

**WNY COLLEGIATE CONSORTIUM OF DISABILITY ADVOCATES  
EFFECTIVE COLLEGE PLANNING: 9<sup>TH</sup> ED. (2006)**

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**The most important concept to grasp is that the student with a disability needs ALL the same competencies as any other college student PLUS whatever special skills or strategies are needed to cope with his disability. It is better to start acquiring skills in an environment he knows well, (i.e., high school) rather than to wait until he arrives on the college campus. Going to a college comfortable with oneself and one's needs will make the difference between success and failure.**

## INTRODUCTION:

Welcome to *Effective College Planning 9<sup>th</sup> Ed!* For more than 20 years the members of the WNY Collegiate Consortium of Disability Advocates (CCDA) have been working with families and education professionals to assist students with disabilities make a successful transition from high school to college. *Effective College Planning* or ECP is the primary resource that we have developed to help students, parents and professionals. ECP is a resource guide that provides technical assistance, timelines and activities related to the transition process.

While ECP has been around for a long time and has been very well received both locally and nationally, we have long felt that something was missing. What is unique about ECP 9<sup>th</sup> ed. is that there will be several versions each addressed to target audiences: school counselors, special education/transition personnel and families. While the general content of each is the same, the directions for use and implementation are audience specific. Why? Because transition is a team effort and each of the stakeholders needs to understand.

### ***WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY IN THE TRANSITION PROCESS?***

The role of the family is central to the transition process. By definition, the goals, needs and interests of the student and family are the driving force which directs the transition process and the development of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Transition is summarized by the development of goals in four major areas: live, learn, work and play.

- **LIVE:** addresses these kinds of questions: Where will the young adult live? At home with family? In a group home? In the military? In an apartment living independently? With a spouse and children? How will the individual travel about? Personal car? Public transportation? Van service? Other? What kinds of community or government services may the individual need? Insurance? Social Security? Public Assistance? Mainstream services that anyone might access?
- **LEARN:** addresses these kinds of questions: What kind of education is needed to achieve the young adult's vocational goals? College? Vocational training? Supported work and a job coach? Competitive employment?
- **WORK:** addresses these kinds of questions: What kind of work, job or profession is the student's goal? Is that goal realistic? What kind of education is required to

achieve that goal? Where might the adult find a job in that field? How can the student find out more about the world of work and the possibilities that exist?

- **PLAY:** address three kinds of questions: What kind of leisure activities does the individual enjoy? What kinds of activities are available in the community for the individual to participate? Movies? Clubs? Political campaigns? etc.

Basically, the young adult and his family should be asking themselves the same kinds of questions about adult life that any young person should be asking—and then considering the ramifications of his disability on the achievement of those goals.

So, let's begin.

As postsecondary professionals, the members of the WNY Collegiate Consortium of Disability Advocates (better known as CCDA) recognize that shopping for a college is every bit as intimidating as shopping for that first computer, with much more at stake. The purpose of this guide is to give accurate information, practical suggestions and options to consider. It is written to the adults because while college is the student's future, parents and high school professionals are the people who will do most of the legwork and guide the decision-making. For parents and professionals who have gone through college search with other children or students and are familiar with the process; what needs to be known here are the disability issues that must be considered. For those who have never been through the process before, this guide can assist in working through it. Whether the student is in seventh grade or is a senior in high school, *ECP* has provided tools to help. We hope that like several thousand parents, teachers and professionals across NYS and the US, this guide will be helpful.

# Transition Planning- An Introduction

*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary's* first definition of transition is, "passage from one state, stage, subject or place to another ...". Transition, or rather transition planning, is what this guide is all about; specifically the transition from high school to college. *Effective College Planning* (ECP) is set up chronologically to follow the natural progression from the high school Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process starting at age 12 through acceptance to the college of choice after graduation. Some background will help with the process of getting started.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, still known as IDEA, defines transition as:

a coordinated set of activities which are designed to prepare the student for outcomes that are envisioned for the student in adult life. Outcomes may include postsecondary education, employment, vocational training, adult education, adult services, independent living, and community participation. The set of activities for each student needs to be based on the student's individual needs, preferences, and interests. The activities must include instruction, community experiences, and development of employment or other post-school adult living objectives.

## Background

In 1990, when Congress reauthorized and re-wrote P.L. 94-142 and renamed the new law the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA), they made it mandatory that students with disabilities and their families be at the center of transition planning for the student's future. Starting at age 14, students and their families were to be the people to decide what that young man or woman would do, where he would live and what kind of community activities and recreation he would enjoy. All of those transition plans **must be the basis of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP)**. When a student wants to go to college, that goal must be reflected in the IEP. Transition activities must reflect not only the courses the student takes, but also development of such life skills as money management, transportation and mobility skills, and everyday living skills such as eating, dressing and doing laundry. The Person Centered Assessment which is included in the text has a list of the competencies of an independent college student. It will help in identifying the skills a student has and those that still need to be mastered.

One way in which IDEIA differs from the old IDEA is the development of a summary of performance for each graduating high student in special education. In New York State, the summary of performance is called the Student Exit Summary (SES). This document gives the secondary education professionals an opportunity to review the student's overall performance and give clear indication of current status of skills, deficit areas and what kinds of strategies or accommodations were successful when used with the student, and which were not. The purpose of the document is to aid the student and family in making informed decisions about the future. While the final federal regulations had not yet been issued, NYS developed and implemented draft regulations which were implemented for the graduating class of 2006.

**There has been ongoing debate among postsecondary professionals about the SES and its value in the transition to college process. What seems to be clear is that the SES will most likely not fulfill a college's requirement for documentation of disability. In NYS, the State University of New York (SUNY) Disability Services Council is working to develop a template for what good basic documentation of disability should include. Colleges that have a particular need for more in depth information would still have the right to require that information before determining whether or not requested accommodations are reasonable and appropriate.**

## Key Issues

There are some key issues that may affect a student's ability to be successful in college. Issues such as the following should be carefully considered during transition planning with the Committee on Special Education (CSE).

- ◆ It is important for parents and educators to understand that under IDEA transition planning is mandated for **all** students with disabilities -- not just those identified by the Committee on Special Education (CSE). This means that students who have 504 plans should also be included in planning for transition. Transition planning begins by at least age 14, with Level 1 review as early as age 12.
- ◆ One of the least understood legislative changes in IDEIA is the requirement for a summary of performance of the student's skills, strategies etc. at the end of the K-12 tenure. In NYS this document is known as the Student Exit Summary (SES). It is an overview of the school personnel's assessment of the student's current status to assist the family with informed decision-making. Colleges and universities have the right to determine for themselves what documentation of disability they require. The SES by itself will probably not be enough to meet the documentation requirements of a college or university.

- ◆ K-12 special education services are based on ENTITLEMENT; in the adult world, including postsecondary education, accommodations are based on ELIGIBILITY.
- ◆ Adult eligibility under Section 504 Subpart E is NOT the same as K-12 entitlement under Section 504 Subpart D.
- ◆ College provides accommodations and academic adjustments but does NOT alter essential elements of an academic program
- ◆ Some districts declassify students, especially students with learning disabilities, in the junior or senior year. At the college level it is necessary to provide current documentation of the impact of the disability on the student. This sometimes presents a problem for the family in terms of trying to gather current documentation of disability when the student is ready to enter college. The decision whether or not to declassify should be made carefully. Is it being made because the student has overcome a condition such as a speech impediment or delay or is it being made because the student has learned to cope in a familiar learning environment? The first student may not need services in college. The second student, when entering college, may need similar services to those that she received in high school. It is not unusual for a student who has been declassified to need updated documentation of disability. If the declassification occurred in an elementary school grade, that documentation may be difficult to locate and be of little value in delineating how the disability currently impacts the student.
- ◆ A local diploma, GED diploma or Regents diploma is required for admission to four year colleges. **An IEP diploma is not equivalent to a local, GED or Regents diploma.**
- ◆ In order to be eligible for Federal financial aid such as PELL or a student loan, a potential student must have one of the following: a local or Regents high school diploma; a General Equivalency Diploma (GED); or a satisfactory score on an independently administered, approved standardized test which demonstrates 'ability to benefit' (see Resource section for a list of federally approved tests of Ability to Benefit).
- ◆ At the high school level, districts will often waive graduation requirements such as math or foreign language in order to make it easier for a student with a disability to meet the high school graduation requirements. For the student who has the potential to attend college, routine waiver of courses such as math and foreign language is not recommended because postsecondary education is not required to waive courses which it deems 'essential' to the curriculum or are required for certification. In fact, in 2000, the State University of New York (SUNY) Board of Directors voted that ALL students graduating from SUNY institutions with a baccalaureate degree (BA/BS)



would be required to have foreign language in order to complete degree requirements.

- ◆ A 504 plan **MUST** be based on a disability and be supported by documentation. Some school districts elect to write a 504 plan for graduating seniors to take with them to the college. While the 504 plan may provide useful information to the college, the college is not bound to implement it since the requirements of Section 504 Subpart D (K-12) and Subpart E (postsecondary) are different. Students who bring 504 plans will most likely still be required to provide the college with documentation of disability since the 504 plan alone is generally not sufficient.
- ◆ The student will need the same skills as any other college freshman **plus** the ability to compensate for his or her disability.
- ◆ Neither IEPs nor high school 504 Plans apply to a student in a college setting.
- ◆ Emotional Disturbance is not a diagnosis and students are not eligible for services in college without a specific mental health diagnosis.

**TRANSITION PLANNING TIPS: REMEMBER THAT THERE IS NO SINGLE RIGHT WAY TO TRANSITION. ONE SIZE FITS ALL MEANS THAT IT PROBABLY DOESN'T FIT ANYONE VERY WELL!**

- Begin the college search process early—as soon as 9<sup>th</sup> or 10 grade.
- Attend college information nights for students with disabilities and their parents. Ask questions!
- Use the lists in this resource guide to formulate a list unique to your student and situation.
- Ask college's what they require for documentation of disability.
- If possible, ask to have your son or daughter shadow a student with a similar disability for a day to learn first hand about the experience.
- Be realistic about your student's capabilities—don't shoot too high, or to low.
- If your student has always been in special education, seriously consider having them start college at your local community college until they become familiar with the environment and expectations of college.
- Give serious consideration to enrolling your student part time.
- Postpone starting college for awhile. Many students exit high school unready and unwilling to commit to college and dig themselves into academic and financial holes that are difficult to overcome.
- Waiving requirements like foreign language or math may have serious ramifications later. Consider challenging your student with these courses, they will meet them in college

And finally:

Those of us in postsecondary education spend a lot of time complaining that our students lack independence and self-advocacy skills, i.e., the ability to take responsibility for themselves and their disabilities. This is the perfect time in the transition process to begin to develop and demonstrate those skills. We firmly believe that since we are always talking about the student's future that the student **MUST** be an active, involved member of the planning process. Students with disabilities often enter college having never had to be responsible for anything having to do with their education. They are suddenly expected to act like adults and make decisions--and live with the consequences! With the start of the high school freshman year the college planning process becomes much more intense. This is the perfect time to have students begin to take some responsibility for the transition process. Assign the student specific tasks that will help him to understand his disability, request information from the college, etc.

## Transition Timeline For IDEA Or 504 Plan Students

### 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

- ◆ The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) **requires** that students with disabilities be directly involved in transition planning and developing their annual IEP including long term adult outcomes and instructional component beginning at age 14.
- ◆ Consideration of career options by shadowing, visiting and talking with people in various careers. Learn about careers through fun, hands-on, real life experiences.
- ◆ Discussion and planning of a college prep program of study with school counselors, teachers, parents and student
- ◆ Consider course selection carefully to maximize later options.
- ◆ Work on a plan to develop study skills and think about how to maximize the student's performance. Consider experimenting with various kinds of assistive technology (e.g. word processor etc.); books in alternate format; Franklin Speller throughout the student's high school career; use of a calculator
- ◆ Attend CCDA College Night for Students with Disabilities.

## 10<sup>th</sup> Grade:

- ◆ Begin to identify adult life plans, work, living, recreation etc. The IEP is based on the student's plans for the future.
- ◆ Have the student meet with the school psychologist to have her psychological evaluation explained to her. Make sure she understands all aspects of the report and the subtests. She should learn about her strengths and weaknesses. Other concepts that should be learned include: the formal terms used to describe the student as a learner and identifying the specific ways the student's disability influences her as a learner.
- ◆ Reevaluate/adjust course of study so that it is consistent with the student's goals.
- ◆ Explore interests, values, decision-making skills through hobbies, Scouts, part-time employment, trips, volunteer work, etc.
- ◆ Attend CCDA College Night. Identify sources of college information.
- ◆ Have the student take an interest inventory to help decide where his interests, strengths and weaknesses are.

## 11<sup>th</sup> Grade

### *September*

- ◆ Identify sources of college information. Three online sites that may be helpful in making college comparisons are [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org), [www.collegeview.com](http://www.collegeview.com), and [www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com).
- ◆ The student should meet with school counselor and begin the process of developing a list of appropriate schools.
- ◆ The student should register for the PSAT. Consider using accommodations!
- ◆ Check with the school or the local library to access computerized career guidance programs such as *DISCOVER*, *SIGI Plus*, *FOCUS*, or *Peterson's QUEST*. These programs allow students to answer questions about themselves and provide them with specific career areas relating to their interests.

### *October/November*

- ◆ Take the PSAT.
- ◆ Take the *Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery* (ASVAB).
- ◆ Review college guides to increase awareness of what type of school appeals to the student.
- ◆ Students, parents and school professionals should attend **CCDA College Night**.

### *December*

- ◆ Review results of the PSAT.
- ◆ The student meets with her counselor and discusses special test accommodations for the SAT or ACT. Decide which test might best meet her needs if her school(s) of choice require one. (Many students with learning disabilities do better on the ACT because of the format of the test **HOWEVER THE ACT HAS BEEN REMOVED FROM LIST OF TESTS APPROVED FOR ABILITY TO BENEFIT**, if that is an issue.

### *January*

- ◆ The student writes or calls for college catalogs.
- ◆ The student begins to fill out the *Self Assessment* in this book and discusses results with counselor.
- ◆ The student picks out several schools to visit during breaks and vacations.
- ◆ The student calls the Admissions office at each college to make an appointment for visit.
- ◆ Be sure the student visits the Disability Office to discuss his disability and ask about the kinds of services, accommodations and modifications that are available.
- ◆ Decide what skills the student needs to improve and make sure they are added to her IEP goals.
- ◆ Contact **VESID** (Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities) (716-848-8001 or [www.nysed.gov](http://www.nysed.gov)) and community support agencies such as the *Learning Disability Association of WNY* (716-874-7200 – Buffalo; 716-679-1601 – Fredonia) or *Deaf Adult Services* (716-833-1637). They can be helpful in

providing support for transition services, or mechanical tools necessary to compensate for a disability. If the student is legally blind, talk to a Counselor from the *Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped* (CBVH 716-847-3517) about college planning.

### *February*

- ◆ Family discussion on college costs, family resources and other issues such as number of students attending, etc. Don't forget to include items such as transportation and meals while at school in this conversation.

### *March*

- ◆ Sign up for SAT/ACT. Be sure to request accommodations, if needed.
- ◆ Keep question sheets updated for all new schools.
- ◆ Decide on several other schools to visit over spring break.
- ◆ Make contacts for appointments/tours.
- ◆ Develop IEP goals for senior year. Be prepared for the annual review with CSE. If the student has a learning disability, **remember to update the student's psychological exam prior to graduation with the WAIS-III (adult version of the standard intelligence test)** as one of the student's transition activities. The student will need a psychological evaluation that reflects how his disability affects him as an adult in order to be eligible for support at the college level.
- ◆ Students who have labels of *Emotional Disturbance (ED)* or *Attention Deficit Disorder* should be sure that they have appropriate documentation, which includes a diagnosis from a qualified professional. ED is not a diagnosis and is insufficient to warrant services at the college level.

### *April*

- ◆ The student visits several other schools over vacation.
- ◆ The student signs up for any appropriate achievement tests (ACTs or SATs) if she is applying to "selective" colleges that require them.

## *May*

- ◆ Continue gathering information about schools through reading, interviewing alumni or students or using GIS.
- ◆ The student registers with *Recordings for Blind and Dyslexic*, if needed.

## *June, July, and August:*

- ◆ The student works with high school staff to draft his college application letter and any essays that may be required.
- ◆ Make sure course selection for senior year is consistent with goals the student has for college.
- ◆ The student works part time; takes driver education; goes to summer school.
- ◆ Plan further visitations if the student has not visited all the schools on her list. A note of caution about summer visitations. Although tours and admissions staff are usually available, many other staff, including Disability Services staff, may be off for the summer or on vacation.

## 12<sup>TH</sup> Grade

### *September*

- ◆ Review annual IEP plan and long term adult goals. Revise the IEP to reflect any suggested activities that arose from college visits.
- ◆ Schedule conferences with mainstream teachers to discuss goals/modifications as the student practices her advocacy skills.
- ◆ Send for college applications and have the student begin filling them out.
- ◆ Check the deadlines for applications. Make a time line for completing them. (Reminder: turn in applications to the school counselor 2-3 weeks ahead of deadlines).
- ◆ The student signs up for SAT/ACT examinations.
- ◆ The student writes any essays necessary for his applications.

