



# College Connections



## GOING TO COLLEGE WITH A DISABILITY

**I**ncreasing numbers of students with physical, mental, or learning disabilities are pursuing and succeeding at postsecondary education. According to the U.S. Department of Education, 11.3 percent of undergraduates in 2003-04 reported having a disability; among these students, 25 percent had an orthopedic or physical condition while 22 percent had a mental illness. (Males were more likely to have attention deficit disorders, while females were more likely to report mental illness/depression and health impairments as disabilities.) As public school districts are required by law to provide each student with an appropriate elementary and secondary education, disabled students may be accustomed to having parents, family members, mentors, or school counselors advocating for them and making sure their needs are met. Colleges also cannot discriminate against students with disabilities, but the student is responsible for requesting any necessary accommodations, such as accessible housing, recording devices, or special adaptive computer software. All students, even those without disabilities, should be ready to speak up for themselves and act as their own advocates.

Colleges are required by law to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Examples of such accommodations are: taped texts, notetakers, sign language interpreters, readers, Braille books, large print materials, talking calculators, assistive listening devices, videotext displays, and special testing accommodations. When applying to college, students are not required to inform the college of any disability, but disclosing the disability is essential for any special needs and accommodations to be met. If an academic adjustment, such as extended testing time, is required, the student should make a request for such aid as early as possible and provide required documentation. Almost every college or university has a staff member or office in charge of coordinating the institution's compliance with 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 based on disability. Students should contact this office about their concerns.

### Questions Students with a Disability Should Ask a Potential College

- Where is the Disabled Students Services office on campus?
- Is the office staffed full-time or part-time? Are there evening hours?
- What kinds of services are available, and how are services obtained?
- How are faculty informed about accommodations?
- What documents are required to prove a disability, and to whom should these be given? Who has access to these documents?
- Is there an orientation for new students with disabilities?
- Is there a summer program for disabled students?
- Is there a disabled students group on campus? How do I contact it?
- What are the alternative testing arrangements?
- How accessible are the classrooms, labs, dorms, and other buildings?
- Are there any special adaptive features on the computers?
- Do the dorms have physically accessible rest rooms and bathroom facilities?
- Is there a policy on waiving certain graduation requirements or arranging alternative courses for students with disabilities?
- Is personal counseling available?
- Is there a written policy regarding services for students with disabilities?

Sources: Office of Civil Rights/U.S. Department of Education, [www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html)

National Center for Education Statistics, <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=60>

Guidance and Career Counselors' Toolkit: Advising High School Students with Disabilities on Postsecondary Options, [www.nationalserviceresources.org/files/guidance-and-career-counselors-toolkit.pdf](http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/files/guidance-and-career-counselors-toolkit.pdf)

New York State Education Department, <http://eservices.nysed.gov/dss/mainervlet?a=details&sed=45350004>

### Seven Differences Between High School and College for Students with Disabilities

In High School	In College
Education is a right and must be provided to you.	Students must apply for admission and meet certain requirements for admission.
Section 504* and Title II** entitle students with disabilities to services and accommodations.	Students must meet certain criteria to be eligible for services and accommodations under Section 504 and Title II.
The school is responsible for identifying the student's disability.	Documenting the disability and requesting services is the student's responsibility.
An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) states the services that the student is entitled to receive and the school must provide them.	The student must apply for and request services. When the college approves them, the student must arrange for the services and advocate for himself/herself.
Teachers, counselors, and parents/guardians aid the student in asking for help.	The student must ask for support and assistance from the college's Disability Services Office.
Parents/guardians have access to the student's grades until he/she is 18 and can participate in IEP meetings.	Parents/guardians cannot gain access to college records or grades without the student's written permission.
Teachers remind students of assignments and deadlines.	Professors will expect the student to check a course outline or syllabus for assignments and deadlines.

\* Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

\*\* Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

Source: Think College: College Options for People with Intellectual Disabilities, [www.thinkcollege.net/for-students/understanding-college/high-schoolcollege-differences](http://www.thinkcollege.net/for-students/understanding-college/high-schoolcollege-differences)

## ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STANDARDIZED TESTS

Students with physical, mental, or learning disabilities may need special accommodations while taking the SAT, SAT Subject Tests, the PSAT/NMSQT, Advanced Placement Tests, and the ACT. Such accommodations may include Braille tests, large print, frequent breaks, extended time, or special furniture.

The College Board and ACT, Inc. will provide reasonable accommodations to students who require them, but the student must request them and submit documentation of his/her specific disability. The use of accommodations at school or participation in an Individual Education Program (IEP) does **not** by itself qualify a student for

accommodations on standardized tests, which must be approved by the College Board or ACT.

Students are urged to apply for accommodations early, as review and approval of a request can take several weeks. Most students apply with the assistance of their schools.

