

Checklist for Preparing a Student with Disability for a Postsecondary Education

Ninth Grade:

Students Should:

- Attend and be involved in IEP meetings with parents, teachers, and exceptional children's personnel. Begin discussing the transition between high school and postsecondary schools, colleges, or work
- Ask the school about career assessments and exploration programs at the high school. (Does the school provide career counseling or testing?).
- Meet with guidance counselors about courses required for college or postsecondary school.
- 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 goals. 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, cost, services for students with disabilities, living arrangements, student activities, etc.

Parents Should:

- Become involved with or remain involved with son/daughter's IEP process.
- Discuss career goals and college plans with son/daughter.
- Research postsecondary schools for programs of interest, costs and financial aid.
- Consider referral options to agencies who offer disability and vocational services (ex: Vocational Rehabilitation)

Tenth Grade:

Students Should:

- Continue attending IEP meeting and become more involved in the decisions made and the transition process.
- Search the internet and other resources (books, articles) to learn more about your disability.
- Identify how the disability impacts you in the classroom, at work, and in social settings. You should be able to discuss your disability and its impact with the IEP team.

- Learn more about the differences between academic adjustments in college and high school. For example, unlimited time maybe provided in high school as an extended time accommodation, 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 (ex: if student is using unlimited time on exams, switch to 50%). Individualized instruction and certain modifications used in high school will not be provided at the postsecondary level.
- 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 (ex: major, location, size, cost, etc.)
- Visit and tour colleges and postsecondary school campuses
- Become involved in activities beyond the classroom (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.
- Take the PSAT for practice. For information regarding PSAT testing for student with disabilities with disabilities, go to the following web site:
<http://www.collegeboard.com/ssd/student/index.html>

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 regarding college and postsecondary costs, financial aid, and scholarships.

Eleventh 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 a representative from financial aid office. What scholarships are available? How much is tuition, fees, books, 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.
- Register and take the PSAT, if not taken in the 10th grade. For information regarding PSAT testing for student with disabilities 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 (ex: SAT, ACT)
- Submit application accommodations for the SAT or ACT, if applicable. Information regarding testing accommodations for College Board tests are located at the following the Web site:
<http://www.collegeboard.com/ssd/student/index.html>
- Take the SAT or ACT. Discuss the results with guidance counselor and parents.

- The summer prior to senior year, visit the disability office, learning centers and computer 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.
- 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.

Twelfth 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.
- Continue to discuss transition options for work or college during IEP meetings.
- Stop using academic adjustments that would not 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.
- 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 will be received every semester, but they should be able to ensure that you would be eligible or not 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 placements tests for English and math. Students who do not meet college level in those areas may be required to take remedial/developmental courses.
- Meet with a professor/instructor, academic advisor, or representative of the college major you intend to pursue.

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. Apply 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.
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/> (VGCC offers help on completing FAFSA, contact financial aid).
- Research disability services Web sites for information on eligibility, documentation guidelines, and services.
- Accompany son/daughter to intake appointment (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.
- 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 Graduation:

Student Should:

- Contact the person that they met with in the disability services 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 for the first week of the semester.

Definition of Terms

Accommodation

Adjustments (academic) made in course materials or instructional methodology which do not change the essential nature or academic and technical standards of the course.

Adjustments made in the physical attributes of a classroom such as provision of tables and/or chairs, which do not disrupt the essential activities of the class or program.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. It mandates equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in areas such as employment, public accommodations, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications.

Disability

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act protects and considers a person disabled is he or she:

- has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities (including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, caring for oneself, or performing manual tasks).
- has a record of such impairment; or
- is regarded as having such an impairment.

Documentation

Documents which verify a person's mental or physical impairment and which describe the impairment adequately for the college to be able to determine the degree of resulting limitation on major life activity to aid in the design of reasonable accommodations. These documents may include, but are not limited to, evaluations, psychological reports, etc. IEP's (Individual Educational Plans), 504 Plans, and SOP (Summary of Performance although providing information about a student's educational experiences, are not sufficient documentation to deem the student eligible for services and accommodations.

Essential Nature of a Course

Colleges need to identify the essential elements of each course equipment and curriculum program. Colleges are not required to waive or substitute alternate courses in place of courses which are essential elements of programs.

Reasonable Accommodation

Academic adjustments (accommodation) or physical adjustments necessary to make a facility or activity accessible to qualified individuals with disabilities. Once the individual is determined otherwise qualified, the known physical or mental limitation is to be accommodated unless it can be shown that the accommodation would impose an undue hardship.

Internet Resources

Transition Guides

- Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities
US Department of Education
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html>

- College Guide for Students with Disabilities
College Foundation of North Carolina
<http://www.cfnc.org/home/sc/pdf/transitions.pdf>

- How is College Different from High School?
<http://www.smu.edu/alec/transition.html>

- Post-ITT
A collection of resources and activities to help students, parents and educators plan for transition from secondary to postsecondary schools
<http://www.postitt.org/>

Materials obtained from the Office for Disability Services at Penn State University, NCAHEAD, and the Disability Services Resource Guide for NC Community Colleges.