

Tips for Students with Disabilities Planning to Attend College

- 1. Read and understand your rights and responsibilities in college.**
 - a. An excellent resource is: Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities. Available at: www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html**

- 2. Anticipate your needs and inquire about how you will meet those needs at the colleges you are considering. For example:**
 - a. If you know you will need a tutor in one or more subject, ask about the availability of tutors, the cost, and the procedure to work with one.**
 - b. If you expect to use assistive technology, inquire about its location on campus, hours of availability, software options, and technical support.**
 - c. If you will need testing accommodations (extended time and/or distraction-reduced environment), ask how far in advance you need to schedule a test and any other details that are important to you in a testing environment.**

- 3. Practice self-advocacy skills. Increase your understanding of disabilities in general and specifically the type and severity of your own disability by talking with a specialist. Practice describing your disability and how it affects your learning so that you can explain fully to faculty the reason for requesting an accommodation such as extended time on tests.**
 - a. In addition, students using medication will need a plan for storing and refilling prescriptions, as well as a schedule for taking meds - keeping your new college routine in mind.**

- 4. Become familiar with the policies and procedures for students with disabilities at the colleges you are considering.**
 - a. What is required for documentation? How current must the documentation be? Where and when should you send it in?**
 - b. What is the procedure to receive accommodations in the classroom? In the residence halls?**

- 5. Learn about the graduation requirements of each college you are considering before you make a commitment. For example,**
 - a. Is there a math or writing standard or requirement for all students?**
 - b. How many math or foreign language courses are required in the general education or core requirements?**
 - c. If you struggle in a particular subject area, does the college have a graduation requirement in that area? How will you meet it?**

- 6. Ask about standardized tests for your major. In most states, students are required to pass a test such as the PRAXIS before they are certified to teach in public K-12 schools.**
 - a. What type of disability documentation is required for the certified tests? And how current must it be? (Requirements of testing agencies often differ from colleges.)**

- 7. Once you have chosen a college and sent in your deposit, send a copy of your documentation to the appropriate person at the college. The Admissions Office can advise you on where to send your documentation. (It varies from college to college.)**

- 8. Complete Step #7 even if you plan to attend college without accommodations. Some students come to college with the intention to “be like everyone else” and leave behind their need for assistance. This plan works for some students, but does not work for all students. It is recommended that you have your documentation on file with the disabilities office (where it will remain confidential) in the event that you come up against a challenge in one of your classes and need support. Having the information on file will expedite the process should you decide to request accommodations mid-semester.**

- 9. If you believe Assistive Technology (such as text to voice software or voice to text software) might be beneficial to you in college, explore your options before you start college. In the state of Vermont, Vocational Rehabilitation (800-366-8611) helps coordinate Assistive Technology Evaluations for people with disabilities. If you have an IEP or 504 Plan you may qualify for Voc Rehab services.**

- 10. Before you come to college, know where you will go for help if the need arises. If possible, visit or call the various support offices on your campus before the first semester begins so you will know where to turn if something unexpected occurs. Most colleges have:**
 - a. Disabilities Office**
 - b. Academic Support**
 - c. Health and Counseling**
 - d. Residence Life**
 - e. Peer Support Programs**
 - f. Financial Aid**