

Preparing for a Post-Secondary Education with a Disability Checklist

<http://equity.psu.edu/>

Grade-by-grade things to consider for both students with a disability and their parents when preparing for a post-secondary education

9th grade

Students should

- Attend and be involved in IEP meetings with parents, teachers and special education personnel.
- Ask the school about career assessments and exploration programs at the high school (e.g., Does the school provide career counseling or testing?).
- Meet with guidance counselors about courses required for college or postsecondary school (i.e., Foreign Language, Math, English, Science, etc).
- Discuss plans and goals with parents (What will I do after high school?). Discuss the costs related to plans and goals.
- Meet with guidance counselors about future plans. Obtain postsecondary school and college brochures available in the guidance office.
- Search Web sites for colleges and postsecondary schools to learn more about course requirements, potential majors, costs, services for students with disabilities, living arrangements, activities, student life, etc.

Parents should

- Become involved with or remain involved with son/daughter's IEP process.
- Discuss career goals and college plans with son/daughter.

10th grade

Students should

- Continue attending IEP meetings and become more involved in the decisions made.
- Search the Internet and other resources (i.e., books, articles) to learn more about your condition.
- Identify how the condition impacts you in the classroom, at work, and in social settings. You should be able to discuss your condition and its impact with the IEP team.
- Learn more about the differences between academic adjustments in college and high school. For example, unlimited time may be provided in high school, whereas 50% or 100% more time may be provided in college.
- Begin to utilize academic adjustments that are more in line with what is used in college (i.e., if student is using unlimited time on exams, switch to 50% or 100% more time). Individualized instruction and certain modifications used in high school will not be provided at the postsecondary level.
- Utilize an academic adjustment letter and self-advocate for academic adjustments in courses (i.e., if extended time is needed, the student should be provided with a letter from the special education department stating extended time is needed for testing. The letter should state a specific amount of time 50% or 100%. The student would make an appointment to meet with their teacher, present the academic adjustment letter, discuss the academic adjustment, and make arrangements for the test adjustment). This is the process used in most postsecondary schools.
- Participate in a career assessment and make appropriate career choices. These choices should match your individual strengths and goals for postsecondary education.
- Research the entrance requirements for admission to postsecondary schools and colleges.
- Meet with guidance counselors to determine if the courses taken in high school meet the postsecondary school or college entrance requirements.
- Continue searching Web sites for postsecondary schools and colleges. Make a list of the schools that match areas of interest (i.e., major, location, size, cost, etc.).

- Visit and tour colleges and postsecondary school campuses.
- Become involved in activities beyond the classroom (i.e., clubs, sports, student government, community service, volunteer organizations, etc). Postsecondary schools look for these activities in addition to grades and test scores when determining admissions.
- Discuss options and choices with parents (e.g., a postsecondary school that the student chooses may not fit into the family budget).
- Take the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) for practice. Check the box that releases your name to colleges to receive brochures. Go to the College Board Web site for more information: <http://www.collegeboard.com/testing/>
- Consider taking the SAT II Subject Tests in your sophomore courses.

Parents should

- Continue involvement in the IEP process. Allow son/daughter to advocate for themselves during the IEP meeting including discussing their disability and needs in the classroom.
- Continue to discuss son's/daughter's post high school plans.
- Research information (e.g., via telephone calls and internet) regarding college and postsecondary costs, financial aid, and scholarships.

11th grade

Students should

- Research college disability service office Web sites to learn about eligibility for services, documentation guidelines, and services offered.
- Tour Postsecondary school campuses:
- Contact the disability services office for a face-to-face meeting with a disability service provider. Learn more about the academic adjustments offered. Services and academic adjustments you received in high school may not be appropriate or realistic for college.
- Meet with a representative from the admissions office to find out admissions criteria. What will be needed in addition to filling out an application?
- Meet with a representative from the financial aid office. What scholarships are available? How much is tuition, fees, living expenses, etc.? What financial aid programs and scholarships does the school offer?
- Meet with advisors from the college to determine if you meet the entrance requirements for the college and major that you have chosen.
- Begin to wean off of unrealistic academic adjustments that would most likely not be provided in a postsecondary school or college, such as: unlimited time, open book tests, clarification of test questions, word banks, shorter tests, modified tests, limited choices, etc.
- Begin using academic adjustment letters for most courses, and self-advocate for academic adjustments in courses. For example, if extended time is needed for exams, the student should present a letter from the Special Education Department for extended time (50% or 100%) to the teacher, and discuss the logistics related to the academic adjustment (i.e., date, location of exam).
- Register and take the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), if not taken in the tenth grade. For information regarding PSAT testing for students with disabilities, go to the following web site: <http://www.collegeboard.com/ssd/student/index.html>
- Attend college fairs.
- Narrow career choices and goals.
- Discuss plans for college with parents.

- Continue to research college Web sites. Research application procedures, course requirements, and entrance requirements for colleges of interest.
- Identify tests required for admission at the college or colleges chosen: (e.g., SAT I, ACT Assessment, or SAT II Subject Tests).
- Submit application for accommodations for the SAT or ACT, if applicable. Information regarding testing accommodations for college board tests are located at the following Web site: <http://www.collegeboard.com/ssd/student/index.html>
- Take the SAT or ACT. Discuss results with guidance counselor and parents.
- Contact the Office for Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) for information about services for high school and college at <http://www.dli.state.pa.us/landi/cwp/view.asp?a=128&q=61197>.
- Complete an assistive technology assessment for college, if you plan to use assistive technology in college.
- The summer prior to senior year, visit the disability office, learning centers, computer labs and assistive technology labs at postsecondary schools and colleges of interest.