Learn more about SSD Online, the College Board's new online system for submitting and managing requests for accommodations, at: <http://professionals.collegeboard.com/testing/ssd/application/online-accommodations-eligibility-system?affiliateId=rdr&bannerId=ssdonline>

For information about ACT's services for students with disabilities, go to: [www.act.org/aap/disab/index.html](http://www.act.org/aap/disab/index.html)

## 10 Steps to College For Students With Disabilities

- 1. Learn** about programs and choices available to you by networking with other students, families, school staff, and community members.
- 2. Enroll** in academic courses that will prepare you for college course work.
- 3. Participate** in or lead your own Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting by helping to plan it, identifying goals, and learning how to fill out any necessary forms.
- 4. Speak up** for yourself; learn how to be your own advocate.
- 5. Keep** all necessary documentation of your disability up to date.
- 6. Decide** how and when you'll disclose your disability. If you choose not to reveal it, learn about tools and strategies you can use to take care of your needs yourself.
- 7. Practice** how you will refer to your disability and the terms you'll use to describe it. Remember that you have to disclose only what information is needed to explain your behavior or obtain needed services.
- 8. Visit** colleges and ask about specific programs and accommodations for students who share your disability.
- 9. Learn** about available financial aid and about how any financial support you receive from other sources may affect the amount of that aid.
- 10. Find out** what services are available through adult human service agencies in communities near the college campus.

Sources: "Transition Checklist," [www.thinkcollege.net/families/transition-checklist](http://www.thinkcollege.net/families/transition-checklist); "Help Your Young Adult Learn about Accessing Accommodations after High School," [www.pacer.org/parent/php/php-c165.pdf](http://www.pacer.org/parent/php/php-c165.pdf)

## FEATURED CAMPUS: ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (RIT)

**National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID)**, one of RIT's eight colleges, is the world's first and largest technical college for hearing-impaired students. Faculty tutors, advisors, captionists, listening systems, and a staff of sign language interpreters are available to help students make the most of their college years. Learn more about RIT/NTID at [www.ntid.rit.edu/](http://www.ntid.rit.edu/).

**Explore Your Future** is a six-day summer program for college-bound deaf and hard-of-hearing students at RIT. The program offers rising 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students an opportunity to explore careers in information technology, engineering, computers, business, art, science, and other fields. Students learn about their interests and learning styles while experiencing life on a college

campus. Parents can attend a session on how to help children making the transition from high school to college, meet with their child's counselor, and learn about financial aid. Find out more at [www.ntid.rit.edu/prospective/evf.php](http://www.ntid.rit.edu/prospective/evf.php).

9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade deaf students with artistic talent may enter a **Digital Arts, Film, and Animation Competition** and win a \$250 prize; the deadline for this year's entries is **January 15, 2011**. For more information, go to [www.ntid.rit.edu/prospective/daac/](http://www.ntid.rit.edu/prospective/daac/). Middle school students with hearing loss can participate in a **Math Competition** on the RIT campus on April 8-10, 2011. To learn more, visit [www.ntid.rit.edu/prospective/mathcounts/](http://www.ntid.rit.edu/prospective/mathcounts/).

## RESOURCES

### Connecting the Disability Community to Information and Opportunities

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

### Family Support Center on Disabilities: Knowledge & Involvement Network

[www.familysupportclearinghouse.org/Pages/Home.aspx](http://www.familysupportclearinghouse.org/Pages/Home.aspx)

### HEATH Resource Center

[www.heath.gwu.edu/](http://www.heath.gwu.edu/)

### PEPNet

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

### Higher Education Disability Services Directory

<http://eservices.nysed.gov/dss/definitions.htm>

### National Center for Learning Disabilities

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

### Making the Move to Managing Your Own Personal Assistance Services (PAS): A Toolkit for Youth with Disabilities

[www.ncwd-youth.info/sites/default/files/pas-toolkit052610-print-final.pdf](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/sites/default/files/pas-toolkit052610-print-final.pdf)

### RFB&D: Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic

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

### For more information about the civil rights of and services for students with disabilities, go to

[www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/auxaids.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/auxaids.html) or write to:

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)

## 3rd Annual Latino College Fair November 20, 2010, 10:00 am - 3:45 pm at Fordham University Rose Hill, Bronx For information:

[www.surveymonkey.com/s/2010LatinoCollegeFair](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2010LatinoCollegeFair)

Join us Saturday, November 20, 2010, from 10:00 am to 3:45 pm at Fordham University's Rose Hill campus in the Bronx. The Fair is free and will offer helpful information for students and their families: Meet representatives from more than 50 private colleges and universities and learn about finding, getting into and paying for college. For more information, a schedule of the day's events, and how to RSVP to attend the fair, go to

[www.surveymonkey.com/s/2010LatinoCollegeFair](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2010LatinoCollegeFair)  
Or e-mail [colleges@nycolleges.org](mailto:colleges@nycolleges.org); call 518.436.4781.

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