

Truckee Meadows Community College

DISABILITY

— *Resource Guide* —

SERVICES

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INTRODUCTION

What is a Disability?

A disability under Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act* and the *Americans with Disabilities Act*, is described as a mental, or physical impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. Examples of impairments that can have a substantial impact on a major life function are visual impairments and blindness, hearing impairment and deafness, mobility impairment, learning disabilities, or systemic medical conditions.

The definition of a disability and criteria for establishing eligibility for accommodations services under 504 and ADA for post secondary institutions may be different than the definitions and criteria implemented in the public schools, rehabilitation programs, social security, Veterans Administration, or as covered under insurance policies.

The Law

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act:

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that ..."No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States...shall solely by reason of ...disability, be denied the benefits of, be excluded from the participation in, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

A person with a disability includes ..."any person who (1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities [including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, caring for oneself, and performing manual tasks], (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment."

A "qualified person with a disability" is defined as one..."who meets the academic and technical standards as requisite to admission or participation in the educational program or activity."

Section 504 protects the rights of qualified individuals who have disabilities such as, but not limited to:

Blindness/visual impairment
 Cerebral palsy
 Deafness/hearing impairment
 Epilepsy or seizure disorder
 Orthopedic/mobility impairment

Specific learning disabilities
 Speech and language disorder
 Spinal cord injury
 Tourett's syndrome
 Traumatic brain injury

Section 504 also protects students with chronic illnesses and "treatable disabilities", such as, but not limited to:

AIDS
 Arthritis
 Cancer
 Cardiac disease

Diabetes
 Multiple sclerosis
 Muscular dystrophy
 Psychiatric disability

Under the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ...colleges may not discriminate in the recruitment, educational process, or treatment of students. Students who have self-identified, provided documentation of disability, and requested reasonable accommodations are entitled to receive approved modifications of programs, appropriate academic adjustments, or auxiliary aids that enable them to participate in the benefit from all educational programs and activities.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities. Title II of the ADA prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in all programs, activities, and services of public entities. It applies to all State and local governments, their departments and agencies, and any other instrumentalities or special purpose districts of State or local governments.

- Requires that people with disabilities not be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination.
- Does not require the institution to receive federal financial assistance.
- Provides clear enforceable standards addressing discrimination against individuals with disabilities by ensuring the federal government plays a significant role.

ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA)

On September 25, 2008, the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) was signed into law. It became effective on January 1, 2009. The U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives both unanimously passed the ADAAA.

The ADAAA focuses on the discrimination at issue instead of the individual's disability. It makes important changes to the definition of the term "disability" by

rejecting the holdings in several Supreme Court decisions and portions of Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) ADA regulations. The Act retains the ADA's basic definition of "disability" as an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment. However, it changes the way that the statutory terms should be interpreted. Most significantly, the ADAAAA:

- Directs EEOC to revise the portion of its regulations that defines the term "substantially limits";
- Expands the definition of "major life activities" by including two non-exhaustive lists:
 - The first list includes many activities that the EEOC has recognized (e.g., walking) as well as activities that EEOC has not specifically recognized (e.g., reading, bending, and communicating);
 - The second list includes major bodily functions (e.g., "functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, respiratory, neurological, brain, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions");
- States that mitigating measures other than "ordinary eyeglasses or contact lenses" shall not be considered in assessing whether an individual has a disability;
- Clarifies that an impairment that is episodic or in remission is a disability if it would substantially limit a major life activity when active;
- Provides that an individual subjected to an action prohibited by the ADA (e.g., failure to hire) because of an actual or perceived impairment will meet the "regarded as" definition of disability, unless the impairment is transitory and minor;
- Provides that individuals covered only under the "regarded as" prong are not entitled to reasonable accommodation; and
- Emphasizes that the definition of "disability" should be interpreted broadly.

RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

College Rights & Responsibilities

College Rights

- Identify and establish essential functions, abilities, skills, knowledge, and standards for courses, programs, services, jobs, and activities, and to evaluate students on this basis;
- Request and receive current documentation from a qualified professional that supports requests for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services;
- Deny a request for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services if the documentation does not demonstrate that the request is warranted, or if the individual fails to provide appropriate documentation;
- Select among equally effective accommodations, adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services;
- Refuse to provide an accommodation, adjustment, and/or auxiliary aid and service that impose a fundamental alteration on a program or activity of the college.