### *October*

- ◆ The student writes college admissions letters. He should ask one or two teachers and his counselor for a letter of recommendation, if needed. Be sure to provide each person with a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

### *November/December*

- ◆ Submit all applications to counselor for checking and mailing.

### *January-April*

- ◆ Meet with all teachers to conference and get feedback regarding performance. This is the time when the district personnel should be devising the Student Exit Summary.
- ◆ Get appropriate financial aid forms. Complete those as soon as possible after annual income tax forms have been filed. Remember that some scholarship and grant programs have filing deadlines and late applications are NOT accepted. The federal financial aid form (FAFSA) can be accessed and completed online at [www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/students](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/students).
- ◆ If the student has not made a final decision, revisit colleges where she has been accepted.

- ◆ Make a final decision and send in deposit.
- ◆ Contact college Disability Office to discuss documentation, etc.

### *May/June*

- ◆ Prepare for finals and enjoy graduation!
- ◆ After graduation, have high school send final transcript to the college the student will be attending.

### *July*

- ◆ The student attends orientation, registers for courses, attends summer prep program, etc.

### *August*

- ◆ It's that time! College awaits!

(Timeline modified from *A Handbook for Students with Learning Disabilities and Their Families*)



## REQUIREMENTS, SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES THAT MUST BE REFLECTED IN THE IEP:

- ◆ **Academic:** A minimum of four years of English, three years of Math and Science (including algebra, biology and chemistry) and one year of Keyboarding. Foreign language should not be waived unless absolutely necessary. When foreign language is waived, documentation of a language based disability is essential. Students who complete third year foreign language and earn a grade of 85 or higher may not require further foreign language at the college level.
- ◆ **Personal:** Self-advocacy skills. In the K-12 system, the decision making is a relationship between district and parents. In college the relationship is between student and college. The student must be able to self-identify, explain his disability and how it impacts him and discuss what accommodations may be required to make it possible for him to participate in and benefit from his education. This includes knowing when and how to ask for help. Elementary and high schools have a responsibility to seek and identify students with disabilities and arrange appropriate services; colleges and universities **do not** have this responsibility, but they do have a responsibility to provide appropriate and reasonable accommodations when requested and the student is eligible for accommodations.
- ◆ Use of a computer, spell checker, calculator, textbooks in alternate format, and note takers, as appropriate.

These are all skills and competencies that can be addressed on the IEP while the student is still in high school. Any college freshman has to face many new challenges. Students with disabilities face all those challenges plus those posed by their disability. By addressing the skills and competencies listed, parents and teachers can greatly enhance the student's potential for success by reducing the difficulties to be faced that first year.

Secondary school professionals often assume that because a student plans to go to college that there are no transition issues that need to be addressed in the IEP. We disagree. Transition is about more than going to college. It includes recreation and leisure activities, involvement in the community and the ability to demonstrate independent living skills like managing money, doing laundry and handling transportation issues. Most high school graduates do not arrive on a college campus fully prepared to handle the personal and academic challenges that will face them in college. In fact, more than 40% of **all** college freshmen with or without disabilities who go away to college don't make it through their first year. What steps can students take **now** to help them be better prepared to be successful in college? The following chart lists some suggested activities that can be written into annual Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) to develop those desirable traits listed above. The more comfortable a student is with himself, his disability, the academic courses he will take and the accommodations he will use, the more likely he is to make a smooth transition from high school to college.

## TRANSITION ACTIVITIES FOR THE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM UNDER IDEA

The following are suggested transition activities for IEPs. Most apply to all students with disabilities; however, some may be specific to individual disability needs. Make a list of the activities that need to be included in the annual IEP and raise them at the CSE meeting. Remember: THE IEP SHOULD REFLECT *THE STUDENT'S* GOALS AND INTERESTS!

Grade Level	<i>Education Skills</i>	<i>Recreation/Leisure; Community Involvement</i>	<i>Employment and Work Readiness Skills</i>	<i>Life Skills</i>
<b>Grades 7-8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Math</li> <li>◆ English</li> <li>◆ Social Studies</li> <li>◆ Science</li> <li>◆ Keyboarding</li> <li>◆ Use of a calculator</li> <li>◆ Alternate text formats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Scouts</li> <li>◆ Team sports</li> <li>◆ Recreation center activities</li> <li>◆ School and church youth groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Watch videos</li> <li>◆ Home chores</li> <li>◆ Go to work with parents or family friends</li> <li>◆ Visit older brother or sister at college</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Set alarm, get up and dress, arrive at school on time with books and assignments</li> <li>◆ Use microwave</li> <li>◆ Some basic cooking</li> <li>◆ Learn laundry skills</li> </ul>
<b>Grades 9-10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Assist with planning 4 or 5 year high school program that includes algebra, English, a lab science, computer or keyboarding, a foreign language</li> <li>◆ Use a calendar and day planner to keep track of assignments and appointments</li> <li>◆ Learn SQ3R or other study strategy and use it</li> <li>◆ <b>Alternate text formats</b></li> <li>◆ <b>Use of assistive technology</b></li> <li>◆ Self assessment of academic skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ School clubs, team sports, dances and school parties, student government</li> <li>◆ Group activities</li> <li>◆ Personal hobbies</li> <li>◆ Church youth group activities</li> <li>◆ Group dates</li> <li>◆ Community projects like clean-up days</li> <li>◆ Assist with a political campaign</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Paper route</li> <li>◆ Help neighbors with lawn mowing and shoveling</li> <li>◆ Baby sitting</li> <li>◆ Participate in summer youth employment program</li> <li>◆ Job shadowing</li> <li>◆ Attend <b>CCDA College Night</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Learn to use public transportation</li> <li>◆ Establish and manage a checking account</li> <li>◆ Begin to take charge of taking medications</li> <li>◆ Know the name and address of your doctor</li> <li>◆ Budget allowance money</li> <li>◆ Self assessment of personal readiness skills</li> </ul>

Grade Level	Education Skills	Recreation and Leisure; Community Involvement	Employment and Work Readiness Skills	Life Skills
<b>Grades 11-12</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Use tape recorder for classes, notes, brainstorming writing ideas</li> <li>◆ Use of assistive technology</li> <li>◆ Alternate text formats</li> <li>◆ Calendar and day planner</li> <li>◆ Start to collect college catalogs</li> <li>◆ Visit colleges</li> <li>◆ Attend CCDA College Night</li> <li>◆ Do ECP Self-assessment (pp. 16-17)</li> <li>◆ Meet VESID or CBVH counselor to discuss postsecondary plans</li> <li>◆ Update medical diagnosis or documentation</li> <li>◆ Reassessment of academic readiness skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Same as above</li> <li>◆ Class trips and group trips</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Part time job or volunteer job</li> <li>◆ Participate in summer youth employment program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Assist with family cooking and food shopping</li> <li>◆ Driver education, mobility instruction or use of public transportation</li> <li>◆ Manage money from job</li> <li>◆ Schedule own appointments within family schedule</li> <li>◆ Reassessment of personal readiness skills</li> </ul>

**Activities:** Have student, parents and yourself or a teacher complete the self assessment of the student. Compare answers and discuss which areas need immediate attention. Prioritize and develop a list of activities to address areas that need work.

## THE CHANGE IN THE ROLE OF PARENT AS ADVOCATE

The **most** important thing to understand about college advocacy is that it needs to begin while the student is still in high school. The parent has always been the spokesperson and advocate for her child, but that is not true in college. The courts recognize an 18 year old as an adult. In terms of education unless the student is cognitively unable to manage her own affairs and therefore has a court appointed guardian, as soon as the student receives that Regents or local diploma, all the rules that shaped his or her education change.

### Legal Differences

It is essential that parents and students understand that the transition from high school to college is more than a move from one educational setting to another; that move reflects a change in the student's legal status and a change in the legal charge to the institution. Under IDEA, which covers education from K-grade 12, districts have a legal responsibility to seek and identify students with disabilities, and to provide an appropriate free public education in the least restrictive environment. Each child is **entitled** to that education by law. That is not true of college. For most parents the most difficult change between high school and college is the recognition that the laws of the United States recognize an 18 year old as an adult, unless the parents or someone else has legal guardianship. At the college level, this means that the student must meet the **eligibility** requirements of the institution. The difference between entitlement and eligibility will be discussed in depth in the next section.

Under Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* (Section 504) the student must be an 'otherwise qualified person with a disability'. That means that the student must self-identify as a person with a disability, provide appropriate documentation of that disability and assist in the process of determining what accommodations would be effective in meeting his or her needs. It also means that the student must be able to act appropriately in a college setting, which includes being able to speak up and advocate for himself.

Under the *Family Educational Rights Privacy Act* (FERPA) no person from the college can discuss confidential information, which includes anything related to grades or disabilities, with parents, without permission from the student. At the high school level, the relationship is between the school district and the parents; at the college level, the relationship is between the college and the student.

## ADMISSIONS ELIGIBILITY:

Perhaps the most important concept to understand about the difference between secondary and postsecondary education is difference between entitlement and eligibility. At the college level, education is no longer a right or an entitlement, but a matter of eligibility. Eligibility for adult services, including postsecondary education, for a person with a disability is defined by the regulations of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504. In order for a student to be accepted at the college of her choice, she must, with or without reasonable accommodations, meet the entry level admissions criteria for that institution, which are established for all potential students by the college. Then she must also meet the admission program requirements for the academic program she wishes to study.

One of the most confusing issues for parents and students alike when considering college options is the importance of the type of diploma that the student receives at high school graduation. A Regents or local diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED) will fulfill the diploma requirements of any college in New York State (NYS). An Individualized Education Diploma (IEP diploma) **does not**. Earning an IEP diploma means that the student did not meet the NYS requirements for a Regents or local diploma and therefore he **is not** a high school graduate. If a student is applying to a college that requires that **all** applicants hold a high school diploma or GED in order to be considered for admission (4-year colleges and universities have this requirement), and he earned an IEP diploma, he does not meet the admissions eligibility for that college and will not be accepted. Not all community colleges or other junior colleges require a high school diploma for admissions. Many have various kinds of high school equivalency diploma programs. Some of those

programs carry college degree credits that can also be applied toward an Associate's Degree, and some carry no degree credit.

#### **INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS VERSUS INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION DIPLOMAS:**

It is important that all stakeholders in the transition planning process needs to understand that having an Individualized Education Program while in high school **is not the same** as earning an IEP diploma. Many students with Individualized Education Programs pass all their competency exams and earn local or Regents diplomas. Students in special education, who earn an IEP **diploma** or reach the age of 21 without completing the requirements for a local or Regents diploma, *may* have postsecondary educational opportunities. Students who have an IEP diploma are non-high school graduates and must therefore follow the requirements of non-high school graduates when applying to college. Students who earn an IEP diploma have the legal right to remain in their school district until age 21 to pursue completion of local or GED diploma requirements or other goals on their Individualized Education Program. Students who complete the local or GED requirements are high school graduates and are entitled to the same rights and privileges as any other high school graduate.

Colleges divide students into two categories: matriculated and non-matriculated. Matriculated students meet all the admissions criteria for the college (including high school diploma or GED), have been accepted to an academic program and are eligible for all programs and services including financial aid.

Non-matriculated students do not meet the criteria for admissions (includes non-high school graduates), are generally accepted only for less than full time credit and are not generally eligible for financial aid such as the NYS Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), PELL or a guaranteed student loan.

#### **ABILITY-TO-BENEFIT:**

Ability-to-Benefit is one of the most confusing issues a student may face in the transition to college planning process. Many people think that 'Ability-to-Benefit' is the name of a specific test like the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or the American College Test (ACT). It is not. Perhaps a little background will clear up the misconceptions.

In 1996, the US Congress decided to address the issue of the staggering number of people who signed contracts for guaranteed student loans and later defaulted on those loans. The result of this decision was the implementation of the 'Ability-to-Benefit' (ATB) legislation. It is important to remember that the intent of the ATB legislation was to significantly reduce the number of defaulted student loans. To achieve this goal, the US Department of Education was charged by Congress to identify **a list of commonly administered standardized tests any one of which an individual who is a non-high school graduate can take to demonstrate that she has the intellectual ability to benefit from a college education.** Each test has an established minimum passing score. Potential students who achieve scores above the minimum passing score demonstrate that they have the potential to succeed in college. A May 1999 revised list of tests whose scores are approved for administration for persons with disabilities is included in the **RESOURCE** section of this guide. Please note that the ACT exam has been removed from the ATB list. Students who



do not achieve the minimum passing score are not eligible for federal financial aid in the form of student loans, PELL, SEOG, and will most likely be ineligible for the NYS Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) or support from the NYS Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID).

Does this mean that an individual who does not test to the minimum passing score cannot attend college? No. That individual may be able to attend as a part-time, non-matriculated student. What does that mean? It means that the student is not admitted to the college or a specific academic department and is personally responsible for the cost of all tuition, books, and fees.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **1. Is it true that the IEP or the 504 plan and its contents apply to college settings?**

No. The IEP is part of IDEA and has no meaning in the college except as a record of services and an outline of what may be needed. Colleges and universities also fall under different regulations than K-12 schools and therefore are responsible for providing services under 504 in a different way.

### **2. Will the Student Exit Summary be sufficient to meet the documentation of disability for college?**

Probably not. The SES is intended to be a resource for families and decision making, It is not intended to be handed to outside entities such as colleges or agencies although it may provide them with useful information. That said colleges only have the right to request documentation information that is applicable and useful to address the request for accommodations. Students who will need to take licensure or certification exams for their professions may need to provide additional information, more recent and in depth for the accommodations on such high stakes tests as nursing, GRE, teaching etc.

### **3. The high school waived math or foreign language for my son or daughter due to disability; will the college also waive these courses?**

If a student wants to major in international business, it is likely that the college will consider both math and foreign language to be essential components of the program. If a student wants to be an art major, that may be a different matter. However, in September 2000, the SUNY Board of Trustees established new General Education requirements for any student in a NYS public (SUNY) college whose goal is to earn a

BA or BS degree. These requirements include 9 hours of history, one or two years of foreign language and completion of at least college level Algebra. Decisions about these requirements are made by each college and academic program, EXCEPT where the program leads to certification such as education, nursing, etc. **Do not assume that what was waived in high school can or will be waived in college.**

**4. Is an IEP diploma the same as a local diploma?**

No. An IEP diploma means that the student met his or her personal IEP goals but did not meet the graduation requirements necessary for a local or Regents diploma.

**5. Will Colleges accept an IEP diploma for admission?**

Colleges regard a student with an IEP diploma as a non-high school graduate just as they regard **any** student who does not have a local diploma or a GED diploma. In NYS, four-year colleges by state law can not accept any student who does not have a Regents, local diploma or a GED. The student must consult each college she is considering because there is no one simple answer to this question.

**6. My child applied to VESID (NYS Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities) but was not eligible for college tuition assistance. Does that mean she is not eligible for services in college?**

VESID provides vocational rehabilitation services to eligible individuals in order to help them achieve a specific employment outcome. The particular services an individual receives depends upon a number of actions such as the agreed upon vocational goal, the

individual's needs, and may also be contingent upon economic need. It is important to remember that college assistance is only one of the services that VESID may provide. A person who does not qualify for VESID college assistance may be eligible for other kinds of vocational rehabilitation services from VESID. It is always best to consult with the VESID counselor rather than assume that a service can or cannot be approved.

However, while VESID's focus is on training or retraining for employment, the college's focus is education and providing reasonable accommodations to qualified students to have the opportunity to be competitive in their college courses. The determination that colleges make is totally separate from VESID eligibility. The determination of whether colleges provide services is based on the information available in the disability documentation that the student presents to the college. The more thorough the documentation, the easier it will be for the college to provide appropriate and effective accommodations.

**7. My son has a 504 plan that was updated his senior year for next year when he is in college. When should we give this to the College?**

This is an EXCELLENT question! Many districts realize that Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act applies both to secondary and postsecondary education and therefore assume that what the high school writes, the college must follow.

**NOT TRUE!** In the next section on legal issues the reader will learn that Section 504 is one law with different subparts. Subpart E, which applies to postsecondary education, has no relationship to the subpart D that covers K-12. Therefore, anything written at the high school level, whether it is an IEP or a 504 plan does not apply to college. The

disability support office at the college may request copies of these documents in order to get an idea of the services that the student used, but is not required to duplicate them.

**8. My daughter has always received services because she is classified as being emotionally disturbed. The college she plans to attend says she will not be eligible for services there, how can that be?**

The student is facing the distinction of a “classification” versus a “diagnosis”. Students in elementary and secondary schools can be classified as *emotionally disturbed* (ED) for a number of reasons ranging from trauma in the family due to death, separation or divorce to actual emerging psychiatric conditions such as bi-polar disorder or obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). Students who are acting out due to trauma are not disabled. Their behavior may warrant placing them in alternative learning environments in high school, but they do not necessarily have a mental impairment that limits everyday life functions. That student is not eligible for services through the disability office at the college.

The individual who has an actual psychiatric condition such as OCD should be referred to a psychiatrist for diagnosis and treatment. This individual might be eligible for services due to the impact of the disability on everyday activities. The medical professional would need to provide documentation of that disability which would an explanation of how the condition impacts everyday life. Recommendations from a medical professional regarding possible accommodations will be given conscientious consideration by the college.

