

Frequently Asked Questions

November 2017

1. How do I receive disability services at college?
You need to contact the Disability Services office on campus to start the application process.
2. When do I need to apply for Disability Services?
It is a good idea to start the application process at the Disability Services office as soon as you have been admitted into college, so that any accommodations you may need can be arranged.
3. Can I use my 504 Plan or IEP for documentation of my disability?
If your 504 Plan or IEP contain the necessary information, it will be accepted as documentation. (See Guidelines for Disability Documentation).
4. Will I receive the same services that I received in high school?
Maybe. High school Special Education programs are required by law to provide whatever service, help, or accommodation that you needed to be successful. Colleges are required by law to provide “equal access to education,” through programs, activities, and facilities. They provide access by using accommodations – not necessarily services or extra help. Access is provided through reasonable accommodations. For example, services such as word banks or reduced assignments probably won’t be provided because postsecondary schools don’t provide modifications that would change the educational standards of coursework.
5. Can I receive a failing grade for a college class in which I am receiving accommodations?
Yes. Accommodations ensure “access”, not necessarily “success”.
6. I have a disability. Will I be eligible to use accommodations in college?
Maybe. The decision to provide accommodations is based on the activity and whether the disability creates any barriers to doing it. For example, a student who is paralyzed from the waist down has a disability and needs a physically accessible environment. However, this same student would not be eligible to use note taking services or be provided with books on tape, because the disability does not interfere with reading or writing.
7. Will my 504 plan follow me to college?
No. The 504 Plan developed by your high school will not follow you to college, but the rights and protections under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 apply when evaluating and determining reasonable accommodations at the college level. Section 504 is civil rights legislation and provides two things: 1) nondiscrimination on the basis of disability; and 2) an equal opportunity to participate. The concept of “maximizing success” is only found under IDEA for elementary and secondary schools.
8. Who decides what accommodations I can use in college?
Approving and implementing accommodations is a collaborative effort between the Disability Services office and course instructors after considering functional limitations of the disability, the

student's perspective, and course/program requirements. Accommodations will be based on how the disability interferes with access to the educational environment and the course curriculum.

9. Do I have to pay for my accommodations?

No. It is the college's responsibility to provide reasonable accommodations to eligible students with disabilities at no cost to the student.

10. Do colleges and universities provide testing to identify a learning disability?

Colleges and universities are not required to provide testing services. Referrals can be made to appropriate professionals.

11. Is financial assistance available through the disability services office for students with disabilities?

No. Check with the financial aid office at the school you will be attending. Some agencies that may provide support are: Vocational Rehabilitation, Workers Compensation, the Veterans Administration, and Job Service.

12. Will the Disability Services office provide services like helping me get ready for the school day or pushing my wheelchair?

No. Services or equipment needed to assist a person with activities of daily living are the responsibility of the individual, not the college. For example, helping with dressing or reminding someone to take their medication, is a personal service that an individual needs in order to function on a daily basis, whether or not they are in college. If the service or equipment is needed solely for the purpose of participating in a college program or activity, it is the college's responsibility to provide it.

13. Do students need test scores from high school assessments to qualify for accommodations in college?

Maybe. Before specific accommodations are identified, Higher Education must confirm the student has a disability as defined by 504/ADA/ Test scores are used to diagnose a disability, however other forms of evidence may also be used such as qualitative observations and evaluations by professionals. Once disability has been established, accommodations are determined based on the functional limits of the disability and the barrier caused in the environment.