College Responsibilities

- Accommodate the known limitations of an otherwise qualified student with a disability;
- Ensure that courses, programs, services, and activities, when viewed in their entirety, are available and usable in the most integrated and appropriate settings;
- Provide or arrange accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services for students with disabilities in courses, programs, services, and activities;
- To maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication, except where permitted or required by law;
- To maintain academic standards by providing accommodations without compromising the content, quality, or level of instruction.

Student Rights & Responsibilities

Student Rights

- Equal access to courses, programs, services, jobs, and activities offered by the college;
- Equal opportunity to work, learn, and receive accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services;
- Confidentiality of information regarding their disability as applicable laws allow;
- Information available in accessible formats.

Student Responsibilities

- Meet qualifications and maintain essential institutional standards for the programs, courses, services, and activities;
- Self-identify disability status in a reasonable and timely manner;
- Provide disability documentation from a qualified professional that reflects the student's current disability status, and how their disability limits participation in courses, programs, services, and activities;
- Follow published procedures for obtaining academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.

Suggestions for students

- Some accommodations require extra time so it is imperative to self-identify and request accommodations as soon as possible;
- Attend classes and follow instructions provided in the class syllabus concerning absences, emergency needs, or other information specific to class;
- If possible inform instructor ahead of time of any absences;
- Contact other outside agencies for possible eligibility in additional services;
- Arrange for personal attendants if needed, whether paid for by an agency or family (colleges are not required under ADA to provide personal attendants, tutors, or personal items such as hearing aids, prostheses, individually designed and fitted special extensions or wands for computer or other resource operation).
- Students with disabilities should process their own college business i.e., registration, drop/add, refunds, etc.

(See Appendix IV, Auxiliary Aids and Services for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities, for additional information)

RESOURCES

National Resources

- **Accessibility of State and Local Government Websites to People with Disabilities**
<http://www.ada.gov/websites2.htm>
- **AHEAD (Association on Higher Education And Disabilities)**
107 Commerce Center Dr., Suite 204
Huntersville, NC 28078
704-947-7779
<http://www.ahead.org>
- **American Association on Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities**
<http://www.aamr.org>
- **American Council of the Blind**
800-424-8666
<http://www.acb.org>
- **American Foundation for the Blind**
800-232-5463 (9:00am-2:00pm, EST)
<http://www.afb.org>
- **American Printing House for the Blind**
800-233-1839
<http://www.aph.org>
- **American Speech-Language-Hearing Association**
888-498-6699
<http://www.asha.org>
- **Americans with Disabilities Act Library**
<http://askjan.org/links/adalinks.htm>
- **Attention Deficit Information Network, Inc. (AD-IN)**
475 Hillside Avenue
Needham, MA 02194
617-455-9895
- **Brain Injury Association, Inc.**
703-761-0750

<http://www.biausa.org>

- **CDC/National Prevention Information Network**
800-458-5231
<http://www.cdcnpin.org>

- **Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorders**
800-233-4050
<http://www.chadd.org>

- **Cystic Fibrosis Foundation**
800-344-4823
<http://www.cff.org>

- **DAIS**
<http://www.daisweb.com>

- **Deaf Connection**
<http://www.deafconnection.org>

- **Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund**
800-348-4232
<http://www.dredf.org>

- **EASI (Equal Access to Software and Information)**
<http://people.rit.edu/easi>

- **Epilepsy Foundation of America**
800-332-1000 (consumers)
<http://www.epilepsyfoundation.org>

- **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**
<http://www.eeoc.gov>

- **HEATH Resource Center** (good resource site)
<http://www.heath.gwu.edu>

- **Immune Deficiency Foundation**
<http://www.primaryimmune.org>

- **Job Accommodation Network**
<http://askjan.org>

- **Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA)**
<http://www.ldanatl.org>