To take the answer a step further, it is possible for someone to have one or more conditions that don't have a specific diagnosis but that definitely create a functional limitation to everyday activity. A friend gave a recent example of a student who suddenly developed hand tremors. The medical professionals were not able to narrow down her condition to a specific diagnosis, but her tremors certainly impacted her everyday life from caring for herself, dressing and feeding to driving, taking notes in class and trying to write. Is she disabled? Yes. Is there a specific diagnosis? No. But she has significant functional limitation in everyday activities.

9. **My daughter has a learning disability and went to the disability office on her campus to arrange for services. The Service coordinator told her that her documentation was too old and that she would have to be retested. I'm furious; she has a learning disability, why does she need to be tested AGAIN?**

This is one of the mostly hotly debated topics in our field. Documentation, retesting, currency of documentation, etc. Part of the issue is philosophical. Part of it is a carry over from early requirements in the K-12 system for evaluations every three years. Part of the issue is rigidity on the part of some service providers to ONLY provide accommodations based on information in the documentation. Part of it is campuses making you jump through hoops because they have the right to maintain their academic standards and integrity.

I hear the Syms store ad "An educated consumer is our best customer" when I hear this question. It is so true. You are shopping colleges to find the fit, appearance, atmosphere, philosophy, services and academics that best fit your needs and desires. As any good shopper knows, one size doesn't fit anyone well.

Think of a multi sided jigsaw puzzle like a rubic's cube. You and your student have needs, wants, issues, strengths, deficits etc. The college has services, programs, staffing, services, technology etc. The picture that you complete depends on how you assemble the pieces. It is not very likely that you will find a college that will fit perfectly, your goal is to find a college that will work with your student to the best of their mutual ability.

OK. This student has a clear history of learning disability and the IEP probably documents that extended time and test readers were routinely provided. If similar accommodations are all the student is requesting and the Student Exit Summary

indicates that a test reader (or use of technology for reading) was an effective accommodation, then further documentation should not be needed. There may be sufficient information available to support the request.

Many students with learning disabilities have had math above the algebra level or foreign language requirements waived in high school. More times than I care to admit, parents have told me that that counselor at the high school assured them that the college would waive the requirement be it math or foreign language, because the high school did. **WRONG!! WRONG!!** One parent whose son had had math waived understood then that we would waive math in college—EXCEPT he wanted to major in Architecture! Clearly math is essential in such a field and cannot be waived. The same is true for students who want to be teachers and who had foreign language waived. Foreign language is a NYS requirement for teacher certification it CANNOT be waived---but the requirement can be met in different ways. American Sign Language is an option; a French, Italian (etc.) literature or culture class in place of a language class; foreign study immersion programs are sometimes a solution. The requirement is still met, it is simply fulfilled in a different manner.

So, the question is whether or not this student would need further documentation of disability beyond the testing done when she was 12 and the answer is yes, probably so. The existing testing probably doesn't include the sequencing, fluid reasoning skills and problem solving information needed to justify a math accommodation and probably needs in depth testing to support the request for foreign language substitution.

The best advice is to talk to the disability services person at the campus the student plans to attend and ask questions. And a final piece of advice:

If the school psychologist can provide an accurate picture of the student's current level of function by administering a screening test or some additional testing that provides comparable information to the WAIS that may be acceptable. Colleges have the right to determine what documentation they want, so the best plan is to work with the disability office at the college the student plans to attend.

#### **10. My son has a learning disability and brought in the psychological evaluation and was told that it is too old and he has to be retested. Why?**

This question is closely related to the one above it. Some certification boards (Medical boards, law exam etc.) MAY require that documentation be no more than 3 years old; if that is the case, then the student who requires accommodations on the board exam may need to be retested. The student may also be applying to a college or academic program where very specific kinds of documentation information is needed to establish eligibility.

These are some examples of the questions and issues that face colleges. Remember that these are legal issues. Section 504 does not require that colleges and universities provide everything any student with a disability requests, even if they would benefit from it. 504 is not special education law like IDEA. Section 504 is anti-discrimination legislation.

Its purpose is to assure that qualified individuals with disabilities have the same access to programs and services as their non-disabled peers. That means that colleges and universities are required to consider each student and each request for accommodation on an individual basis; that is how students and parents must begin to think about them also. The next section of *Effective College Planning* will go into the legal issues in more detail.

## LEGAL ISSUES

When talking about transition from high school to college, it is necessary to consider more than the academic preparation required. Since Congress first passed Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975, education of individuals with disabilities must be regarded as a legal issue. It is imperative that both parents and students understand the legal differences between the two educational environments.

- **Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 (Section 504):** Civil rights/ anti-discrimination legislation that applies to any entity (business, organization, school etc.) that receives federal funds of any kind. The purpose of Section 504 is to give qualified individuals with disabilities ***equal access to programs and services available to the non-disabled person***. It has different sub-parts that apply to elementary and secondary, and post-secondary education. The regulations for Section 504 give us the federal definition for person with a disability, otherwise qualified, programs and services etc. 504 plans are written for students with disabilities who can participate in a regular education program but who may need accommodations such as extended time or an alternate location for test taking.
- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** Legislation that replaced the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. The purpose is to ensure that all children with disabilities in the United States in grades K-12 would receive a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. IDEA mandates that school districts identify children with disabilities and design an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to meet the needs of each child. IDEA requires that all children with disabilities within a school district, including those with 504 plans, receive transition planning from age 12 until graduation or age 21. IDEA does not apply to pre-school or to postsecondary education.
- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** Civil rights/Anti-discrimination legislation. ADA's main purpose is to extend the legal mandate of Section 504 beyond recipients of federal funds. It has five major Titles that cover employment, public accommodations, private entities, telecommunications, and miscellaneous topics. In terms of postsecondary education, ADA reinforces the requirements of Section 504 and under Title III extends the requirements of equal program access to private colleges and universities that might have previously been exempt from the mandate of Section 504.

The chart on the next page compares and contrasts these three laws.





**THE DIFFERENCES IN LEGAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN  
SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**

	<b>K-12 Education</b>	<b>Postsecondary Education</b>	<b>Practical Application</b>
<b>What is the law?</b>	<p><b>IDEA:</b> Individuals with Disabilities Education Act  <b>504:</b> Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.  <b>ADA:</b> Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990</p>	<p><b>504:</b> Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, particular reference to Subpart E  <b>ADA:</b> Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990</p>	<p><b>Section 504(e) and ADA are not about special education services, they are about nondiscrimination and access for eligible individuals with disabilities.</b></p>
<b>What is the intent of the law?</b>	<p><b>IDEA:</b> To provide a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment to identified students with disabilities, including special education and related services.  <b>504/ADA:</b> To ensure that no other-wise qualified person with a disability is denied access to, benefits of, or is subject to discrimination solely on the basis of disability.</p>	<p><b>504/ADA:</b> To ensure that no other-wise qualified person with a disability is denied access to, benefits of, or is subject to discrimination solely on the basis of disability.</p>	<p><b>I IDEA meets the specific special Education needs of the student and modifies the program accordingly. 504(e) and ADA allow eligible individuals with disabilities the same access to programs, activities and services as their nondisabled peers.</b></p>
<b>Who is covered under the law?</b>	<p><b>IDEA:</b> All children and youth requiring special education services until age 21 or graduation from high school.</p>	<p><b>504/ADA:</b> All qualified persons with disabilities who, with or without reasonable accommodations, meet the college's admissions requirements and the specific entry level criteria for the specific program and who can document the existence of a disability as defined by Section 504.</p>	<p><b>Not every student who received special education services under IDEA will be a qualified individual with a disability under 504(e) or ADA. And once admitted, not every request for accommodation will be deemed to be reasonable.</b></p>

<p><b>What is a disability?</b></p>	<p><b>IDEA:</b> A list of 13 disability classification areas are defined in IDEA and include specific learning disabilities. <b>504/ADA</b> have no such list. A person with a disability is defined as anyone who has: (1) any physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life functions; (2) a history of such an impairment; (3) or is regarded as having such an impairment.</p>	<p><b>504/ADA:</b> A person with a disability is defined as anyone who has: (1) any physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life functions (2) a history of such an impairment (3) is regarded as having such an impairment. <b>ADA</b> also includes HIV status and contagious and non-contagious diseases.</p>	<p><b>An emotional disturbance label, under IDEA, may or may not result in a diagnosis of a mental impairment, severe enough to qualify as a disability.</b></p>
<p><b>Who is responsible for identifying and documenting need?</b></p>	<p>School districts are responsible for identifying and evaluating potential students with disabilities. When such a determination is made, the district plans educational services for classified students at no expense to the family.</p>	<p>Students are responsible for self-identification and for obtaining disability documentation from a professional who is qualified to assess their particular disability; cost of the evaluation must be assumed by the student, not the post-secondary institution.</p>	<p><b>Just because documentation is sent on behalf of students, does not mean the students will receive services without the student coming in to specifically request them.</b></p>
<p><b>Who is responsible for initiating service delivery?</b></p>	<p>School districts are responsible for identifying students with disabilities and providing special education programs and services, including related services, and transition services as delineated in an Individualized Education Program.</p>	<p>Students are responsible for notifying the Disability Support Services staff of their disability and of their need for reasonable accommodations. Accommodations <b>(not special education)</b> are provided on a</p>	<p><b>Students must request accommodations in a timely manner. Resource rooms are not a typical service in college.</b></p>

		case-by-case, as-needed basis in order for students with disabilities to have equal access to the institution's programs and activities.	
<b>Who is responsible for enforcing the law?</b>	<b>IDEA</b> is an entitlement law, enforced by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services in the US Department of Education. Local enforcement is the responsibility of the NYS Department of Education Office of <b>Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities</b> (VESID)	<b>504/ADA:</b> are civil rights statutes overseen by the <b>Office of Civil Rights</b> (OCR), and the US Department of Justice in conjunction with the <b>Equal Employment Opportunity Commission</b> (EEOC).	
<b>What about advocacy?</b>	The parent or guardian is the primary advocate. Students with disabilities from age 14 on must be invited to participate in the IEP process. If the student does not attend, the district must ensure that the student's preferences and interests are considered.	Students must be able to self-identify and discuss their disability and needs in order to work with the Disability Support staff to implement reasonable accommodations. <b>The Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) guarantees student confidentiality. Conversations with parents regarding confidential information without written consent from the student are illegal.</b>	<b>Students must become self-advocates at the college level.</b>

(Modified from materials prepared by Kay McVey, PROJECT CONNECT, Henderson State University)

Many people have expressed concern over recent Supreme Court decisions limiting and defining the Americans with Disabilities Act and worry about how these decisions will impact students with disabilities in college. It is important to remember that for most colleges and universities, Section 504 is the foundation for determining who is an eligible person with a disability and what range of accommodations and/or services that individual may require. It is important to understand what Section 504 and its related regulations do and do not say:

**Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states:**

***No otherwise qualified person with a disability in the United States ... shall, solely by reason of ... disability, be denied the benefits of, be excluded from participation in, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance....***

Let's review Section 504 definitions:

**A person with a disability is:**

“any person who (1) has a physical or mental impairment which **substantially limits** one or more major life activities, (2) has a history of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.”

**Examples of disabilities include, but are not limited to:**

<b>Chronic illnesses, such as:</b>	<b>Conditions such as:</b>
AIDS	Blindness/visual impairment
Asthma	Cerebral palsy
Cancer	Deafness/hearing impairment
Cardiac disease	Epilepsy or seizure disorder
Diabetes	Orthopedic/mobility impairment
Multiple sclerosis	Specific learning disability
Muscular dystrophy	Speech and language disorder
Bi-Polar Disorder	Spinal cord injury
Major Depression	Tourette's syndrome
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	Traumatic brain injury

**Substantially limits** means that the individual's manner, rate or duration of performing a life function is significantly different than that of most people. For example, most individuals who have asthma have acute asthma, which means that they periodically have periods of impaired respiratory function, but most of the time their breathing is within normal range. Chronic asthma becomes a disability when, even with medication and treatment, the individual's breathing severely limits the ability to routinely perform everyday functions that other individual's can perform with no respiratory distress.

**A qualified person with a disability** is defined as one

“who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the education program or activity.”

In postsecondary education, a qualified student with a disability is one who can meet the admission requirements for both the college or university and the specific program of study which she wishes to pursue AND

- ◆ Voluntarily self-identifies herself to the Disability Office on campus and provides adequate documentation of a disability.
- ◆ Has documentation that details the current impact of the disability on everyday life functions.
- ◆ Needs those adjustments, modifications, auxiliary aids or services to participate in and/or benefit from the college's programs and activities.

Under the provisions of **Section 504**...

Colleges and universities that receive federal assistance such as PELL grants, ROTC, federal grant money etc., may not discriminate on the basis of disability in the recruitment, admission, educational process or treatment of students in any of the institution's programs, services or activities. The **Americans with Disabilities Act** (ADA) extends the provisions of Section 504 to private entities such as private colleges, regardless of whether or not they receive federal funding. Special exemptions exist for solely religiously funded institutions

**Section 504** specifies that colleges and universities **may not**:

- ◆ Limit the number of students with disabilities who are admitted.
- ◆ Make pre-admission inquiries as to whether or not an applicant has a disability. (There are limited exceptions to this rule; however students are never REQUIRED to disclose during the admissions process.)
- ◆ Use admissions tests or criteria that inadequately measure the academic qualifications of students with disabilities because special provisions were not made.
- ◆ Exclude qualified students with disabilities from any course of study, program or activity.
- ◆ Establish rules or policies that might adversely affect students with disabilities.

## STUDENT AND COLLEGE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Student Rights and Responsibilities:

*Every otherwise qualified student with a documented disability has the following rights:*

- ◆ Equal access to courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities available through the college or university.
- ◆ Reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids determined by the institution on a case-by-case and/or course-by-course basis.
- ◆ Appropriate confidentiality of all information pertaining to the disability with the choice of to whom to disclose the disability, except as required by law.
- ◆ Information reasonably available in accessible formats.

### ***Every otherwise qualified student with a disability has the responsibility to:***

- ◆ Meet the qualifications and essential technical standards, both academic and institutional, including the student code of conduct.
- ◆ Identify him/herself in a timely manner as an individual with a disability when requesting an accommodation from the appropriate service provider.
- ◆ Provide documentation from a qualified source that verifies the nature of the disability, functional limitations, and the need for specific accommodations
- ◆ Follow specific procedures for obtaining reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments and services.

### College or University Rights and Responsibilities

#### ***Colleges and universities have the right to:***

- ◆ Maintain academic, admissions and graduation standards.
- ◆ Require that a student with a disability provide current documentation completed by a qualified professional source to verify the need for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids.
- ◆ Discuss a student's need for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids with the professional source of his documentation with the student's signed consent authorizing discussion.
- ◆ Select among equally effective and appropriate accommodations, adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids for each student on a case-by-case/course-by-course basis.

- ◆ Deny a request for accommodations, adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids if
  - a) the documentation does not identify a specific disability,
  - b) the documentation fails to verify the need for the requested services, and/or
  - c) the documentation is not provided in a timely manner.
- ◆ Refuse to provide an accommodation, adjustment, and/or auxiliary aid that is inappropriate or unreasonable, including any that:
  - a) poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others;
  - b) constitutes a substantial change or alteration to an essential element of a course or program;
  - c) fundamentally alters the nature of the service provided; and/or
  - d) poses undue financial hardship or administrative burden on the institution.

***Colleges and universities have the responsibility to:***

- ◆ Review and revise institutional, programmatic, employment and other policies and procedures to assure that they do not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities.
- ◆ Ensure that the institution's courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities, when viewed in their entirety, are offered in the most integrated and appropriate settings based on a review of what the law requires.
- ◆ Provide information regarding policies and procedures to students with disabilities in a timely manner and assure its availability in accessible formats upon request.
- ◆ Evaluate students on their abilities, not their disabilities.
- ◆ Provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids for students with disabilities upon a timely request by a student.
- ◆ Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication concerning students with disabilities except where disclosure is required by law or authorized by the student.

***More specifically, institutions have the responsibility to:***

- ◆ Assist students with disabilities who self-identify and meet the college's or university's criteria for eligibility in receiving reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids determined on a case-by-case/course-by-course basis.
- ◆ Assure confidentiality of all information pertaining to a student's disability.
- ◆ Inform students with disabilities of the college or university policies and procedures for filing a formal grievance both internally and/or through external agencies (e.g., US Department of Education Office of Civil Rights).



# THE COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT

There are many differences between high school and college; the following list outlines some of these differences.

## 1. Academic Environment in College:

- ◆ Less contact with instructors.
- ◆ Less individual feedback.
- ◆ More academic competition.
- ◆ Instruction is mainly by lecture.
- ◆ Independent reading assignments in addition to lectures.
- ◆ Classes meet less often and for fewer hours.
- ◆ An entire course is completed in 16 weeks or less.
- ◆ New and increased social pressures.
- ◆ Using the library effectively is more important.
- ◆ Students are responsible for what they learned in high school.
- ◆ More emphasis on understanding theory.
- ◆ Courses may be offered online, by videotape etc.

## 2. Grading in College:

- ◆ Harder work is required for an A or B; **C** is an **average** grade.
- ◆ Semester grades may be based on just two or three test scores.
- ◆ Exam questions may be more difficult to predict.
- ◆ More major writing assignments.
- ◆ Essay exams are more common.

## 3. Knowledge Acquisition in College:

- ◆ Comprehension skills are more important.
- ◆ Critical thinking and writing skills are essential
- ◆ Taking good notes is important.
- ◆ Being able to identify main ideas is more important.
- ◆ Effective communication skills are more important.
- ◆ Students are responsible for monitoring their own progress and are responsible for recognizing the need for getting additional help.
- ◆ Paying attention in class is more important.
- ◆ Studying is more important.