Parents should

- Continue involvement in IEP process. Allow son/daughter to advocate for themselves during the meetings.
- Continue discussing and narrowing down career goals and plans. Determine if college is a goal.
- Attend campus visits and tours with son/daughter.
- Research disability services office Web sites for information regarding eligibility for services, documentation guidelines, and services available at college.
- Accompany son/daughter to intake appointment (first time appointment) to the disability services office. Son/daughter should do most of the talking and questioning with regard to their condition, and services requested during this meeting. Parents may fill in the gaps when necessary.
- Research the Web sites of the colleges' son/daughter is considering. Parents should pay particular attention to admissions criteria, admissions deadlines, financial aid information, scholarship information, programs, cost, housing and food services.

- Give written permission for son/daughter to have contact with the Office for Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), if appropriate. OVR Web site is located at: <http://www.dli.state.pa.us/landi/cwp/view.asp?a=128&q=61197>
- Schedule son/daughter for an assistive technology assessment through OVR, or the high school, if applicable.
- Search the Web sites listed under Internet Resources for more information about college planning (see resources below).
- Search the Web sites listed under Internet Resources regarding transition to college for students with disabilities (see resources below).

12th grade

Students should

- Narrow choices of postsecondary schools or colleges.
- Begin completing postsecondary school and college applications. Applying early in the selection process may increase the chance of getting into school or college of choice.
- Discuss transition options for work or college during IEP meetings.
- Stop using academic adjustments that would not be provided in postsecondary schools or colleges such as: unlimited time, open book tests, clarification of test questions, word banks, shorter tests, modified tests, limited choices, etc.
- Use academic adjustment letters for most or all courses, and self-advocate for academic adjustments in courses. For example, if extended time is needed for exams, the student should present a letter from the Special Education Department for extended time (50% or 100%) to the teacher, and discuss the logistics related to the academic adjustment (i.e., date, location of exam). The academic adjustments should be similar to those used in postsecondary schools and colleges.
- Contact disability services office at colleges to schedule and participate in an intake appointment.
- Research the disability services office Web site to review documentation guidelines.
- Submit documentation to the disability services office at the postsecondary schools or colleges that you have chosen.
- Ask the disability services office to review documentation to determine if it meets the guidelines.
- Discuss requested academic adjustments to determine if your request is reasonable (academic adjustments received in high school are not always appropriate for college). Most postsecondary schools provide academic adjustments on a course-by-course and case-by-case basis. Therefore, most postsecondary schools will not be able to tell you exactly what academic adjustments that you will be receive every semester. However, the disability office should be able to ensure whether or not you are eligible for services at the postsecondary level.

- Once accepted, contact the disability services office to discuss academic adjustments for the freshman year placement testing. Typically, colleges have placement tests for English, Math, or Sciences. Students who do not meet college level in those areas may be required to take remedial courses.
- Meet with a professor, academic advisor, or representative of the college major you intend to pursue.
- Schedule an appointment with the Office for Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) <http://www.dli.state.pa.us/landi/cwp/view.asp?a=128&q=61197> to discuss assistance available.
- Request and schedule an assistive technology assessment through OVR, if applicable.

Parents should

- Continue involvement in IEP. Son/daughter should be speaking for themselves during these meetings.
- Continue discussions with son/daughter about postsecondary school or college choices. Note admission deadlines for applications. Applying early in the selection process may increase chances of getting into college or postsecondary school of their choice.
- Assist son/daughter as they complete college applications.
- Contact the financial aid office to see if the costs of tuition, room or board are expected to increase.
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>
- Research disability services Web sites for information on eligibility, documentation guidelines, and services.
- Accompany son/daughter to initial introduction meeting (first time appointment) to the disability services office. Son/daughter should do the majority of the talking and questioning about their condition in this meeting. Parents may fill in the gaps when necessary.
- Give written permission for son/daughter to have contact with the Office for Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), if appropriate. OVR Web site is located at: <http://www.dli.state.pa.us/landi/cwp/view.asp?a=128&q=61197>

- Make sure that documentation for the disability services office has been sent, received, and evaluated for coverage under the American's with Disabilities Act (1990).

After high-school graduation

Students should

- Contact the person that they met with in the disability services office after registering for courses. This will help to ensure that the disability services personnel are prepared for providing services for individual courses that you are registered. Remember that in college, academic adjustments are done on a case-by-case and course-by-course basis.
- Prior to arriving at college, schedule an appointment with the disability services office.

Internet Resources

Career Exploration

- <http://www.pennsylvaniamentor.org/>

College Planning

- <http://www.educationplanner.org/>
- <http://www.pheaa.org/>
- <http://www.pennsylvaniamentor.org/FinAid/>

College Choices

- <http://www.pennsylvaniamentor.org/CampusTour/>

Transition to Post-Secondary Education

- <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html>
- <http://www.pattan.k12.pa.us/>
- <http://www.postitt.org/index.shtml>