- **DBTAC Mid-Atlantic ADA Information Center**
<http://www.adainfo.org>

- **Mental Health America**

703-684-7722

<http://www.nmha.org>

- **National Alliance of Blind Students**
800-424-8666
<http://acbstudents.org>
- **NCLD, National Center for Learning Disabilities**
212-545-7510
<http://www.nclld.org>
- **National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials**
800-223-5219
<http://www.nchrtm.okstate.edu>
- **National Easter Seal Society**
312-726-6200
<http://www.easterseals.com>
- **National Brain Injury Foundation**
<http://nbif.org.au/>
- **National Institute on Deafness and Other Communicative Disorders Clearinghouse (NIDCD)**
800-241-1044
800-241-1055 (TT)
- **National Institute on Mental Health (NIMH)**
1-866-615-6464
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov>
- **National Multiple Sclerosis Society**
800-344-4867
<http://www.nationalmssociety.org>
- **National Rehabilitation Association**
703-836-0850
<http://www.nationalrehab.org/website/index.html>
- **National Rehabilitation Information Center**
703-836-0850
<http://www.naric.com/>
- **National Spinal Cord Injury Association**
800-962-9629
<http://www.spinalcord.org>
- **Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education**
1-800-421-3481
<http://www2.ed.gov/ocr>

- **Office of the Americans with Disabilities Act**
800-514-0301
<http://www.ada.gov>
- **PEPNet (The Postsecondary Education Programs Network)**
<http://www.pepnet.org>
- **Reasonable Accommodations for Adults with Psychiatric Disabilities:
An On-line Resource for Employers and Educators**
617-353-3549
<http://www.bu.edu/cpr/reasaccom/index.html>
- **Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic, Inc.**
800-221-4792 (book orders only)
606-452-0606
<http://www.rfbd.org/>
- **Resource Center on Substance Abuse Prevention and Disability**
800-628-8442
- **Spinal Bifida Association of America**
800-621-3141
<http://www.spinabifidaassociation.org>
- **Stuttering Foundation of America**
800-992-9392
<http://www.stuttersfa.org/>
- **Tourette Syndrome Association**
718-224-2999
<http://www.tsa-usa.org>
- **United Cerebral Palsy Associations, Inc.**
800-872-5827 (voice/TT)
<http://www.ucp.org/>
- **Web Accessibility Initiative**
<http://www.w3.org/WAI/Resources/>
- **World Wide Web Consortium**
<http://www.w3.org/>

Definition of Terms

Accommodation

Adjustments 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.

Assistive technology made available to persons with disabilities in college learning labs, the library, test center or classroom.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities 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.

Assistive Technology

Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off-the-shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities for individuals with disabilities.

Attention Deficit Disorder

Attention deficit disorder, commonly referred to as ADD, is a neurological disability characterized by inappropriate attention skills, impulsive behavior, and in some cases, hyperactivity. The behaviors may include: fidgeting, difficulty remaining seated, difficulty following instructions, leaving tasks uncompleted, and appearing not to listen when others are speaking.

Blind

Visual acuity (20/20 scale) and the range of peripheral vision evaluate a person's vision. Normal vision is defined as 20/20 visual acuity and an average range of 180 degrees in peripheral vision. An individual is legally

blind if after methods of correction, such as glasses or contact lenses, he/she has a visual acuity of 20/200 or higher denomination, or a range of peripheral vision under 20 degrees.

Closed Captioning

Closed captioning allows individuals who are deaf or have limited hearing to view television and understand what is being said. The words spoken on the television are written across the bottom of the screen so the person can follow the dialogue and action of the program.

Communication Disabilities

Communication disabilities include any visual, hearing, or speech impairments that limit a person's ability to communicate.

Deaf-Blindness

Deaf-blindness, or dual sensory impairment, is a combination of both visual and hearing impairments. An individual with deaf-blindness can experience severe communication, educational, and other developmental problems. A person with deaf-blindness cannot be accommodated by services focusing solely on visual impairments or solely on hearing impairments, so services must be specifically designed to assist individuals with deaf-blindness.

Deafness

Deafness can be defined as a total or partial inability to hear. An individual who is totally deaf is unable to hear with or without the use of a hearing aid, whereas a person who is partially deaf may be able to hear with the help of a hearing aid. Deafness can be genetic or also acquired through disease most commonly from meningitis in the child or rubella in the woman during pregnancy.

Descriptive Video

Descriptive videos are designed for people who are visually impaired. The videos provide additional narration which carefully describes the visual elements of the film, such as the action of the characters, location, and costumes, without interfering with the actual dialogue and sound effects.

Developmental Disability

A developmental disability is a severe and long lasting disability which is the result of a mental and/or physical impairment. It is likely to continue

indefinitely and results in substantial functional limitations in three or more areas. These areas include: self-care, self-direction, economic self-sufficiency, independent living, learning, receptive and expressive language, and mobility.

Disability

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act protects and considers a person disabled if 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

Verifying 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 a major life activity to aid in the design of reasonable accommodations.