#### **4. Support in College:**

- ◆ No *resource room*; student must be independent and responsible for seeking assistance.
- ◆ Behavior problems are not tolerated. All students must comply with the Code of Conduct.
- ◆ More students on campus.
- ◆ More social activities.
- ◆ Environment may be impersonal.
- ◆ Students are treated as adults and are expected to self-advocate.

#### **5. Stress in College:**

- ◆ Increased workload and faster pace.
- ◆ It is more difficult to earn high grades.
- ◆ Students are expected to know what they want from college, classes, life, etc.
- ◆ Students need to be able to juggle assignments, job responsibilities, family responsibilities, plus any sports, activities, etc.

#### **6. Responsibility in College:**

- ◆ Students are more independent and are accountable for their behavior both in class and out, including dorms and extracurricular activities.
- ◆ Increased number of choices and decisions to be made.
- ◆ More self-evaluation — accepting responsibility.
- ◆ More independent reading and studying are required.
- ◆ Students are responsible for time management.
- ◆ Students establish and attain their own goals.
- ◆ Students are more responsible to whoever is paying for their education.
- ◆ Students must be motivated to succeed.
- ◆ Students are responsible for independently completing assignments and handing them in on time.

*(Adapted from Claire E. Weinstein, Professor, Educational Psychology Karalee Johnson, Robert Malloch, Scott Ridley, Paul Schultz, Graduate Students, Educational Psychology)*

## WHAT QUALITIES HELP MAKE A SUCCESSFUL COLLEGE STUDENT?

**Academic Skills:** Each student with a disability must be able, with or without accommodation to do the following:

1. Demonstrate competency of reading, writing, and math at the level necessary to meet the essential requirements for the academic program.

This seems obvious, yet every year we face a disturbing number of parents who have been told that because the high school waived math or foreign language that the college will also waive these requirements. Other parents threaten us with lawsuits if we require their son or daughter with a learning disability to demonstrate writing composition skills. Others expect spelling to be completely disregarded. One parent threatened to sue the college if the student was required to take tests! **Section 504 and the ADA require reasonable accommodation NOT a wholesale disregard for academic standards!** Both laws reinforce a college's right to maintain its academic integrity. ADA's regulations specifically state that a college need not grant an accommodation or modification that would constitute a fundamental alternation of the program.

OK. So what does that mean in real English? It means that students with disabilities in US colleges, with or without accommodations, are expected to demonstrate competence in written and spoken English. That competence might require a computer with specialized software or a textbook in electronic format. It means that a program like Architecture or Engineering will NOT waive or substitute math requirements that are essential to the program. It means that a student who wishes to become a medical transcriptionist cannot have spelling waived since there are huge differences between hyper and hypo conditions; however a student who is an art or design major might have the math or spelling waived.

2. Most instructors expect students to spend at least 3 hours outside of class doing assignments or reading for every hour spent in class. For example: if a student is registered for 12 credit hours, she should be spending a minimum of 36 hours per week outside of class doing assignments and preparing for classes. Often students with disabilities need to spend considerably more time than this to be successful. Consider the student's disability and accommodation needs and, if appropriate, plan more time to complete the degree requirements. The student may want to consider a reduced course load.

Attending college is a full-time job. If a student cannot make the commitment at this time, she may want to consider enrolling part-time or attending college at a later date.

### Personal Skills or Attributes

- ◆ Positive attitude
- ◆ Mental and emotional flexibility
- ◆ Knowledge about academic policies and deadlines
- ◆ Effective and appropriate communication skills
- ◆ Good time management skills
- ◆ Organizational skills for self and tasks
- ◆ Clear sense of goals

- ◆ Personal independence
- ◆ Knowing when and how to seek help
- ◆ Strong commitment to completing a degree

Students with disabilities have other issues to consider in addition to those mentioned earlier. Not all postsecondary institutions provide exactly the same programs and services for students with disabilities. It is important to know that the college a student chooses can offer the kinds of programs and support services that she needs. The following is a list of questions to help students identify colleges that can meet specific needs. Not all of them will apply to every student, but those that do will help students begin a dialogue with the college's Disability Support staff and will help generate other questions that the student does need to ask.

## STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT

### BASIC INFORMATION & SKILLS CHECKLIST

Student Information	Yes	No	Working On	Don't Know
1. Can I name and describe my disability?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Can I describe my strengths?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do I know what accommodative services I need? (e.g., extended time, separate location, use of a word processor, notetaker, books on tape)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do I know what assistive equipment I need to use? (e.g., screen reader, screen enlarger, tape recorder)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Academic Preparation Skills	Yes	No	Working On	Don't Know
1. Do I have at least basic keyboarding skills?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Have I had at least three years of high school mathematics, including algebra?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Have I had at least three years of high school science, including at least one lab science?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do I have one or more years of a foreign language?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Do I understand what I read?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Do I understand things better if I hear them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Can I write a well-developed essay?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Can I use email; the internet etc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Do I have the computer and personal discipline for an online or distance learning course?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Do I need a calculator to perform math functions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Study Skills</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Working On</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
1. Do I know how to do research in a library? Online? Using an online library?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do I know when and how to seek tutorial assistance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Can I take notes from a lecture either by hand or computer or from a tape recording?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do I know how to take notes from a book?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Do I know how to take notes from a video or online course?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Do I know how to study for different kinds of tests?				
7. Do I know how to take different kinds of tests?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Do I need extra time for tests?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Am I usually prepared for class?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Am I usually on-time for classes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Do I skip classes often?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Is my school work and notes neat?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Am I good at organizing my work? (E.g. folders/computer files?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Are my assignments completed on time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Is my behavior in class appropriate and not distracting to others in the class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Do I stay focused during class?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Can I do my share of a group project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Social Skills</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Working On</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
1. Do I communicate appropriately with teachers? In person? By telephone? By email?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do I interact appropriately with peers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do I know how to interact appropriately with different kinds of people in various situations: in class, at work, in the instructor's office, on a date?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Can I make decisions for myself without being influenced by others?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Do I know how to let someone know I like them? (dating etiquette)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Can I handle rejection appropriately?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Do I know how to use the telephone effectively?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Do I know when to use a cell phone (and when to turn it off)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Do I know when a conversation or discussion is over?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Do I know how to work appropriately with a sign language interpreter, note taker, tutor or scribe?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Can I demonstrate problems-solving and decision-making skills?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Do I know how to deal with anger without using violence?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Do I respect other people's ways of looking at things, their lifestyles, and their attitudes even if I don't agree with them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Can I choose appropriate friends, social and recreation activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Do I know how to order from a menu, pay my share of the bill and add a tip when out with friends or on a date?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Basic Life Skills</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Working On</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
1. Do I know how to use transportation to go to and from campus, job, and internships?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do I have leisure activities such as sports or a hobby?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do I know how to locate appropriate assistance when needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do I have adequate knowledge of my medical needs in regard to medications and health problems and am I able to express these needs to others?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Can I schedule and manage medication refills, appointments and treatments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Can I manage money appropriately?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Can I appropriately use checking accounts and credit/debit cards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Do I have basic cooking skills using stove, oven, microwave and toaster oven?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Can I do my own laundry?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Can I do my own food and clothes shopping?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Do I take care of my service animal (e.g. guide dog, etc. including feeding, bathing and toileting and clean up	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Can I understand and follow safety and evacuation procedures and equipment both home and away?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Knows how to make a 911/711 call in case of an emergency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Self-Care Skills</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Working On</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
1. Can I manage my own daily routine of medications, diet or treatments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Can I handle my personal hygiene without assistance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do I Carry appropriate personal identification such as driver's license, car registration and insurance, health ID and insurance in case of emergency, or student id?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do I practice safe sex and use safety precautions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Do I know how to refuse if I don't want to be touched and can say no?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Can I recognize unsafe situations, and prevent or avoid them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Do I present an age and situation appropriate appearance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Can I handle my personal hygiene without assistance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Can I navigate and use the internet safely?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



If there were questions in the lists that the student could not answer, the student needs to talk about his choices of college or vocation with a sponsoring agency, guidance counselor, resource room teacher or other professional who knows him. The answers to these questions will help him begin to seriously consider whether or not college is a realistic option.

Picture this: A student and her parents are meeting for the first time with the Disability Services representative at a college that she is considering. Things have been going well so far because the questions have been about her and her strengths and weaknesses. She has spent time on the Student Self-Assessment and could answer most of the questions. Then the crisis occurs. "What kind of accommodations will you need at the college?" asks the college person. She looks at her parents and doesn't know what to say.

This is a frequent scene at that first meeting. Very few incoming students know what kind of accommodations they might need. The following questions will help students decide how they learn information. Students know how they learn **best**; unfortunately, not all college classes will be taught in the manner that they prefer. Students will have to develop strategies to learn information presented in a variety of formats. The charts will help the student identify strategies he can use to improve his ability to organize, store and retrieve information.

## What are accommodations and how do I know which ones I might need?

Read each question carefully and think about how it applies to you. **Keep in mind that you are thinking about learning new, difficult information.** On the line next to the question, put the NUMBER of the response that you choose:

**1 - NEVER APPLIES      2 - SOMETIMES APPLIES      3 - OFTEN APPLIES**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. It is better for me to get work done in a quiet place.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I am not skilled at giving VERBAL explanations for directions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I have trouble reading if the print is small, blurry, or smudged.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. It is hard for me to read other people's handwriting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I cannot study sitting at a desk.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. If I can't think of a word I wave my hands and call it a 'thingee'.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I remember something better if I write it down.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. My eyes get tired fast although the eye doctor says they are OK.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. It is hard for me to understand what a person is saying when there are other people talking or there is music playing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I remember things that I hear better than things I read or see.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. When I read, I mix up words that look alike, like them and then and bad and dad.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. I don't like to read directions first; I would rather just start doing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. I enjoy doodling and even my notes have lots of pictures, arrows, etc. in them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. I think better when I have the freedom to move around.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. I often get lost or am late if someone TELLS me how to get to a new place and I don't write the directions down.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Before I follow directions, it helps me to SEE someone else do it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. I had trouble learning to read out loud when I was younger.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. It helps to use my finger as a pointer when reading to keep my place.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. If I am taking a test, I can 'see' the textbook or notebook page where the answer is.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. If I had the choice to learn new information by lecture or a textbook, I would choose to HEAR it rather than read it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. I tend to solve problems through a more trial-and-error approach, rather than a step-by-step method.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. When trying to remember someone's telephone number, it helps if I try to picture it in my head.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. I find myself needing frequent breaks when studying.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. My written work doesn't look neat to me. My papers have crossed out words and erasures.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. It's hard for me to understand a joke that someone tells me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. I understand how to do something BEST if someone TELLS me rather than if I read the directions myself.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. It helps me to LOOK at the speaker when I am listening. Looking helps me focus on what she is saying.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. I learn BEST when someone SHOWS me how to do something and then I have the opportunity to do it myself.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. Handwriting is tiring; I press down really hard with a pencil or pen.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. I do not get lost easily even in a strange place.

Find the corresponding question on the inventory and write your answer on the line:

1 _____	3 _____	2 _____
7 _____	4 _____	5 _____
9 _____	8 _____	6 _____
13 _____	10 _____	12 _____
15 _____	11 _____	14 _____
17 _____	18 _____	16 _____
19 _____	20 _____	21 _____
22 _____	24 _____	23 _____
25 _____	26 _____	28 _____
27 _____	29 _____	30 _____

<b>TOTALS:</b>	_____	_____
	<b>VISUAL</b>	<b>AUDITORY</b>
	_____	_____
	<b>TACTILE</b>	_____

**Interpreting the scores:**

Find each numbered question from the list and place your answer of 1, 2, or 3 on the line matching that question on the chart above. When you have filled in all the numbers, add up your total in each column. The higher the score, the BETTER you are at using those skills. For example, if your total scores are: visual 19; auditory 25, tactile 23 you are learn BEST by listening, then using hands-on. You are not as comfortable with a textbook or a chart that no one has explained to you.

Your high scores are in auditory or listening skills and tactile or hands-on skills, with a low score in visual. This would indicate that you are probably weak in reading and comprehension, but do very well with oral directions and hands-on or paper and pencil tasks.

College faculty will employ combinations of visual, auditory and tactile teaching techniques. The information on the following chart will help you identify strategies and accommodations that you can use to reinforce learning in those modes where you are weak.

## SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACCOMMODATIONS

	<i>STRATEGIES</i>	POSSIBLE ACCOMMODATIONS
<b>To improve VISUAL learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Use of slides, charts, diagrams, and illustrations to reinforce learning</li> <li>◆ Use of color coding to organize notes, note cards and textbook underlining</li> <li>◆ Writing questions in margins of textbook</li> <li>◆ Converting notes to charts and matrix format</li> <li>◆ Use a calculator for computations</li> <li>◆ Use of graphic paper for math computations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Copy of instructor's overhead transparencies</li> <li>◆ Use of computer software and spell checker</li> <li>◆ Watch videos, etc. more than once</li> <li>◆ Extra time on tests</li> <li>◆ Enlargement of print materials to make print easier to read</li> <li>◆ Use of a calculator</li> <li>◆ Use of a note taker</li> </ul>
<b>To improve AUDITORY learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Participate in study group</li> <li>◆ One-to-one tutoring</li> <li>◆ Brainstorm ideas for writing into a tape recorder</li> <li>◆ Tape record notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Tape recording classes</li> <li>◆ Tests read or recorded</li> <li>◆ Use of textbooks on tape</li> <li>◆ Use of voice input for computer</li> <li>◆ Use of computer with voice output</li> <li>◆ Extra time for tests</li> <li>◆ Alternate test location</li> <li>◆ Using an assisted listening device such as an FM amplification system</li> </ul>
<b>To improve TACTILE learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Recopy class notes</li> <li>◆ Convert notes to study or 'flash' cards</li> <li>◆ Use of models for studying</li> <li>◆ Additional time for lab classes and study</li> <li>◆ Study or lab partner</li> <li>◆ Frequent repetition of task until it is learned</li> <li>◆ Role playing</li> <li>◆ Frequent breaks while studying</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Assigned lab partner</li> <li>◆ Tests and assignments in electronic format</li> </ul>

## THE COLLEGE SEARCH – “THE GOOD FIT!”

It is important to understand that **all colleges are different** and policies and procedures will be a little different from one college to the next. Ask about admissions requirements including SAT or ACT exam scores. Ask how important the student’s class average is; ask if the college has an appeals process because the student wants to have a fair chance to be admitted. Students do **not** have to tell the Admissions office about their disability, either on the application or during any interview — but may **want** to tell them so that they will give the student information about services for students with disabilities. Also, some colleges allow students with disabilities to ask for special consideration during the admissions process, if it is needed. If the student needs to provide documentation of disability, she **should not send the documentation to the admissions office. Send it to the Office of Disability Services.** Once the student graduates from high school or turns 18, she is regarded as an adult. She doesn’t need to have everyone know about her disability — and **SHE** has control over who knows; she should use that control wisely.

Once the student begins to narrow his choices of possible career goals he can begin to think about how to reach that goal. Which colleges offer the academic program(s) that will lead to his goal? Can his family afford that college? Can he start at a college close to home and transfer later? These are questions that **all** potential college students need to address. The following chart explains different types of postsecondary institutions and their academic options:

# TYPES OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

<b>College</b>	An institution that offers educational instruction beyond the high school level in a 2-year or 4-year program.
<b>University</b>	An academic organization which grants <i>undergraduate</i> and <i>graduate</i> degrees in a variety of fields. It is composed of a number of 'schools' or 'colleges' each of which encompasses a general field of study.
<b>Liberal Arts College</b>	Four-year institution which emphasizes program of broad undergraduate education. Pre-professional or professional training may be available but is not stressed.
<b>Junior College</b>	Two-year institution of higher learning which provides vocational training and academic curricula ( <i>terminal</i> and <i>transfer</i> ). <b>Terminal Course:</b> Academic program is complete in itself. A student who completes it <i>may not</i> apply to a 4-year college for further study without completing additional course requirements. <b>Transfer Course:</b> Academic program is designed to lead into a 4-year course at another college or university.
<b>Community College</b>	Two-year public institution offering similar programs as junior colleges
<b>Engineering or Technological College</b>	Independent professional schools which provide 4-year training programs in the fields of engineering and physical sciences. They are often known as Institutes of Technology or Polytechnic Institutes.
<b>Technical School</b>	A 2-year institution that offers terminal occupational programs intended to prepare students for immediate employment in fields related to engineering and physical sciences. These schools may also offer 1-year certificates in certain crafts and clerical skills.
<b>Nursing School</b>	There are two kinds of nursing schools in WNY. At schools affiliated with 4-year colleges, students receive both a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) Degree and an R.N. and have the possibility of entering the field of nursing administration. At a community college, students receive an Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) Degree and an R.N.
<b>Military Schools</b>	Federal military academies prepare officers for the Army, Navy, and Air Force. These institutions ( <i>West Point, Annapolis, the Air Force Academy</i> ) require recommendation and appointment by members of Congress. Private and state supported military institutes, however, operate on a college application basis. They all offer degree programs in engineering and technology with concentrations in various aspects of military science.
<b>Business School</b>	Business schools fall into two categories. At some colleges it is possible to specialize in business administration or in a 2-year secretarial course in conjunction with liberal arts courses and earn an <i>Associate in Applied Science Degree</i> (A.A.S.). Other institutions offer predominantly business or secretarial courses and may or may not be regionally accredited.

