, and ask for specific details about how you would receive these. (Whom to see, what are the services, when are they given, by whom, and where are they provided?)

- Are these services available without fee?
- What documentation of your learning disability is required?
- Who is responsible for coordinating services for students with learning disabilities? Is this a full-time permanent position?
- Does availability of these services depend on the enlightenment and good will of each instructor or is it established by school policy?
- How hard must students advocate for themselves to get special services?
- How many students with learning disabilities are in the school?
- Is faculty responsive to the needs of students with learning disabilities?
- Is there a learning center where content tutoring is available for all students?

### ***General Questions About Admissions***

- Is there a separate procedure for admission to the learning disability program?
- Are SAT or ACT examinations required?
- What documentation is required for admission in addition to standard requirements?
- Is a personal interview required?
- Is any special testing required? If so, what tests and who should administer the testing? How recent do tests have to be?
- When is the best time to apply? Is there a cut-off date?
- When can I expect to hear of my acceptance or rejection?
- How is an acceptance decision reached?

## **General Questions about the College or University**

- What courses of study are offered?
- What is the average class size?
- How much time is spent in each class?
- What percentage of the faculty is full-time or permanent as opposed to part-time adjuncts? (Having many part-time instructors may indicate that extra help, availability during office hours, and faculty advising may not be readily available or adequate to best serve the needs of students with learning disabilities.)
- What grade point average must a student maintain to stay in the college or university?
- Are there course modifications for students with learning disabilities?
- What social and co-curricular activities are available?
- Have you visited the college and talked with students?

## **Transition from High School to College for Students with Disabilities**

*Adapted from Literature for NCLD by Colleen Lewis,  
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### **Transition Checklist**

<b>High School</b>	<b>College</b>
<p><b>Special Education model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School personnel “find you”.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Accommodations Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You must request help; no one will come to find you.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Where you receive services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Education classroom, resources room, related service provider room (e.g. speech).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Where you receive services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differs from one school to another (“Office of Disability Support Services,” “Disabled Student Services,” “Special Services”,...)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Documentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinated by school psychologist or other appointed staff person</li> <li>• Team develops IEP or 504 Plan from documentation and test results.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Documentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You must provide “proof” of your disability (e.g. educational testing, HS records, independent reports from medical and/or mental health professionals).</li> <li>• Colleges can set their own guidelines for documentation (e.g. no more than 3 years old, adult assessment measures, etc.).</li> <li>• High schools are not required to do a comprehensive evaluation before graduation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Special Education Law</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides the mandate and funding to schools for in-school special education services as well as transportation/buses to school, physical, occupational, speech therapy, and tutoring.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Civil Rights Law</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation</li> <li>• Colleges are required only to offer accommodations &amp; support services; not services of a personal nature.</li> <li>• Tutoring is not required under ADA. Some colleges offer tutoring through disability services and some colleges have tutoring centers for all students.</li> <li>• Foreign Language waivers &amp; other course substitutions are not automatic.</li> </ul>

## ***While still in high school you need to:***

1. Find out about your disability:
  - Talk to your parents, high school special education teacher, or school counselor to learn about your specific disabilities.
    - Understand the academic impact of your disability.
    - Understand your areas of strength and weakness.
    - Understand how your disability might affect future employment and/or career choices.
    - Make sure that you have current documentation (request updated testing or a re-evaluation before you leave high school).
    - Read your disability documentation and understand what it says.
2. Actively participate in all transition related meetings (i.e. IEP, 504, IPE)
  - Participate in self-advocacy training.
  - Learn to express your current and future needs, concerns, interests, and preferences.
  - Know what your rights & responsibilities are and what the grievance procedures are at your selected colleges.
3. Develop a personal information file with disability related information:
  - Disability documentation
    - Current high school records (e.g. grade transcript, standardized achievement testing scores).
    - Medical records (if relevant to educational progress).
    - Copy of current IEP or 504 Plan.
    - College Entrance Exam results/info (SAT, ACT).
    - Psychological and educational evaluation records.
4. Select and Plan College Choices
  - Select the colleges you'd consider attending (Important tip: DO NOT choose schools by the amount of services that they offer; make your initial selections based on whether the school offers the programs of study that most interest you)
  - Visit each campus. (Make sure to meet the person(s) in charge of the Office of Disability Services.)
  - Do your homework! Consider:
    - What services/programs each prospective college provides through their disability support office or other office that handles disability accommodations?
    - How often are services available? Are the service providers on campus and available on an as-needed basis?

## **Guides for Students with Learning Disabilities and/or ADD/ADHD**

### ***Self-Advocacy Skills for Students with Learning Disabilities***

- ISBN: 978-1-934032-06-0
- Author: Henry B. Reif
- 2007 Edition
- Publisher: Dude Publishing

### ***The K&W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities or Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)***

- ISBN: 978-0307945075
- Author: Marybeth Kravets & Amy Wax
- 2012 copyright, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition
- Publisher: Kravets, Wax & Associates, and The Princeton Review, Inc.

### ***The Colleges That Change Lives***

- ISBN: 978-0143122302
- Author: Lauren Pope
- 2013-2014 Edition
- Publisher: Penguin Books