Essential Nature of a Course

This is language from applicable case law; ref. The Davis decision. Colleges need to identify the essential elements of each course requirement and curriculum program. Colleges are not required to waive or substitute alternate courses in place of courses which are essential elements of programs.

Health Impairments

The term, health impairments, refers to any type of chronic illness that affects how a person lives his or her life. Common examples of health impairments are AIDS, cancer, diabetes, arthritis, etc.

Hearing Impairment

This term is used to describe any level of hearing loss, such as hard of hearing or deafness.

Hyperactivity

Hyperactivity generally refers to a group of behavioral characteristics, such as aggressiveness, constant activity, impulsiveness, and distractibility. The actual behaviors displayed include: fidgeting, an inability to remain seated or still, and excessive talking. Hyperactivity is commonly associated with attention deficit disorder.

Intellectual Disability

Intellectual disability is a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior, which covers many everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of 18. Generally, an IQ test score of around 70 or as high as 75 indicates a limitation in intellectual functioning.

Intellectual functioning—also called intelligence—refers to general mental capacity, such as learning, reasoning, problem solving, and so on.

Learning Disability

Learning disabilities is a broad term used to refer to disorders that affect a person's ability to interpret what they see or hear and link information from different parts of the brain. These disorders usually manifest as problems with reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematics. Learning disabilities are neurological, lifelong disorders, but can often be overcome through appropriate intervention and support.

Mental Illness

The term mental illness refers to any illness or disorder that has significant psychological or behavioral manifestations, is associated with painful or distressing symptoms, and impairs an individual's level of functioning in certain areas of life. There are several different types of mental illness with differing levels of severity. Therapy and medication are the most common forms of treatment.

Preadmission Inquiry

Institutions may not make preadmission inquiry as to whether an applicant for admissions has a disability. Confidential inquiries may be made after the candidate is admitted to determine if accommodations are needed.

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.

Speech Impairments

Speech impairments refers to disorders that impair an individual's ability to verbally communicate. This could include the ability to speak, the inability to maintain a flow or rhythm of speech (e.g., dysfluency or stuttering), or the inability to pronounce certain sounds. Hearing impairments, neurological disorders, mental retardation, or physical impairments such as cleft palate can cause speech impairments.

Telecommunications Relay System

These are services (usually maintained by telephone companies) that will relay information verbally for those individuals whose communication must rely on electronic transmission due to a functional limitation; i.e., speech or hearing limitation.

Visual Impairment

A visual impairment is an impairment of sight that cannot be corrected by glasses or contact lenses. This includes individuals with low vision as well as people who are legally blind.

APPENDIX I

*Auxiliary Aids and Services for Postsecondary Students with
Disabilities*

*OCR Questions and Answers on Disability Discrimination under
Section 504 and Title II*



Auxiliary Aids and Services for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities

Higher Education's Obligations Under Section 504 and Title II of the ADA

U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights
Washington, D.C.

Revised September 1998

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

In 1973, Congress passed Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), a law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of physical or mental disability (29 U.S.C. Section 794). It states:

No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance...

The Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education enforces regulations implementing Section 504 with respect to programs and activities that receive funding from the Department. The Section 504 regulation applies to all recipients of this funding, including colleges, universities, and postsecondary vocational education and adult education programs. Failure by these higher education schools to provide auxiliary aids to students with disabilities that results in a denial of a program benefit is discriminatory and prohibited by Section 504.

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits state and local governments from discriminating on the basis of disability. The Department enforces Title II in public colleges, universities, and graduate and professional schools. The requirements regarding the provision of auxiliary aids and services in higher education institutions described in the Section 504 regulation are generally included in the general nondiscrimination provisions of the Title II regulation.

Postsecondary School Provision of Auxiliary Aids

The Section 504 regulation contains the following requirement relating to a postsecondary school's obligation to provide auxiliary aids to qualified students who have disabilities:

A recipient . . . shall take such steps as are necessary to ensure that no handicapped student is denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or

otherwise subjected to discrimination under the education program or activity operated by the recipient because of the absence of educational auxiliary aids for students with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills.

The Title II regulation states:

A public entity shall furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services where necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, a service, program, or activity conducted by a public entity.

It is, therefore, the school's responsibility to provide these auxiliary aids and services in a timely manner to ensure effective participation by students with disabilities. If students are being evaluated to determine their eligibility under Section 504 or the ADA, the recipient must provide auxiliary aids in the interim.