## COLLECTING THE NECESSARY INFORMATION:

Before starting any task, there is a need to collect the tools to do the job right. Applying to college requires information tools. As the student gathers up the information listed below and she'll find it much easier to do the sometimes-tedious job of applying to college

Listed below are some areas that are likely to be handled very differently at various colleges. Compare the answers to their questions to determine where the student will have the best support for her particular needs.

## ASSISTIVE COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY AND ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT:

- ◆ Are computers accessible to persons with disabilities?
- ◆ Are computers with adaptive and/or assistive technology available in both teaching and open labs?
- ◆ Do dorm room computers have access to assistive software?
- ◆ Is there training available in the use of technology?
- ◆ Is it possible to borrow technology?

## TUTORING:

It is very important to ask questions about tutoring. Most people think that tutoring is an accommodation. **Section 504** regulations say that it is not, that studying and tutoring are personal services or responsibilities. Most colleges provide some tutoring, but how much, how it is provided, and who does the tutoring are all important questions. It is also important to understand that if the college doesn't provide tutoring for all students, it does not have to provide tutoring for a student with a disability, even if the student needs or could benefit from that service.



## **STUDENT ACTIVITIES / SUPPORT SERVICES:**

- ◆ What student activities are available on campus?
- ◆ Is there a student club for students with disabilities on campus? If so, how do I get in touch with it?
- ◆ Is there personal counseling available?
- ◆ Does the campus offer on campus transportation? If so, what are the hours and how does the student make arrangements to access it?
- ◆ Does the campus have the capability to scan books or other materials and if so, what is the turnaround time?

## **HOUSING:**

- ◆ Are there physically accessible residence facilities including toilet and bath?
- ◆ Are personal attendants available on campus? If yes, how are they contacted?
- ◆ What are the rules about equipment and electrical use?
- ◆ What is the policy regarding students with disabilities applying for single rooms?

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**

### **How do students with disabilities apply to college?**

The same way all other students do! They research the schools that interest them, go visit those colleges, meet students and staff, and ask questions. The questions in **Activity 7** (pages 97-101) of *Effective College Planning* will help the student know what to ask and who to ask.

### **How are services arranged?**

Early in the process of planning for college, students should contact the Student Disability Services office at the college they plan to attend. Student Disability Services staff will talk to the student about her disability and needs. They will also ask for proof of the disability from a medical doctor, VESID/CBVH counselor, school records or other appropriate source.

### **Can any student with a disability access any accommodation?**

All services are arranged for each student on an as-needed basis. The nature and extent of accommodations are different at each college. The range of services includes sign language interpreters, notetakers, special equipment (books on tape, tape recording of classes, closed captioning for TV), and alternative testing such as extra testing time, test given in an alternate location, test readers or use of a computer.

### **What does 'as needed' mean?**

'As-needed' means that accommodations will vary from course to course, teacher to teacher and semester to semester. Section 504 requires 'reasonable accommodation' which means that the accommodation must be effective, it does not necessarily mean that it will be exactly what the student requested. It is to the student's benefit, whenever possible, to access accommodations that can be employed in the workforce. Therefore a tape recorder may be a better accommodation than a human notetaker—unless the faculty member writes on the board or uses overhead transparencies!

While every student's accommodations are different and unique, the following chart demonstrates the kinds of accommodations that are often used to assist students with specific types of disabilities.

## What are accommodations and how do I know which ones I might need?

### EXAMPLES OF ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENTS, MODIFICATIONS, AUXILIARY AIDS AND SERVICES

ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENTS	MODIFICATIONS	AUXILIARY AIDS	SERVICES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Extension of time to complete graduation requirements</li> <li>◆ Course substitutions of non-essential program requirements</li> <li>◆ Alternative testing locations</li> <li>◆ Priority registration</li> <li>◆ Tape recording of classes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ removal of architectural barriers</li> <li>◆ moving a class to an accessible location</li> <li>◆ Alternative format for tests or assignments</li> <li>◆ Alternative format for instruction i.e. small group or individualized instruction</li> <li>◆ tactile, audio, Braille, large print, e-text formats for tests and handouts</li> <li>◆ use calculators, spell checkers, dictionaries, etc.</li> <li>◆ textbooks on tape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Adaptive equipment</li> <li>◆ Readers, note takers, interpreters, scribes</li> <li>◆ Calculators, spell checkers, dictionaries, etc.</li> <li>◆ FM amplification units</li> <li>◆ specialized computer hardware or software</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ taping texts, notes</li> <li>◆ typists for assignments</li> <li>◆ test proctoring</li> <li>◆ mobility training</li> <li>◆ training on specialized equipment</li> <li>◆ systems advocacy</li> <li>◆ self-advocacy training</li> <li>◆ faculty, staff in-service training</li> </ul>

**EXAMPLES OF ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS OFTEN USED BY STUDENTS  
WITH SPECIFIC DISABILITIES**

<b>Disability</b>	<b>Accommodations</b>
<b>Low Vision</b>	Large print lab handouts, lab signs, and equipment labels TV monitor connected to microscope to enlarge images Class assignments made available in electronic format Computer equipped to enlarge screen character and images Voice output on computer
<b>Blindness</b>	Audio-taped or Braille lecture notes, handouts and texts Raised line drawings and tactile models of graphic materials Braille lab signs and equipment labels Adaptive lab equipment, i.e., talking thermometers, calculators, light probes and tactile timers Class assignments made available in electronic format Computer with optical character reader, voice output, Braille screen display and printer output
<b>Hearing Impairment</b>	Interpreter; FM amplification system; note taker Faculty face student when speaking or using visual aids.
<b>Learning Disability</b>	Notetaker and/or audio-taped class sessions Extra exam time, alternative testing arrangements Visual, aural and/or tactile demonstrations incorporated into instruction Computer with voice output, spell checker and grammar checker
<b>Mobility Impairment</b>	Notetaker/Attendant to assist with lab work, group or lab assignments Classrooms, labs, field trips and field placements in accessible locations Adjustable tables, computer stations and lab equipment located within reach Class assignments in electronic format Computer equipped with special input devices such as voice input, Morse code, alternative keyboard
<b>Health Impairments</b>	Notetakers Flexible attendance requirements and extra exam time Assignments made available in electronic format; use of e-mail to facilitate communication

***Important Note: no services can be granted to a student who does not identify him/herself to the Student Disability Services office on campus or who does not provide adequate documentation of a disability.***

If a student will need accommodations, it is crucial for him or her to meet with the Disability Services Staff as early as possible. This will help with planning for appropriate services, accommodations or auxiliary aids. All students who self-identify must provide adequate documentation of disability before accommodations can be provided.

## What does ‘adequate documentation of a disability’ mean?

Documentation of a disability means providing information about the person’s disability from a qualified professional and it has two purposes:

- ◆ To verify that the individual has a physical or mental impairment, which substantially limits one or more life functions.
- ◆ To substantiate that the impairment/condition **currently** requires modifications, academic adjustments or services in order to compensate for or accommodate the disability.

Keep in mind that some students have been **declassified** and no longer are receiving services under IDEA. These students will often have 504 plans so they can continue to receive accommodations such as extended time for tests. Just as an IEP is generally not “adequate documentation of a disability” neither is a 504 plan. Just because a student is declassified it **does not** mean that she no longer has a disability – it only means that she no longer needs special education services. She has adapted to the high school learning environment. The college learning environment is an entirely different matter. It is important that when students are declassified, up-dated documentation is in place both to justify the declassification and to assist the student in the transition to the postsecondary learning environment.

## Who can provide the documentation?

Documentation **must** be from a professional source who is **qualified** to diagnose or make determinations about the disability. For example, hearing impairment generally requires a copy of an audiogram from a licensed audiologist. Learning disabilities generally require a recent psychological evaluation by a psychologist; however, additional information from a reputable recognized expert source such as the GOW School would also be a possibility. Documentation of Attention Deficit Disorder from a medical doctor may not be sufficient. **Students are responsible for providing current adequate documentation. The college or university has the right to request further information from the student if what is presented is insufficient.**

Documentation must be on professional letterhead, and include the diagnosis and current status of the disability as well as the professional’s name and credentials.

Contact the Student Disability Services office on campus to determine what specific documentation the student will need to provide. Documentation is the basis for determining what accommodations, services, etc., the student is eligible to receive. **It is extremely important.**

## **How much will services cost?**

Section 504 and the ADA require colleges to provide reasonable accommodations and services **at no cost** to eligible students with disabilities. Colleges make decisions about the nature and extent of reasonable accommodations on a case-by-case basis. The cost of these services **may** be paid for by many sources. These sources include, but are not limited to: colleges, rehabilitation agencies such as the VESID, CBVH, and/or other local support agencies. **Students who want services — beyond what the college decides is reasonable — are responsible for these costs.**

Colleges may **request or recommend** that students apply to VESID, CBVH etc. but **cannot refuse** services to students who do not apply or who are denied by these agencies. Students **must** apply directly to agencies to find out if they are eligible for sponsorship to college. Please see the directory of agencies at the back of this booklet. Again, it is crucial for students to contact these offices/agencies early in college planning to get these services.

## **Is there anything else students with disabilities should know?**

Since identification is voluntary and confidential, and since Student Disability Services staff need documentation of a disability, the student should contact the Student Disability Services office early. The student should not wait until feeling desperate or is failing; it may be too late for the Student Disability Services staff to help.

## **GLOSSARY:**

**ABILITY TO BENEFIT:** A potential student who is a non-high school graduate is recognized as having the ability-to-benefit from a college education after successfully earning a minimum passing score on one of the federally approved standardized tests. (See page 16 for a more detailed explanation, including the list of approved tests for individuals with disabilities on pages 63-65 in the **RESOURCE SECTION**).

**ACADEMIC:** A term used to describe any collegiate course of study; a term used to describe areas of study falling under the traditional scholarly disciplines, as distinct from directly vocational or technical programs.

**ACADEMIC ADVISOR:** Students who are matriculated into academic programs are assigned a faculty member who assists the student in setting semester course schedules and monitors that the student meets all of that academic program's degree requirements.

**ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENT:** A modification made to a course or program for a student with a disability. The modification is made to a nonessential part of the course or program.

**ADA:** *see Americans with Disabilities Act*

**ACCOMMODATION:** *see Reasonable Accommodations*

**ADD/DROP:** A system used to change a student's schedule after registration has been formally completed. (Usually the first week of classes. Also called Schedule Adjustment.)

**ALTERNATE FORMAT:** Conversion of print materials into a form accessible to individuals who cannot read standard print. Examples include Braille, **e-text**, and large print.

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:** Federal law passed in 1990 (effective beginning January 26, 1992) extending the civil rights protections offered by **Section 504** to places of public accommodations, state and local governments, and employment in addition to recipients of federal funding.

**ASSISTIVE LISTENING DEVICE:** Technology, usually consisting of a transmitter and a receiver, used to enhance sound for individuals with hearing impairments. Some may be used with or without hearing aids.

**ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY:** Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially or off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.



**ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE:** The degree awarded by community colleges and private two year colleges Associate of Science (A.S.), Associate of Art (A.A.), Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) and Associate in Occupational Studies (A.O.S.).

**AUDIT:** Student option for recording attendance in a course when no grade is desired.

**BACCALAUREATE DEGREE (Bachelor's Degree):** An academic degree awarded to students who successfully complete undergraduate requirements in a planned, approved program (usually requiring four years of full-time study to complete). Community college and private two year college graduates often transfer to a four year institution to complete this degree after receiving their Associate Degrees.

**CAPTIONING:** Providing text for speech.

**CART:** Communications Access Real-Time. Using court reporters to caption classroom lectures.

**CATALOG:** The book published by a college (annually or biannually) which describes the programs offered at the College, the academic policies of the College, services available to students, and short descriptions of each course.

**CBVH:** Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped.

**"CLOSED" COURSE:** Status of a course in which current enrollment has reached the number of students the instructor is scheduled to teach.

**COLLEGE LEVEL EXAMINATION PROGRAM (CLEP):** A standardized examination in college-level subject matter. The general examinations cover material offered in freshman-level English composition, humanities, fine arts, mathematics, natural sciences, and social science courses. Subject examinations cover material offered in specific advanced level courses.

**CONFLICT:** This occurs when the student attempts to register for two courses that are offered at the same time or which overlap.

**CONTINUING STUDENT:** Students who are considered eligible for registration the next semester because they were enrolled the previous semester (or were on an approved/recorded Leave of Absence) have not been academically dismissed, and have not yet graduated.

**CO-REQUISITE:** A requirement that may be met either before registration for a particular course or program, or at the same time as that course or program.

**COUNSELOR:** The Counseling Office at each campus has counselors available to help students with personal problems, academic problems, program changes, withdrawals, goal setting and interest testing.

**COURSE NUMBERS:** The numbers assigned to a particular course for registration identification purposes.

**COURSE SUBSTITUTION:** The substitution of a course for another required course that is specified in an academic program. Decisions regarding substitutions must be made on a case-by-case basis. Only courses that are non-essential can be substituted. Courses that essential to the program or that are required for licensure or certification cannot be substituted.

**C-PRINT:** A notetaking system developed for hard-of-hearing students. It is similar to CART, but captions meaning-for-meaning instead of word-for-word.

**CREDIT HOUR:** Unit of measure that indicates the number of classroom hours per week that the class is held. Credit hours for laboratory, studio and physical education skills courses are often computed on a different basis.

**CUMULATIVE QUALITY POINT AVERAGE:** The total of the student's grade points for all semesters divided by the total number of credit hours completed for all semesters.

**CURRICULUM:** An organized course of study approved by the State Education Department that results in a degree. Ex. Business; Environmental Science; Nursing.

**DEVELOPMENTAL COURSES:** Courses which prepare the student to complete the courses necessary for their degree. These classes often do not count toward a degree.

**DISABILITY:** A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or major life activities.

**DISMISSAL:** Notification that a student can no longer attend that institution. Dismissal can be the result of poor grades resulting in Academic Dismissal or removal from the campus for behavior that violates the Student Code of Conduct.

**E-TEXT:** Print materials available in electronic ("e") format for use with a computer program which can read to the user.

**EXTERNAL TRANSFER CREDIT:** Credit granted for courses taken at another school.

**FULL TIME STATUS:** A student with a disability who cannot attend the expected number of full time hours due to the nature of their disability may be considered full time. Most colleges require documentation of a very significant disability and require recertification for full time status each semester.

**FULL TIME STUDENT:** Generally granted for a semester registration of 12 or more credits; an institution **may** grant full time status to a student with a disability enrolled for fewer than 12 credits if that registration is related to the impact of the disability on the student.

**GRADE POINT:** The value of a letter grade. A=4, B=3, C=2, D= 1, F=0.

**GRADE POINT AVERAGE:** See Quality Point Average.

**GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE:** Each institution must have a published formal procedure for students to follow if they feel that they have been treated unfairly by a college employee.

**INCOMPLETE GRADE:** Grade assigned by instructor to allow student to finish course requirements after course ends.

**LIFE EXPERIENCE (LEAP):** A program allows students to use their life experience to earn credit for a degree.

**LIBERAL ARTS:** Liberal Arts are those academic disciplines taught without regard to specific preparation for a vocation, falling within the behavioral and social sciences, the humanities, the natural sciences and mathematics, and the fine arts. Specifically excluded are all vocational courses such as accounting or education courses.

**MAJOR:** Academic major to which a student has applied and been accepted by the specific department. Students with an accepted major are eligible to register for courses in that department's 'majors only' (restricted) courses. A student may have two majors.

**MASTER COURSE SCHEDULE:** Booklet containing the courses which will be offered in a given semester. This booklet is different each semester.

**MASTER'S DEGREE:** An academic degree awarded to students who successfully complete a prescribed course of graduate study (after a Bachelor's Degree).

**MATRICULATE:** The process of applying and being accepted into a degree program at a college or university. Being matriculated is important for academic advisement and financial aid purposes and allows the student to take advantage of all services within the school.

**MATRICULATED STUDENT:** A student who enrolls or registers in a college as a degree candidate (necessary for financial aid).

**NON-MATRICULATED STUDENT:** An individual who may be enrolled in courses at a college but is not working toward a degree.

**OPEN COLLEGE ELECTIVE** (General Elective or Elective): A course from any of the college degree credit courses.

**OVERLOAD:** Students who are registered for more than 19 semester credit hours. This is possible only if a student's advisor has granted permission and students have paid tuition at the part-time student rate for any credit hours over the 19 credit hour limit.

**PART-TIME STUDENTS:** Students who register for fewer than 12 semester credit hours.

**PERSONAL CARE ASSISTANT:** A person who assists the individual with a disability with activities of daily living. This is generally the responsibility of the individual with a disability and not the college or university.

**PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY:** The extent to which the buildings and grounds of an institution needs modifications, accommodations or adaptations in order to provide the individual with a disability an opportunity to get from place to place in the institution, and make use of its facilities.

**PLACEMENT TEST:** Test designed to measure the student's ability in English and/or mathematics and then to prescribe what English and/or mathematics courses the student will begin with.

**PRE-REGISTRATION** (Early Registration): Continuing students are able to register for courses in the next semester at the end of the semester they are currently attending.