Postsecondary Student Responsibilities

A postsecondary student with a disability who is in need of auxiliary aids is obligated to provide notice of the nature of the disabling condition to the college and to assist it in identifying appropriate and effective auxiliary aids. In elementary and secondary schools, teachers and school specialists may have arranged support services for students with disabilities. However, in postsecondary schools, the students themselves must identify the need for an auxiliary aid and give adequate notice of the need. The student's notification should be provided to the appropriate representative of the college who, depending upon the nature and scope of the request, could be the school's Section 504 or ADA coordinator, an appropriate dean, a faculty advisor, or a professor. Unlike elementary or secondary schools, colleges may ask the student, in response to a request for auxiliary aids, to provide supporting diagnostic test results and professional prescriptions for auxiliary aids. A college also may obtain its own professional determination of whether specific requested auxiliary aids are necessary.

Examples of Auxiliary Aids

Some of the various types of auxiliary aids and services may include:

- taped texts
- notetakers
- interpreters
- readers
- videotext displays
- television enlargers
- talking calculators
- electronic readers
- Braille calculators, printers, or typewriters
- telephone handset amplifiers
- closed caption decoders
- open and closed captioning
- voice synthesizers
- specialized gym equipment
- calculators or keyboards with large buttons
- reaching device for library use
- raised-line drawing kits
- assistive listening devices
- assistive listening systems
- telecommunications devices for deaf persons.

Technological advances in electronics have improved vastly participation by students with disabilities in educational activities. Colleges are not required to provide the most sophisticated auxiliary aids available; however, the aids provided must effectively meet the needs of a student with a disability. An institution has flexibility in choosing the specific aid or service it provides to the student, as long as the aid or service selected is effective. These aids should be selected after consultation with the student who will use them.

Effectiveness of Auxiliary Aids

No aid or service will be useful unless it is successful in equalizing the opportunity for a particular student with a disability to participate in the education program or activity. Not all students with a similar disability benefit equally from an identical auxiliary aid or service. The regulation refers to this complex issue of effectiveness in several sections, including:

Auxiliary aids may include taped texts, interpreters or other effective methods of making orally delivered materials available to students with hearing impairments, readers in libraries for students with visual impairments, classroom equipment adapted for use by students with manual impairments, and other similar services and actions.

There are other references to effectiveness in the general provisions of the Section 504 regulation which state, in part, that a recipient may not:

Provide a qualified handicapped person with an aid, benefit, or service that is not as effective as that provided to others; or

Provide different or separate aid, benefits, or services to handicapped persons or to any class of handicapped persons unless such action is necessary to provide qualified handicapped persons with aid, benefits, or services that are as effective as those provided to others.

The Title II regulation contains comparable provisions.

The Section 504 regulation also states:

[A]ids, benefits, and services, to be equally effective, are not required to produce the identical result or level of achievement for handicapped and nonhandicapped persons, but must afford handicapped persons equal opportunity to obtain the same result, to gain the same benefit, or to reach the same level of achievement, in the most integrated setting appropriate to the person's needs.

The institution must analyze the appropriateness of an aid or service in its specific context. For example, the type of assistance needed in a classroom by a student who is hearing-impaired may vary, depending upon whether the format is a large lecture hall or a seminar. With the one-way communication of a lecture, the service of a notetaker may be adequate, but in the two-way communication of a seminar, an interpreter may be needed. College officials also should be aware that in determining what types of auxiliary

aids and services are necessary under Title II of the ADA, the institution must give primary consideration to the requests of individuals with disabilities.

Cost of Auxiliary Aids

Postsecondary schools receiving federal financial assistance must provide effective auxiliary aids to students who are disabled. If an aid is necessary for classroom or other appropriate (nonpersonal) use, the institution must make it available, unless provision of the aid would cause undue burden. A student with a disability may not be required to pay part or all of the costs of that aid or service. An institution may not limit what it spends for auxiliary aids or services or refuse to provide auxiliary aids because it believes that other providers of these services exist, or condition its provision of auxiliary aids on availability of funds. In many cases, an institution may meet its obligation to provide auxiliary aids by assisting the student in obtaining the aid or obtaining reimbursement for the cost of an aid from an outside agency or organization, such as a state rehabilitation agency or a private charitable organization. However, the institution remains responsible for providing the aid.

Personal Aids and Services

An issue that is often misunderstood by postsecondary officials and students is the provision of personal aids and services. Personal aids and services, including help in bathing, dressing, or other personal care, are not required to be provided by postsecondary institutions. The Section 504 regulation states:

Recipients need not provide attendants, individually prescribed devices, readers for personal use or study, or other devices or services of a personal nature.

Title II of the ADA similarly states that personal services are not required.

In order to ensure that students with disabilities are given a free appropriate public education, local education agencies are required to provide many services and aids of a personal nature to students with disabilities when they are enrolled in elementary and secondary schools. However, once students with disabilities graduate from a high school program or its equivalent, education institutions are no longer required to provide aids, devices, or services of a personal nature.

Postsecondary schools do not have to provide personal services relating to certain individual academic activities. Personal attendants and individually prescribed devices are the responsibility of the student who has a disability and not of the institution. For example, readers may be provided for classroom use but institutions are not required to provide readers for personal use or for help during individual study time.

Questions Commonly Asked by Postsecondary Schools and Their Students

Q: What are a college's obligations to provide auxiliary aids for library study?

A: Libraries and some of their significant and basic materials must be made accessible by the recipient to students with disabilities. Students with disabilities must have the appropriate auxiliary aids needed to locate and obtain library resources. The college library's basic index of holdings (whether formatted on-line or on index cards)

must be accessible. For example, a screen and keyboard (or card file) must be placed within reach of a student using a wheelchair. If a Braille index of holdings is not available for blind students, readers must be provided for necessary assistance.

Articles and materials that are library holdings and are required for course work must be accessible to all students enrolled in that course. This means that if material is required for the class, then its text must be read for a blind student or provided in Braille or on tape. A student's actual study time and use of these articles are considered personal study time and the institution has no further obligation to provide additional auxiliary aids.

Q: What if an instructor objects to the use of an auxiliary or personal aid?

A: Sometimes postsecondary instructors may not be familiar with Section 504 or ADA requirements regarding the use of an auxiliary or personal aid in their classrooms. Most often, questions arise when a student uses a tape recorder. College teachers may believe recording lectures is an infringement upon their own or other students' academic freedom, or constitutes copyright violation.

The instructor may not forbid a student's use of an aid if that prohibition limits the student's participation in the school program. The Section 504 regulation states:

A recipient may not impose upon handicapped students other rules, such as the prohibition of tape recorders in classrooms or of dog guides in campus buildings, that have the effect of limiting the participation of handicapped students in the recipient's education program or activity.

In order to allow a student with a disability the use of an effective aid and, at the same time, protect the instructor, the institution may require the student to sign an agreement so as not to infringe on a potential copyright or to limit freedom of speech.

Q: What if students with disabilities require auxiliary aids during an examination?

A: A student may need an auxiliary aid or service in order to successfully complete a course exam. This may mean that a student be allowed to give oral rather than written answers. It also may be possible for a student to present a tape containing the oral examination response. A test should ultimately measure a student's achievements and not the extent of the disability.

Q: Can postsecondary institutions treat a foreign student with disabilities who needs auxiliary aids differently than American students?

A: No, an institution may not treat a foreign student who needs auxiliary aids differently than an American student. A postsecondary institution must provide to a foreign student with a disability the same type of auxiliary aids and services it would provide to an American student with a disability. Section 504 and the ADA require that the provision of services be based on a student's disability and not on such other criteria as nationality.

Q: Are institutions responsible for providing auxiliary services to disabled students in filling out financial aid and student employment applications, or other forms of necessary paperwork?

A: Yes, an institution must provide services to disabled students who may need assistance in filling out aid applications or other forms. If the student requesting assistance is still in the process of being evaluated to determine eligibility for an auxiliary aid or service, help with this paperwork by the institution is mandated in the interim.

Q: Does a postsecondary institution have to provide auxiliary aids and services for a nondegree student?

A: Yes, students with disabilities who are auditing classes or who otherwise are not working for a degree must be provided auxiliary aids and services to the same extent as students who are in a degree-granting program.

For More Information

For more information on Section 504 and the ADA and their application to auxiliary aids and services for disabled students in postsecondary schools, or to obtain additional assistance, see the list of OCR's 12 enforcement offices containing the address and telephone number for the office that serves your area, or call 1-800-421-3481.