**PRE-REQUISITE:** A basic course that the student is required to take before registering for an advanced course.

**PRIORITY REGISTRATION:** Permission given to students with disabilities to register early when the nature of the disability significantly impacts course selection and time scheduling.

**PROBATION:** Status of a student who may face dismissal if the grades or actions that prompted the probation are not improved within a designated period of time.

**PROGRAM ACCESSIBILITY:** The extent to which any given program needs modifications, accommodations or adaptations in order to provide the individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in the program.

**PROGRAM CHANGE:** The process a student must use to change from one major course of study to another.

**PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS:** Courses that form the basis for an academic major and are essential to completing that program or meeting license or certification requirements. These courses are essential to the program and cannot be waived or substituted.

**QUALITY POINT AVERAGE (Grade Point Average):** The total of the student's grade points in a semester divided by the total number of credit hours completed for that semester.

**REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS:** Those academic adjustments, auxiliary aids and services, program modifications or physical access adjustments that are made to the programs, employment opportunities, activities, and services sponsored by the college to provide equal access to all otherwise qualified persons with disabilities.

**REGISTRATION:** The process of selecting the courses and sections of each student's class schedule for a specific semester.

**RESERVED COURSES:** Courses in which enrollment is limited to those people who are matriculated into the designated degree program.

**REGISTRAR:** The administrator who is in charge of the Registration or Records office.

**REGISTRAR'S OFFICE:** The office on campus in charge of student transcripts, verifying students status at school, registering and issuing student semester schedules, grades, end of the term reports, and processing the student's graduation certification.

**SCHEDULE ADJUSTMENT:** Changing courses or sections on student's approved semester course schedule. May require the approval of the student's academic advisor.

**SECTION 504:** The section of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which requires that all institutions that receive Federal assistance must make their programs, services and activities accessible to individuals with disabilities.

**SECTIONS:** Various classes of the same course in the same semester. They may have different days, times, instructors, and/or rooms, but course content will be the same.

**STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT:** Rules of behavior established by the college describing unsatisfactory behavior by a student. Includes rules such as those that govern use of alcohol or drugs on campus or at campus events. Violation of these published rules can result in probation or dismissal.

**TRANSCRIPT:** The student's educational record. Official transcripts are sent from institution to institution or to potential employers at the student's request and bear the seal of the College.

**TTY/TDD:** TeleText Type, or Telecommunications Device for the Deaf, is a device which permits individuals who are hearing or speech impaired to communicate through the use of text transmission over phone lines.

**TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS:**

**VESID:** Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities. This is New York State's vocational rehabilitation services department for all individuals with disabilities except those who are blind.

**VRS:** Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

**WITHDRAWAL FROM COURSE:** When a student cannot continue in a course for some reason, he or she must formally withdraw from that course. The withdrawal is not finalized until the Registrar's Office receives all necessary paperwork. Failure to complete the withdrawal process will result in **F grade** in the course. A student cannot withdraw beyond established dates. The student withdraws **ONLY** from that course or courses but remains enrolled in the rest of the courses for which he or she is registered.

**WITHDRAWAL FROM COLLEGE:** Formal process utilized to change the status of an active student to one who is inactive. Discontinuance of attendance, notifying instructors, or mere telephone contact with college personnel do not constitute an official withdrawal. Students remain both academically and financially responsible for all incurred expenses until the withdrawal procedure has been finalized.

U.S. Department of Education  
Margaret Spellings  
*Secretary*

Office for Civil Rights  
James Manning  
*Delegated the Authority of Assistant Secretary*

**U.S. Department of Education  
Office for Civil Rights  
Washington, D.C. 20202**

*May 2005*

More and more high school students with disabilities are planning to continue their education in postsecondary schools, including vocational and career schools, two- and four- year colleges, and universities. As a student with a disability, you need to be well informed about your rights and responsibilities as well as the responsibilities that postsecondary schools have toward you. Being well informed will help ensure that you have a full opportunity to enjoy the benefits of the postsecondary education experience without confusion or delay.

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the U.S. Department of Education is providing the information in this pamphlet to explain the rights and responsibilities of students with disabilities who are preparing to attend postsecondary schools. This pamphlet also explains the obligations of a postsecondary school to provide academic adjustments, including auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that the school does not discriminate on the basis of disability.

OCR enforces Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II), which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. Practically every school district and postsecondary school in the United States is subject to one or both of these laws, which have similar requirements.\*/\_

Because both school districts and postsecondary schools must comply with these same laws, you and your parents might believe that postsecondary schools and school districts have the same responsibilities. This is not true; the responsibilities of postsecondary schools are significantly different from those of school districts.

Moreover, you will have responsibilities as a postsecondary student that you do not have as a high school student. OCR strongly encourages you to know your responsibilities and those of postsecondary schools under Section 504 and Title II. Doing so will improve your opportunity to succeed as you enter postsecondary education.

The following questions and answers provide more specific information to help you succeed.

**As a student with a disability leaving high school and entering postsecondary education, will I see differences in my rights and how they are addressed?**

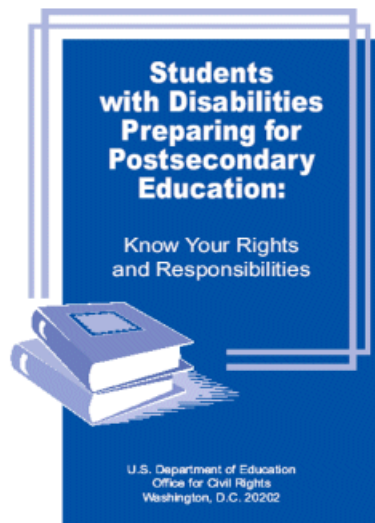
Yes. Section 504 and Title II protect elementary, secondary and postsecondary students from discrimination. Nevertheless, several of the requirements that apply through high school are different from the requirements that apply beyond high school. For instance, Section 504 requires a school district to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to each child with a disability in the district's jurisdiction. Whatever the disability, a school district must identify an individual's education needs and provide any regular or special education and related aids and services necessary to meet those needs as well as it is meeting the needs of students without disabilities.

Unlike your high school, your postsecondary school is not required to provide FAPE. Rather, your postsecondary school is required to provide appropriate academic adjustments as necessary to ensure that it does not discriminate on the basis of disability. In addition, if your postsecondary school provides housing to nondisabled students, it must provide comparable, convenient and accessible housing to students with disabilities at the same cost.

Other important differences you need to know, even before you arrive at your postsecondary school, are addressed in the remaining questions.

**May a postsecondary school deny my admission because I have a disability?**

No. If you meet the essential requirements for admission, a postsecondary school may not deny your admission simply because you have a disability.



### **Do I have to inform a postsecondary school that I have a disability?**

No. However, if you want the school to provide an academic adjustment, you must identify yourself as having a disability. Likewise, you should let the school know about your disability if you want to ensure that you are assigned to accessible facilities. In any event, your disclosure of a disability is always voluntary.

### **What academic adjustments must a postsecondary school provide?**

The appropriate academic adjustment must be determined based on your disability and individual needs. Academic adjustments may include auxiliary aids and modifications to academic requirements as are necessary to ensure equal educational opportunity. Examples of such adjustments are arranging for priority registration; reducing a course load; substituting one course for another; providing note takers, recording devices, sign language interpreters, extended time for testing and, if telephones are provided in dorm rooms, a TTY in your dorm room; and equipping school computers with screen-reading, voice recognition or other adaptive software or hardware.

In providing an academic adjustment, your postsecondary school is not required to lower or effect substantial modifications to essential requirements. For example, although your school may be required to provide extended testing time, it is not required to change the substantive content of the test. In addition, your postsecondary school does not have to make modifications that would fundamentally alter the nature of a service, program or activity or would result in undue financial or administrative burdens. Finally, your postsecondary school does not have to provide personal attendants, individually prescribed devices, readers for personal use or study, or other devices or services of a personal nature, such as tutoring and typing.

### **If I want an academic adjustment, what must I do?**

You must inform the school that you have a disability and need an academic adjustment. Unlike your school district, your postsecondary school is not required to identify you as having a disability or assess your needs.

Your postsecondary school may require you to follow reasonable procedures to request an academic adjustment. You are responsible for knowing and following these procedures. Postsecondary schools usually include, in their publications providing general information, information on the procedures and contacts for requesting an academic adjustment. Such publications include recruitment materials, catalogs and student handbooks, and are often available on school Web sites. Many schools also have staff whose purpose is to assist students with disabilities. If you are unable to locate the procedures, ask a school official, such as an admissions officer or counselor.

### **When should I request an academic adjustment?**

Although you may request an academic adjustment from your postsecondary school at any time, you should request it as early as possible. Some academic adjustments may take more time to provide than others. You should follow your school's procedures to ensure that your school has enough time to review your request and provide an appropriate academic adjustment.

### **Do I have to prove that I have a disability to obtain an academic adjustment?**

Generally, yes. Your school probably will require you to provide documentation that shows you have a current disability and need an academic adjustment.

### **What documentation should I provide?**

Schools may set reasonable standards for documentation. Some schools require more documentation than others. They may require you to provide documentation prepared by an appropriate professional, such as a medical doctor, psychologist or other qualified diagnostician. The required documentation may include one or more of the following: a diagnosis of your current disability; the date of the diagnosis; how the diagnosis was reached; the credentials of the professional; how your disability affects a major life activity; and how the disability affects your academic performance. The documentation should provide enough information for you and your school to decide what is an appropriate academic adjustment.

Although an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan, if you have one, may help identify services that have been effective for you, it generally is not sufficient documentation. This is because postsecondary education presents different demands than high school education, and what you need to meet these new demands may be different. Also in some cases, the nature of a disability may change.



If the documentation that you have does not meet the postsecondary school's requirements, a school official must tell you in a timely manner what additional documentation you need to provide. You may need a new evaluation in order to provide the required documentation.

#### **Who has to pay for a new evaluation?**

Neither your high school nor your postsecondary school is required to conduct or pay for a new evaluation to document your disability and need for an academic adjustment. This may mean that you have to pay or find funding to pay an appropriate professional to do it. If you are eligible for services through your state vocational rehabilitation agency, you may qualify for an evaluation at no cost to you. You may locate your state vocational rehabilitation agency through this Department of Education Web page: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/index.html>

#### **Once the school has received the necessary documentation from me, what should I expect?**

The school will review your request in light of the essential requirements for the relevant program to help determine an appropriate academic adjustment. It is important to remember that the school is not required to lower or waive essential requirements. If you have requested a specific academic adjustment, the school may offer that academic adjustment or an alternative one if the alternative also would be effective. The school may also conduct its own evaluation of your disability and needs at its own expense.

You should expect your school to work with you in an interactive process to identify an appropriate academic adjustment. Unlike the experience you may have had in high school, however, do not expect your postsecondary school to invite your parents to participate in the process or to develop an IEP for you.

#### **What if the academic adjustment we identified is not working?**

Let the school know as soon as you become aware that the results are not what you expected. It may be too late to correct the problem if you wait until the course or activity is completed. You and your school should work together to resolve the problem.

#### **May a postsecondary school charge me for providing an academic adjustment?**

No. Furthermore, it may not charge students with disabilities more for participating in its programs or activities than it charges students who do not have disabilities.

#### **What can I do if I believe the school is discriminating against me?**

Practically every postsecondary school must have a person—frequently called the Section 504 Coordinator, ADA Coordinator, or Disability Services Coordinator—who coordinates the school's compliance with Section 504 or Title II or both laws. You may contact this person for information about how to address your concerns.

The school also must have grievance procedures. These procedures are not the same as the due process procedures with which you may be familiar from high school. However, the postsecondary school's grievance procedures must include steps to ensure that you may raise your concerns fully and fairly and must provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints.

School publications, such as student handbooks and catalogs, usually describe the steps you must take to start the grievance process. Often, schools have both formal and informal processes. If you decide to use a grievance process, you should be prepared to present all the reasons that support your request.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome from using the school's grievance procedures or you wish to pursue an alternative to using the grievance procedures, you may [file a complaint](#) against the school with OCR or in a court. You may learn more about the OCR complaint process from the brochure *How to File a Discrimination Complaint with the Office for Civil Rights*, which you may obtain by contacting us at the addresses and phone numbers below, or at <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/howto.html>.

If you would like more information about the responsibilities of postsecondary schools to students with disabilities, read the OCR brochure *Auxiliary Aids and Services for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities: Higher Education's Obligations Under Section 504 and Title II of the ADA*. You may obtain a copy by contacting us at the address and phone numbers below, or at <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/auxaids.html>.

Students with disabilities who know their rights and responsibilities are much better equipped to succeed in postsecondary school. We encourage you to work with the staff at your school because they, too, want you to succeed. Seek the support of family, friends and fellow students, including those with disabilities. Know your talents and capitalize on them, and believe in yourself as you embrace new challenges in your education.

To receive more information about the civil rights of students with disabilities in education institutions, contact us at:

Customer Service Team  
Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, D.C. 20202-1100  
Phone: 1-800-421-3481  
TDD: 1- 877-521-2172  
Email: [ocr@ed.gov](mailto:ocr@ed.gov)  
Web site: [www.ed.gov/ocr](http://www.ed.gov/ocr)

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\*\_/ You may be familiar with another federal law that applies to the education of students with disabilities—the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). That law is administered by the Office of Special Education Programs in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the U.S. Department of Education. The IDEA and its Individualized Education Program (IEP) provisions do not apply to postsecondary schools. This pamphlet does not discuss the IDEA or state and local laws that may apply.

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## ***SUNY AND THE IEP DIPLOMA***

In recent months, SUNY has been asked frequently whether students who receive a high school Individualized Education diploma (IEP diploma) must be considered high school graduates and treated accordingly under Education Law 6304, which requires community colleges to accept 'into an appropriate program of the college' all applicants from the sponsorship area 'who graduated from high school within the prior year.'

The State Education Department has ruled that an IEP diploma is different from a high school diploma in that it is not an indicator of successful completion of high school study. A student earns a high school diploma by demonstrating mastery of the high school curriculum in accordance with regulations adopted by the State Education Department. Similarly, persons qualifying to sit for the high school equivalency exam may make this demonstration of mastery by passing a comprehensive examination on the subject matter in the high school curriculum. Certain students with handicapping conditions, however, are unable to make this showing.

State regulations mandate public schools and permit private schools to award IEP diplomas to recognize the personal accomplishments of handicapped students who are unable to earn a high school diploma. A school may award a qualified student with a handicap an IEP diploma at the end of any school year in which the student has attained the age of 21, or upon application of the student or his/her parent, after the student has attended school for 12 years. State regulations require that an IEP diploma clearly indicate on its face that it is awarded solely on the basis of the student's successful completion of an individualized education program.

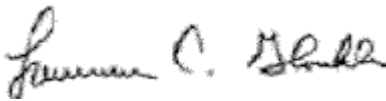
The IEP diploma, unlike either the high school diploma or the high school equivalency diploma, does not represent passing 4 years or their equivalent in grades above grade nine; it reflects a purely subjective measure of achievement. As further indication that the award of the IEP diploma is not indicative of high school graduation, students awarded such diplomas before their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday remain eligible to attend the public schools in their district without tuition until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, or until they have earned a high school diploma, whichever is earlier.

Assuming that Education Law 6304 was intended to extend the full opportunity mandate to high school graduates indicating successful completion of the high school curriculum, students with IEP diplomas are not high school graduates in the sense intended by the law. Community Colleges are therefore under no legal obligation to accept such students under the terms of the full opportunity policy.

All students, including those with IEP diplomas, who have neither a high school diploma nor its equivalent, and who are admitted to post-secondary education programs on the basis of their 'ability to benefit', must successfully complete an independently administered ability to benefit test as required by the U.S. Department of Education pursuant to Section 484(d) of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

October 2003

**To:** District Superintendents  
Superintendents of Public and Nonpublic Schools  
Superintendents of State-Operated and State-Supported Schools  
Principals of Public and Nonpublic Schools  
Directors of Special Education  
Chairpersons of Committees on Special Education  
Directors of Pupil Personnel Services  
Executive Directors of Approved Private Schools  
Presidents of Boards of Education  
State and Local Teacher Associations  
Impartial Hearing Officers  
Community Dispute Resolution Centers  
Commissioner's Advisory Panel for Special Education Services  
SETRC Project Directors and Training Specialists  
Organizations, Parents and Individuals Concerned with Special Education

**From:** Lawrence C. Gloeckler 

**Subject:** Extension of the RCT Safety Net for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities continue to make considerable progress in achieving the State learning standards with increasing numbers taking and passing Regents examinations. However, there is still a significant achievement gap between students with disabilities and general education students, and an even more significant gap for students with disabilities in districts with low resources. In recognition of that gap, the Board of Regents in October 2003 approved an extension of the Regents Competency Test (RCT) safety net for students with disabilities. This action extends the safety net for an additional five years to make it available to all eligible students with disabilities **entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade from the 1996-97 school year through the 2009-10 school year**. The Department will proceed with amendments to Part 100 of the Commissioner's Regulations to conform to this decision by the Board of Regents.

Beginning with students who entered grade 9 in the 2001-02 school year, in order to earn a high school Regents diploma, they need to take and pass with a score of 65 or higher five specific Regents examinations. The safety net allows students with disabilities who do not pass one or more

of the required Regents examinations to instead meet testing requirements for the local diploma by passing the corresponding RCT(s) or the Department approved alternatives. The school may

administer the RCT before or after the Regents examination, but, in all cases, the student must take the required Regents examinations in order to earn the local diploma.