<http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/auxaids.html>

Page last updated 12/28/00 (sbd)



Questions and Answers on Disability Discrimination under Section 504 and Title II

How do Section 504 and Title II differ?

The main difference between the two laws is that one applies to the recipients of grants from the federal government (Section 504) and the other applies only to public entities (Title II). A school or college may be both a recipient of Federal funds from the US Department of Education and also a public entity. In such cases, the institution is covered by both laws.

Are all school districts, colleges, and universities covered by these laws?

Virtually all public school districts are covered by Section 504 because they receive some federal financial assistance. Public colleges and universities generally receive federal financial assistance, and most private colleges and universities receive such assistance. There are some private colleges that do not receive any federal assistance, and Section 504 does not apply to them. Title II applies only to public institutions.

Are all programs in a school or college covered if it receives federal financial assistance?

Generally, all programs in a school or college are covered if the school or college receives federal financial assistance or is a public entity.

Do these laws cover just students?

No. The laws protect all participants in the program from discrimination, including parents, students, and employees.

Do these laws cover just education programs?

No. They cover all programs of a school or college, including academics, extracurricular, and athletics. Also, the laws apply to the activities of a school or college that occur off campus..

Do all buildings have to be made physically accessible?

No, not necessarily. While buildings constructed after the Section 504 regulation was issued (that is, those built since 1977) must be fully accessible, older buildings do not have to be made fully accessible. For older buildings, the law requires that the program or activity be made accessible. A common way this is done is to relocate the program to another building that is accessible.

What types of adjustments are required for students with disabilities in colleges and universities?

Colleges and universities are required to provide students with appropriate academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services that are necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in the school's program. Examples of

auxiliary aids that may be required are taped texts, notetakers, interpreters, readers, and specialized computer equipment.

Colleges and universities are not required to supply students with attendants, individually prescribed devices such as hearing aids and wheelchairs, readers for personal use or study, or other devices or services of a personal nature

What types of services are required for students with disabilities in elementary and secondary schools?

School districts are required to provide a free appropriate education to students with disabilities based on their individualized educational needs. The services may include special education and related aids and services such as physical therapy, as well as modifications to the regular education program including adjustments in test taking procedures and adjustments to rules regarding absences when a student's absences are due to a disability.

Does OCR enforce laws that prohibit harassment of students or others because of a disability?

Yes. Both Section 504 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act make it unlawful to harass people in covered entities because of their disabilities. OCR and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services have jointly issued [guidance to school districts](#) regarding harassment based on disability.

APPENDIX II (Transition)

*Major Differences between High School and Postsecondary
Disability Services*

*Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education:
Know Your Rights and Responsibilities*

*Learning Disabilities in the College Setting: A Different Ball Game
than High School*

MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND POSTSECONDARY DISABILITY SERVICES

<i>High School</i>		<i>Post Secondary</i>
Applicable Laws		
I.D.E.A Section 504, Rehabilitation Act		A.D.A. Section 504, Rehabilitation Act
Required Documentation		
I.E.P.		Varies depending on the disability, and must include testing documentation.
School provides evaluation at no cost to student.		Student provides evaluation at own expense.
School retests over time.		Student provides retesting.
Student Role		
Student is identified by school.		Student self-identifies to Disability Services Office.
School sets up accommodations.		Student is responsible for securing accommodations.
Parental Role		
Access to student records.		No access to student records without the student's written consent.
Participation in accommodations		Student requests accommodations
Mandatory involvement.		Student is self advocates
Instructors		
Modification of curriculum.		Not required to modify
Use of multi-sensory approach.		Not required. Lecture is predominant
Weekly testing, mid-term, final, and graded assignments		May test once or twice with few assignments.
Attendance taken and reported.		Attendance often not taken but student can be dropped after missing 10% (1 class)

Grades	
Grades modified based on curriculum	Grades reflect the quality of work submitted
Conduct	
Disruptive conduct may be accepted.	Students who are disruptive and unable to abide by the Institution's code of conduct are deemed "not qualified" and can be dismissed
Most Important Differences in Summary	

I.D.E.A. is about **Success**.

A.D.A. is about **Access**.

High School is mandatory and free.

Postsecondary is voluntary and costs

A Word about the A.D.A.

The ADA extends civil rights protection to persons with disabilities. A "person with a disability" is anyone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (public institutions are covered under Title II), students with documented disabilities may request accommodations that will enable them to participate in postsecondary educational programs. A "qualified person with a disability" is defined as one who meets the requisite academic and technical standards required for admission or participation in the postsecondary institution's programs.