As a reminder, the admission requirements for taking the Regents and RCTs are described on page 4 of the *Regents Examinations, Regents Competency Tests, and Proficiency Examination: School Administrator's Manual*. For example, only students enrolled in grades 11 and 12 may be admitted to the RCTs in reading and writing; they are generally expected to take these tests initially in January of Grade 11.

The following students qualify for the RCT safety net:

- Students with disabilities identified through a Committee on Special Education (CSE). Specific language regarding the availability of the safety net does not have to be indicated on the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- Students with disabilities identified through the Section 504 Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) if recommended and documented by the MDT on the student's Accommodation Plan.
- Students with disabilities declassified while in grades 8-12 if recommended and documented by the CSE on the student's IEP.

It is important to note that the RCT safety net for students with disabilities is different from the local option for a passing score of 55-64 available to all students when adopted by the district. The "low-pass option" will be in effect for all students now in high school (students who entered grade 9 in 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003) and those entering grade 9 in 2004. This allows students to meet local diploma requirements by earning a score of at least 55 on the five required Regents exams. The low-pass option must be made available to students with disabilities if the district chooses to make it available to any students.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. **Can a district make a local decision not to make the RCT safety net available to students with disabilities?**

No. The safety net must be provided for students with disabilities in all districts.

2. **If the local board of education has not adopted the 55-64 low-pass option for all students, can it be made available to students with disabilities only?**

No. The 55-64 low-pass option is available to students with disabilities only if it has been adopted \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ all \_\_\_\_\_ students.

3. **If the Board of Education has adopted the low-pass option and if a student with a disability earns between a 55 and 64 on a required Regents examination, does he or she also need to take the corresponding RCT?**

No. The 55-64 low-pass option, available to all students including students with disabilities, satisfies the testing requirement for a local diploma.

**4. If a student earns 55-64 on a required Regents examination, will this count toward a Regents or local diploma?**

Local diploma only. A score of 65 or higher is required for meeting Regents diploma requirements.

Further questions about the 55-64 low-pass option may be e-mailed to [emscassessinfo@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:emscassessinfo@mail.nysed.gov). If you have questions about the RCT safety net for students with disabilities, please contact the Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities, Special Education Policy Unit, at 518-473-2878 or your Regional Associate at one of the following VESID Special Education Quality Assurance Regional Offices:

Eastern Regional Office	(518) 486-6366
Hudson Valley Regional Office	(914) 245-0010 / (518) 473-1185
Central Regional Office	(315) 428-3287
Long Island Regional Office	(631) 884-8530
New York City Regional Office	(718) 722-4544
Western Regional Office	(585) 344-2002, ext. 420 / (716) 821-7360

**Guidelines to Allow for the Transfer of Assistive Technology When a Student Moves from School Jurisdiction to Higher Education, Other Human Services Agency or Employment**

**Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID)  
Special Education and Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

**Guidelines to Allow for the Transfer of Assistive Technology When a Student Moves from School Jurisdiction to Higher Education, Other Human Services Agency or Employment**

**July 1996**

TO: District Superintendents  
Presidents of Boards of Education  
Superintendents of Schools  
VESID District Office Managers  
New York City Board of Education  
Principals of Public Schools  
Directors of Special Education  
Chairpersons of Committees on Special Education  
School District Business Officers  
SETRC Project Directors and Training Specialists

FROM: H. Carl McCall, State Comptroller  
Richard P. Mills, Commissioner of Education

SUBJECT: Guidelines to Allow for the Transfer of Assistive Technology When a student Moves from School Jurisdiction to Higher Education, Other Human Services Agency or Employment

The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify issues associated with the transfer of technology property to support students with disabilities as they transfer from local educational agencies to other settings or opportunities.

**Historical Background:**

In 1991, the State Board of Regents established a Select Commission on Disability. The focus of the Commission was on services to people with disabilities under the auspices of the Board of Regents and the State Education Department. The Commission also made recommendations regarding services that might cross agency lines, including the coordination of such services, and suggested appropriate actions to be taken by the State. The Commission, in its 1993 final report, made 13 specific recommendations. One of the recommendations dealt with the Appropriate Use and Transfer of Assistive Technology.

It read as follows:

The Regents should focus special attention on the issue of technology, review the manner and extent to which Assistive Technology is currently delivered and used, and remove impediments to the appropriate use and transfer of such technology. A strategy should be developed to enable

transfer of Assistive Technology as an individual with disabilities moves through his or her life course.

A task force was established to examine and make recommendations to eliminate barriers to transferring Assistive Technology between agencies. The task force's membership includes representatives from schools, BOCES, and higher education institutions. As a result of recommendations from this task force, the Education Department and the Office of State Comptroller have conferred and agreed to the distribution of this memorandum.

Definition: Assistive technology is defined as an item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

Issue: School districts periodically provide assistive technology to students with disabilities as part of their Individualized Education Program. This technology is often adapted to that individual and may be of little value to others. However, the technology often continues to be necessary for that individual when they leave school. A number of school districts have expressed a reluctance to sell technology property when a student leaves that district. It was determined that this is due partly to an uneasiness over selling an item, for a price they set, to interested parties. The greater reason for reluctance has been an uncertainty over how the Office of State Comptroller will treat these actions, should there be an audit.

Resolution: While statutory provisions address the obligations of local school officials, there are no specific provisions which address the ability to transfer such technology, whether hardware or software. However, Boards of Education do have clear authority to manage the general affairs of the district, and this includes the authority to dispose of property the district no longer needs. Boards of Education need to consider the following aspects in preparing to dispose of assistive technology. These areas focus on accountability for the disposition and transfer of property. These are also the areas that auditors will be interested in if they review the disposition of property.

Surplus Nature of the Property: School officials are routinely called upon in their day-to-day responsibilities to decide whether items are no longer usable in their present condition and, therefore, need replacing, or even if usable, whether they are no longer needed for the district's own purposes. The situation is no different when the items involved are technological in nature. Generally, there should be no known, immediate or currently foreseeable use of the property for the district's needs. If that condition is met, the district may regard the item(s) as surplus, and therefore disposable.

Disposition at Fair Market Value: School officials are always required to make a good faith effort to obtain an item's actual value when disposing of property owned by the district. Determining their fair market value, however, may pose some difficulty for school officials who are required to set that value before there may be a proper transfer of ownership. Not all items have a ready market, nor is there a certain, established method for determining value. This may be particularly so when the property consists of technology items provided for a specific student's use and the student has used it for a long time. School officials should reasonably consider such things as the age and condition of surplus items in attempting to assess their value. School officials should be able to show how the value of an item has been determined. As long



as the school district or BOCES receives reasonable value for transferring its surplus property, the transfer may be made to anyone; i.e., another school district, BOCES, postsecondary institution, human service agency, employer, or private individual. There is no need to pursue bidding requirements for the disposition to occur.

Accountability Issues: Decision-making in this area is clearly the legal responsibility of the appropriate school officials. When an audit is conducted, auditors from the Office of the State Comptroller will look to see available documentation which demonstrates that the school officials considered the relevant factors of whether the property in question was deemed not usable by the district, e.g., whether it is surplus, and whether a proper attempt was made to place and obtain a reasonable or fair monetary value on the property when it was transferred. Where the circumstances make it difficult to establish that value, the school district or BOCES attempts to obtain help will be considered. That is, when a district or BOCES finds it cannot easily establish the value of an item or items, its request for advice and the advice received from a source such as another district which may have had similar experience, may well be regarded as a sufficient demonstration of a proper effort to set the value of the property.

Questions concerning this topic should be directed to the Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities, Program Development Support Services Unit at (518) 486-7462.

## EXPANDED APPROVAL OF "ABILITY-TO-BENEFIT" TESTS AND PASSING SCORES

The notice further provided that the nine listed tests were not yet approved for students with disabilities. As a result, for these students, an institution could continue to use ability-to-benefit tests that were approved as of June 30, 1996. However, if a student with disabilities, nevertheless, took and passed one of those nine tests, the Secretary would consider that the student had demonstrated the requisite ability-to-benefit for purposes of section 484(d) of the HEA.

The Secretary is now expanding the approval of those nine tests for use with students with disabilities provided that those tests are given in a manner that is consistent with the applicable requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. This would include offering and administering the test in a time, place and manner that is accessible, including the provision of appropriate modifications and auxiliary aids and services. Examples of appropriate modifications and auxiliary aids and services include a change in the length of time of examination for individuals with learning disabilities and Braille or large print examinations and answer sheets or qualified readers for individuals with visual impairments. In addition, because the regulations at 34 CFR Part 668, Subpart J, contain a special provision for the assessment of students with disabilities for whom no tests are reasonably available, if none of the nine approved tests can be given in a manner that is accessible to a person with disabilities, an institution must utilize the procedures under 34 CFR 668.149 which allow for testing under this alternative provision.

As stated in Sec. 668.149, such a test is a modified test or testing procedure or instrument that has been scientifically developed specifically for the purpose of evaluating the ability to benefit from postsecondary training or education of students with a disability. It measures both basic verbal and quantitative skills at the secondary school level and reflects the student's skills and general learned abilities rather than the student's impairment.

As a result of the Secretary's expanded approval of the use of these tests for students with disabilities, as of the date of this notice, an institution may use one of the approved nine tests for these students provided that the test is administered in a manner that accommodates the students' disabilities. In addition, for sixty days after the date of this notice, an institution may also use any ability-to-benefit test that was approved as of June 30, 1996. However, after that sixtieth day, an institution must no longer use one of the latter type tests.

*Note. Please note that the exception provided in the October 27, 1998 Federal Register notice remains in effect for students whose native language is not English and who are not fluent in English. That is, the tests that the Secretary has approved in this notice and the October 27, 1998 notice are not approved for those students, and institutions may continue to use ESL ability-to-benefit tests that were approved as of June 30, 1996 for those students. Nevertheless, if a student takes and passes one of the tests approved in this notice or the October 27, 1998 notice, the Secretary will consider that the student demonstrated the requisite ability-to-benefit for purposes of section 484(d) of the HEA.*

## LIST OF APPROVED "ABILITY-TO-BENEFIT" TESTS AND PASSING SCORES

1. **ASSET Program: Basic Skills Tests** (Reading, Writing, and Numerical)--Forms B2 and C2.

Passing Scores: The approved passing scores on this test are as follows:

Reading (34), Writing (34), and Numerical (33).

Publisher: The test publisher and the address, contact person, telephone, and fax number of the test publisher are:

American College Testing (ACT) Placement Assessment Programs  
2201 North Dodge Street,  
P.O. Box 168, Iowa City, Iowa 52243  
Contact: Dr. John D. Roth  
Telephone: (319) 337-1030, Fax: (319) 337-1790.

3. **Career Programs Assessment (CPAT) Basic Skills**

Subtests Language Usage, Reading and Numerical)--Forms A, B, and C.

Passing Scores: The approved passing scores on this test are as follows:

Language Usage (43), Reading (44), and Numerical (42).

Publisher: The test publisher and the address, contact person, telephone, and fax number of the test publisher are:

American College Testing (ACT), Placement Assessment Programs  
2201 North Dodge Street  
P.O. Box 168, Iowa City, Iowa 52243  
Contact: Dr. John D. Roth  
Telephone: (319) 337-1030, Fax: (319) 337-1790.

4. **COMPASS** Subtests: Prealgebra/Numerical Skills Placement, Reading Placement, and Writing Placement.

Passing Scores: The approved passing scores on this test are as follows:

Prealgebra/Numerical (21), Reading (60), and Writing (31).

Publisher: The test publisher and the address, contact person, telephone, and fax number of the test publisher are:

American College Testing (ACT), Placement Assessment Programs, 2201 North  
Dodge Street,  
P.O. Box 168, Iowa City, Iowa 52243,  
Contact: Dr. John D. Roth,  
Telephone: (319) 337-1030, Fax: (319) 337-1790.

**5. Computerized Placement Tests (CPTs)/Accuplacer (Reading Comprehension, Sentence Skills, and Arithmetic).**

Passing Scores: The approved passing scores on this test are as follows:

Reading Comprehension (52), Sentence Skills (60), and Arithmetic (36).

Publisher: The test publisher and the address, contact person, telephone, and fax number of the test publisher are:

The College Board,  
45 Columbus Avenue  
New York, New York 10023-6992  
Contact: Ms. Loretta M. Church  
Telephone: (212) 713-8000, Fax: (212) 713-8063.

**6. Descriptive Tests: Descriptive Tests of Language Skills (DTLS) (Reading Comprehension, Sentence Structure and Conventions of Written English)--Forms M-K-3KDT and M-K-3LDT; and Descriptive Tests of Mathematical Skills (DTMS) (Arithmetic)--Forms M-K-3KDT and M-K-3LDT.**

Passing Scores: The approved passing scores on this test are as follows: Reading Comprehension (108), Sentence Structure (9), Conventions of Written English (309), and Arithmetic (506).

Publisher: The test publisher and the address, contact person, telephone, and fax number of the test publisher are:

The College Board,  
45 Columbus Avenue  
New York, New York 10023-6992  
Contact: Ms. Loretta M. Church  
Telephone: (212) 713-8000, Fax: (212) 713-8063.

**7. Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE): (Reading Total, Total Mathematics, Total Language)--Forms 5 and 6, Level A, Complete Battery and Survey Versions.**

Passing Scores: The approved passing scores on this test are as follows:

Reading Total (768), Total Mathematics (783), Total Language (714).

Publisher: The test publisher and the address, contact person, telephone, and fax number of the test publisher are:

CTB/McGraw-Hill  
20 Ryan Ranch Road  
Monterey, California 939405703  
Contact: Ms. Tina Gwaltney  
Telephone: (831) 393-7749, Fax: (831) 393-7142.

**8. Test of Adult Basic Education (TA.BE): (Reading, Total Mathematics, Language)--Forms 7 and 8, Level A, Complete Battery and Survey Versions.**

Passing Scores: The approved passing scores on this test are as follows:

Reading (559), Total Mathematics (562), Language (545).

Publisher: The test publisher and the address, contact person, telephone, and fax number of the test publisher are:

CTB/McGraw-Hill  
20 Ryan Ranch Road  
Monterey, California 939405703  
Contact: Ms. Tina Gwaltney  
Telephone: (831) 393-7749, Fax: (831) 393-7142.

**9. Wonderlic Basic Skills Test (WBST)--Verbal Forms VS-1 & VS-2, Quantitative Forms QS-1 & QS-2.**

Passing scores: The approved passing scores on this test are as follows:

Verbal (200) and Quantitative (210).

Publisher: The test publisher and the address, contact person, telephone, and fax number of the test publisher are:

Wonderlic Personnel Test, Inc.

1509 N. Milwaukee Ave.

Libertyville, IL 600481380

Contact: Mr. Victor S. Artese,

Telephone: (800) 323-374, Fax: (847) 680-9492.

**DURATION OF APPROVAL**

**The Secretary approves each of these tests for five years from the date of the Secretary's written notice to the test publisher, unless the Secretary withdraws this approval or the publisher requests that approval of a test be withdrawn. In either case, the Secretary will publish a notice in the Federal Register indicating this change. Users are referred to the test publisher's technical manual for computing these scores.**

## BULLETIN #132

TO: Chief Executive Officers

FROM: Robert J. Maurer, President

SUBJECT: Part-Time TAP Eligibility for Students with Disabilities

DATE: August 4, 1998

CC: *Financial Aid Administrators, Certifying Officers, Bursars, Registrars, Campus Coordinators of Disabled Student Services*

On July 14, Governor Pataki signed Senate Bill 7072 into law as Chapter 332 of the Laws of 1998. This new law provides that students who are disabled, as defined by the 1990 Federal Americans with Disabilities Act, do not have to be in full-time attendance to be eligible for Tuition Assistance Program payments. These students are now eligible for TAP if they are attending part-time, as defined by the Commissioner of Education. This new law is effective immediately.

Under prior law, regulation and policy, students with disabilities who attended school part-time because of their disability were eligible for a TAP award payment only after the number of credits they took equaled the number necessary to be considered a full-time student. This was usually after two or more semesters. Chapter 332 provides these students are eligible for a partial TAP award payment in the first term in which they attend on a part-time basis. The law does not require students with disabilities to attend part-time; students with disabilities who attend full-time continue to be eligible, as any other student, for a full TAP award.

For the purposes of application processing, students with disabilities should follow the same procedures as other students. HESC will continue to calculate a full-time TAP award for any eligible student who applies. Schools will be asked to certify the eligibility of students with disabilities who are attending less than full-time for a part-time TAP award. Once the school certifies a student's eligibility, HESC will calculate the part-time TAP award and post it to the remittance advice. HESC will then notify the student of the award by issuing an award certificate. We will shortly issue a technical bulletin giving full details on the methodology for computing the amount of the TAP award and the impact on TAP point accumulation.

The new law did not change any of the other TAP eligibility requirements, including students be matriculated in a program of study, be in good academic standing, or have achieved a C average at the completion of their second academic year. HESC is working with the State Education Department to further define how these existing TAP requirements will be applied to these students.

It is important that the Financial Aid Office and the TAP Certifying Officer work jointly with the office or staff responsible for administering the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The TAP Certifying Officer must be able to document that the student is ADA eligible. Those records can be obtained from the designated campus ADA representative. Since we do not yet have a list of the campus coordinators for the disabled, we have included two copies of this bulletin in the mailing to the Financial Aid Officers.

If you have any questions or require additional information about the new law, please call the Office of Field Services at (518) 474-3552.

## WEB RESOURCES:

### ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY

**ADTECH:** A 'listerv' for those who deal with assistive or adaptive technology from high speed scanners to questions about interfacing technology

<http://www.lists.oregonstate.edu/cgi-bin/lyris>

**Equal Access to Software and information (EASI):** Owned and operated by Dr. Norm Coombs, EASI offers online courses and discussions on topics such as web access and distance learning. <http://easi.cc/workshop.htm>

**Syllabus Magazine** a monthly publication dedicated exclusively to covering IT in higher education. **Syllabus** covers critical IT trends and technologies within a variety of platforms. <http://lists.101com.com/NLS/pages/main.asp?NL=Syllabus>

### ACCESS TO CAREER SERVICES, INTERNSHIPS, AND FIELD PLACEMENTS

**Job Accommodations Network:** A service of the [Office of Disability Employment Policy](#) of the U.S. Department of Labor [www.jan.wvu.edu](http://www.jan.wvu.edu)

**Workforce Diversity** and **Careers & the Disabled** – two magazine devoted to issues regarding employment of individuals with disabilities. [www.eop.com](http://www.eop.com)

### DISABILITY GENERAL

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) webpage:** [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov) or [www.usdoj.gov](http://www.usdoj.gov)

**Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG):**  
[www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada)

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) webpage:** [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov) or [www.usdoj.gov](http://www.usdoj.gov)

**Disability Information.gov:** Federal website with links to other federal websites related to disability <http://disabilityinfo.gov>

**HEATH:** National clearinghouse on Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Disabilities [www.heath.gwu.edu](http://www.heath.gwu.edu)

**Office for Civil Rights (OCR):** Unit of the US Department of Education charged with oversight of compliance with the ADA on college campuses. [www.ed.gov/ocr](http://www.ed.gov/ocr)

**DSSHE-L:** International 'listserv' that allows disability service providers in postsecondary education to network with colleagues when they need assistance. To subscribe: <http://listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu/archives/dsshe-l.html>



## DISABILITY SPECIFIC

**ADDitude:** a print magazine dedicated to improving academic, vocational, and social outcomes for people with Attention Deficit Disorder. [www.additudemag.com](http://www.additudemag.com).

**American Printing House for the Blind:** Resources for the blind including four track tape recorders and some large print books <http://www.aph.org>

**Northeast Technical Assistance Center on Deafness (NETAC):** Located on the campus of the Rochester Institute of Technology, NETAC provides assistance and information to campuses and individuals to improve the learning environment for deaf and hard of hearing students on college campuses. Website has a great collection of teacher tipsheets that can be downloaded and copied. [www.netac.rit.edu](http://www.netac.rit.edu)

**PEPNET:** Transition materials for deaf and hearing impaired students and teachers [outcome.mcpo.org/Gatestoadventure](http://outcome.mcpo.org/Gatestoadventure)

**Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic:** Textbooks on audio cassette and now electronic format [www.rfbd.org](http://www.rfbd.org)

**Talking Books and Braille Library:** NYS version of the National Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Lends books, tapes, publications to eligible participants in alternate format. Also provides users with free tape players etc. for use with the material. [tbbl@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:tbbl@mail.nysed.gov)

## TRANSITION RESOURCES

**Collegiate Consortium of Disability Advocates (CCDA)** full text of Effective College Planning 7<sup>th</sup> Ed. and information about events and materials. [www.ccdanet.org](http://www.ccdanet.org)

**Post-Secondary Disability Consortium of Central New York:** Website developed by this consortium to assist students, parents, educators, and consulting professionals in developing a better understanding of the issues involved in the transition to college for students with disabilities. [www.pdccny.org](http://www.pdccny.org)

## STUDENT TOOLS

**Northeast Technical Assistance Center on Deafness (NETAC):** Located on the campus of the Rochester Institute of Technology, NETAC provides assistance and information to campuses and individuals to improve the learning environment for deaf and hard of hearing students on college campuses. An on-line notetaker training course is available at: <http://www.netac.rit.edu/onlinenotetakertraining.html>

**Speech-to-Text Freeware:** There are a number of free software programs (very basic) for speech-to-text. <http://www.dyslexia.com/helpread.htm> has links to five: Browsealoud, Help Read, ReadPlease, WeMedia and Read-E.

**TASC Tutoring Centers On-Line Workshops** – included are workshops in Time Management, Notetaking Techniques, Learning Styles Exploration, Textbook Reading Strategies, Increasing Reading Rate, and Test-taking Strategies.  
[http://www.trcc.commnet.edu/ed\\_resources/tasc/skills\\_workshops.htm](http://www.trcc.commnet.edu/ed_resources/tasc/skills_workshops.htm)

**University of Minnesota Assignment Calculator** – this tool is great for students to plan out writing papers. <http://www.lib.umn.edu/help/calculator/>

**University of St. Thomas Study Guides and Strategies** – Topics include: Preparing to Learn, Classroom Participation, Project Management, Preparing for Tests, Writing Basics, Math and Science, Studying, Learning with others, Taking Tests, Reading Skills, Web truth. <http://www.studygs.net/index.htm>

## COLLEGE SEARCH

[www.act.org](http://www.act.org)  
[www.weapply.com](http://www.weapply.com)  
[www.collegeview.com](http://www.collegeview.com)  
[www.gocollege.com](http://www.gocollege.com)  
[www.review.com/college](http://www.review.com/college)  
[www.luminet.net/~jackp/survive.html](http://www.luminet.net/~jackp/survive.html)

College Board Home Page  
[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

College Quest  
[www.collegequest.com/](http://www.collegequest.com/)

The Student Guide  
[www.ed.gov/prog\\_info/SFA/StudentGuide/](http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/StudentGuide/)

CAREERS  
[www.careersandcolleges.com](http://www.careersandcolleges.com)  
[www.MyRoad.com](http://www.MyRoad.com)

National Clearinghouse on Careers and Professions Related to Early Intervention and Education for Children with Disabilities; The Council for Exceptional Children  
[www.special-ed-careers.org](http://www.special-ed-careers.org)

Financial Aid/Scholarships

[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)

[www.collegenet.com](http://www.collegenet.com)

[www.scholarships101.com](http://www.scholarships101.com)

[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)

[www.cashe.com](http://www.cashe.com)

National Amputation Foundation Scholarship

[www.nationalamputation.org](http://www.nationalamputation.org)

National Association of the Deaf Stokoe Scholarship

[www.nad.org/openhouse/programs/R&Sawards/stokeoscholarship.html](http://www.nad.org/openhouse/programs/R&Sawards/stokeoscholarship.html)

Financial Aid for Students

[www.ed.gov/OSFAP/students](http://www.ed.gov/OSFAP/students)

The Financial Aid Information Page

[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org).

FAFSA Express

[www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/express.html](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/express.html)

Don't Miss Out: The Ambitious Student's Guide to Financial Aid

[www.octameron.com](http://www.octameron.com)

Financial Aid for students with Disabilities and Their Families

[www.rspfunding.com](http://www.rspfunding.com).

Funding Your Education

[www.ed.gov/prog\\_info/SFA/FYE](http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/FYE)

[www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com)

CASHE- College Aid Sources for Higher Education

[www.salliemae.com](http://www.salliemae.com)

Admissions and Financial Aid Information

CollegeNET

[www.collegenet.com](http://www.collegenet.com)

The National Association of Student Financial Aid

[www.nasfaa.org](http://www.nasfaa.org)

The Parents Guide to Paying for College  
[www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

Hemophilia Health Services Memorial Scholarship Program  
[www.hemophiliahealth.com](http://www.hemophiliahealth.com)

## ***CCDA MEMBERS***

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State Education Department - VESID  
508 Main Street  
Buffalo, NY 14202  
716/ 848-8001

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## **TRANSITION: STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES PREPARING FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**

Reproduction and ordering information  
U.S. Department of Education  
Rod Paige  
Secretary  
Office for Civil Rights  
Gerald A. Reynolds  
Assistant Secretary

July 2002

### ***Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities***

U.S. Department of Education  
Office for Civil Rights  
Washington, D.C. 20202

July 2002

More and more high school students with disabilities are planning to continue their education in postsecondary schools, including vocational and career schools, two- and four- year colleges, and universities. As a student with a disability, you need to be well informed about your rights and responsibilities as well as the responsibilities that postsecondary schools have toward you. Being well informed will help ensure that you have a full opportunity to enjoy the benefits of the postsecondary education experience without confusion or delay.

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the U.S. Department of Education is providing the information in this pamphlet to explain the rights and responsibilities of students with disabilities who are preparing to attend postsecondary schools. This pamphlet also explains the obligations of a postsecondary school to provide academic adjustments, including auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that the school does not discriminate on the basis of disability.

OCR enforces Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II), which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. Practically every school

district and postsecondary school in the United States is subject to one or both of these laws, which have similar requirements.\* /

Because both school districts and postsecondary schools must comply with these same laws, you and your parents might believe that postsecondary schools and school districts have the same responsibilities. This is not true; the responsibilities of postsecondary schools are significantly different from those of school districts.

Moreover, you will have responsibilities as a postsecondary student that you do not have as a high school student. OCR strongly encourages you to know your responsibilities and those of postsecondary schools under Section 504 and Title II. Doing so will improve your opportunity to succeed as you enter postsecondary education.

The following questions and answers provide more specific information to help you succeed.

As a student with a disability leaving high school and entering postsecondary education, will I see differences in my rights and how they are addressed?

Yes. Section 504 and Title II protect elementary, secondary and postsecondary students from discrimination. Nevertheless, several of the requirements that apply through high school are different from the requirements that apply beyond high school. For instance, Section 504 requires a school district to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to each child with a disability in the district's jurisdiction. Whatever the disability, a school district must identify an individual's education needs and provide any regular or special education and related aids and services necessary to meet those needs as well as it is meeting the needs of students without disabilities.

Unlike your high school, your postsecondary school is not required to provide FAPE. Rather, your postsecondary school is required to provide appropriate academic adjustments as necessary to ensure that it does not discriminate on the basis of disability. In addition, if your postsecondary school provides housing to nondisabled students, it must provide comparable, convenient and accessible housing to students with disabilities at the same cost.

Other important differences you need to know, even before you arrive at your postsecondary school, are addressed in the remaining questions.

May a postsecondary school deny my admission because I have a disability?

No. If you meet the essential requirements for admission, a postsecondary school may not deny your admission simply because you have a disability.

## DO I HAVE TO INFORM A POSTSECONDARY SCHOOL THAT I HAVE A DISABILITY?

No. However, if you want the school to provide an academic adjustment, you must identify yourself as having a disability. Likewise, you should let the school know about your disability if you want to ensure that you are assigned to accessible facilities. In any event, your disclosure of a disability is always voluntary.

### **What academic adjustments must a postsecondary school provide?**

The appropriate academic adjustment must be determined based on your disability and individual needs. Academic adjustments include modifications to academic requirements and auxiliary aids and services, for example, arranging for priority registration; reducing a course load; substituting one course for another; providing notetakers, recording devices, sign language interpreters, extended time for testing and, if telephones are provided in dorm rooms, a TTY in your dorm room; and equipping school computers with screen-reading, voice recognition or other adaptive software or hardware.

In providing an academic adjustment, your postsecondary school is not required to lower or effect substantial modifications to essential requirements. For example, although your school may be required to provide extended testing time, it is not required to change the substantive content of the test. In addition, your postsecondary school does not have to make modifications that would fundamentally alter the nature of a service, program or activity or would result in undue financial or administrative burdens. Finally, your postsecondary school does not have to provide personal attendants, individually prescribed devices, readers for personal use or study, or other devices or services of a personal nature, such as tutoring and typing.

## IF I WANT AN ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENT, WHAT MUST I DO?

You must inform the school that you have a disability and need an academic adjustment. Unlike your school district, your postsecondary school is not required to identify you as having a disability or assess your needs. Your postsecondary school may require you to follow reasonable procedures to request an academic adjustment. You are responsible for knowing and following these procedures. Postsecondary schools usually include, in their publications providing general information, information on the procedures and contacts for requesting an academic adjustment. Such publications include recruitment materials, catalogs and student handbooks, and are often available on school Web sites. Many schools also have staff whose purpose is to assist students with disabilities. If you are unable to locate the procedures, ask a school official, such as an admissions officer or counselor.

## WHEN SHOULD I REQUEST AN ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENT?

Although you may request an academic adjustment from your postsecondary school at any time, you should request it as early as possible. Some academic adjustments may take more time to provide than others. You should follow your school's procedures to ensure that your school has enough time to review your request and provide an appropriate academic adjustment.

Do I have to prove that I have a disability to obtain an academic adjustment?

Generally, yes. Your school probably will require you to provide documentation that shows you have a current disability and need an academic adjustment.

## WHAT DOCUMENTATION SHOULD I PROVIDE?

Schools may set reasonable standards for documentation. Some schools require more documentation than others. They may require you to provide documentation prepared by an appropriate professional, such as a medical doctor, psychologist or other qualified diagnostician. The required documentation

may include one or more of the following: a diagnosis of your current disability; the date of the diagnosis; how the diagnosis was reached; the credentials of the professional; how your disability affects a major life activity; and how the disability affects your academic performance. The documentation should provide enough information for you and your school to decide what is an appropriate academic adjustment.

Although an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan, if you have one, may help identify services that have been effective for you, it generally is not sufficient documentation. This is because postsecondary education presents different demands than high school education, and what you need to meet these new demands may be different. Also in some cases, the nature of a disability may change.

If the documentation that you have does not meet the postsecondary school's requirements, a school official must tell you in a timely manner what additional documentation you need to provide. You may need a new evaluation in order to provide the required documentation.

## WHO HAS TO PAY FOR A NEW EVALUATION?

Neither your high school nor your postsecondary school is required to conduct or pay for a new evaluation to document your disability and need for an academic adjustment. This may mean that you have to pay or find funding to pay an appropriate professional to do it. If you are eligible for services through your state vocational rehabilitation agency, you may qualify for an evaluation at no cost to you. You may locate your state vocational rehabilitation agency through this Department of Education Web page:

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/RSA/Resources/State>

Once the school has received the necessary documentation from me, what should I expect?

The school will review your request in light of the essential requirements for the relevant program to help determine an appropriate academic adjustment. It is important to remember that the school is not required to lower or waive essential requirements. If you have requested a specific academic adjustment, the school may offer that academic adjustment or an alternative one if the alternative also would be effective. The school may also conduct its own evaluation of your disability and needs at its own expense. You should expect your school to work with you in an interactive process to identify an appropriate academic adjustment. Unlike the experience you may have had in high school, however, do not expect your postsecondary school to invite your parents to participate in the process or to develop an IEP for you.



## WHAT IF THE ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENT WE IDENTIFIED IS NOT WORKING?

Let the school know as soon as you become aware that the results are not what you expected. It may be too late to correct the problem if you wait until the course or activity is completed. You and your school should work together to resolve the problem.

May a postsecondary school charge me for providing an academic adjustment?

No. Furthermore, it may not charge students with disabilities more for participating in its programs or activities than it charges students who do not have disabilities.

## WHAT CAN I DO IF I BELIEVE THE SCHOOL IS DISCRIMINATING AGAINST ME?

Practically every postsecondary school must have a person--frequently called the Section 504 Coordinator, ADA Coordinator, or Disability Services Coordinator--who coordinates the school's compliance with Section 504 or Title II or both laws. You may contact this person for information about how to address your concerns.

The school also must have grievance procedures. These procedures are not the same as the due process procedures with which you may be familiar from high school. However, the postsecondary school's grievance procedures must include steps to ensure that you may raise your concerns fully and fairly and must provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints. School publications, such as student handbooks and catalogs, usually describe the steps you must take to start the grievance process. Often, schools have both formal and informal processes. If you decide to use a grievance process, you should be prepared to present all the reasons that support your request. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome from using the school's grievance procedures or you wish to pursue an alternative to using the grievance procedures, you may file a complaint against the school with OCR or in a court. You may learn more about the OCR complaint process from the brochure *How to File a Discrimination Complaint with the Office for Civil Rights*, which you may obtain by contacting us at the addresses and phone numbers below, or at <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/howto.html>

If you would like more information about the responsibilities of postsecondary schools to students with disabilities, read the OCR brochure *Auxiliary Aids and Services for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities: Higher Education's Obligations Under Section 504 and Title II of the ADA*. You may obtain a copy by contacting us at the address and phone numbers below, or at <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/auxaids.html>.

Students with disabilities who know their rights and responsibilities are much better equipped to succeed in postsecondary school. We encourage you to work with the staff at your school because they, too, want you to succeed. Seek the support of family, friends and fellow students, including those with disabilities. Know your talents and capitalize on them, and believe in yourself as you embrace new challenges in your education.

To receive more information about the civil rights of students with disabilities in education institutions, contact us at:

Customer Service Team  
Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, D.C. 20202-1100  
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\*/ You may be familiar with another federal law that applies to the education of students with disabilities--the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). That law is administered by the Office of Special Education Programs in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the U.S. Department of Education. The IDEA and its Individualized Education Program (IEP) provisions do not apply to postsecondary schools. This pamphlet does not discuss the IDEA or state and local laws that may apply.

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