Institutions are expected to give "reasonable accommodations". Among the accommodations which postsecondary institutions can make are:

- Removal of architectural barriers
- Interpreters
- Notetakers
- Assistive Technology
- Extra time on tests and assignments (Time and a half in most cases).
- Tape recorders

The emphasis of the ADA is on accessibility for those who wish to pursue education at the postsecondary level. There is no obligation on the part of a college to make fundamental changes in its courses for students with disabilities.

**Students with disabilities who complete high school will enter either the work force or a postsecondary educational environment. Having attained the age of legal majority, they will be expected to exhibit self-advocacy and to communicate their own needs for reasonable accommodations in work or educational environments.*

(Blue Ridge Community College, revised 7/12/02)

U.S. Department of Education
Arne Duncan
Secretary

Office for Civil Rights

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Assistant Secretary

First published July 2002. Reprinted May 2004.
Revised September 2007.

U.S. Department of Education
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Washington, D.C. 20202
September 2007

More and more high school students with disabilities are planning to continue their education in postsecondary schools, including vocational and career schools, two- and four- year colleges, and universities. As a student with a disability, you need to be well informed about your rights and responsibilities as well as the responsibilities postsecondary schools have toward you. Being well informed will help ensure you have a full opportunity to enjoy the benefits of the postsecondary education experience without confusion or delay.



The information in this pamphlet, provided by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the U. S. Department of Education, explains the rights and responsibilities of students with disabilities who are preparing to attend postsecondary schools. This pamphlet also explains the obligations of a postsecondary school to provide academic adjustments, including auxiliary aids and services, to ensure the school does not discriminate on the basis of disability.

OCR enforces 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 on the basis of disability. Practically every school district and postsecondary school in the United States is subject to one or both of these laws, which have similar requirements.*[/](#)

Although both school districts and postsecondary schools must comply with these same laws, the responsibilities of postsecondary schools are significantly different from those of school districts.

Moreover, you will have responsibilities as a postsecondary student that you do not have as a high school student. OCR strongly encourages you to know your responsibilities and those of postsecondary schools under Section 504 and Title II. Doing so will improve your opportunity to succeed as you enter postsecondary education.

The following questions and answers provide more specific information to help you succeed.

As a student with a disability leaving high school and entering postsecondary education, will I see differences in my rights and how they are addressed?

Yes. Section 504 and Title II protect elementary, secondary and postsecondary students from discrimination. Nevertheless, several of the requirements that apply through high school are different from the requirements that apply beyond high school. For instance, Section 504 requires a school district to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to each child with a disability in the district's jurisdiction. Whatever the disability, a school district must identify an individual's education needs and provide any regular or special education and related aids and services necessary to meet those needs as well as it is meeting the needs of students without disabilities.

Unlike your high school, your postsecondary school is not required to provide FAPE. Rather, your postsecondary school is required to provide appropriate academic adjustments as necessary to ensure that it does not discriminate on the basis of disability. In addition, if your postsecondary school provides housing to nondisabled students, it must provide comparable, convenient and accessible housing to students with disabilities at the same cost.

Other important differences you need to know, even before you arrive at your postsecondary school, are addressed in the remaining questions.

May a postsecondary school deny my admission because I have a disability?

No. If you meet the essential requirements for admission, a postsecondary school may not deny your admission simply because you have a disability.

Do I have to inform a postsecondary school that I have a disability?

No. However, if you want the school to provide an academic adjustment, you must identify yourself as having a disability. Likewise, you should let the school know about your disability if you want to ensure that you are assigned to accessible facilities. In any event, your disclosure of a disability is always voluntary.

What academic adjustments must a postsecondary school provide?

The appropriate academic adjustment must be determined based on your disability and individual needs. Academic adjustments may include auxiliary aids and modifications to academic requirements as are necessary to ensure equal educational opportunity. Examples of such adjustments are arranging for priority registration; reducing a course load; substituting one course for another; providing note takers, recording devices, sign language interpreters, extended time for testing and, if telephones are provided in dorm rooms, a TTY in your dorm room; and equipping school computers with screen-reading, voice recognition or other adaptive software or hardware.

In providing an academic adjustment, your postsecondary school is not required to lower or effect substantial modifications to essential requirements. For example, although your school may be required to provide extended testing time, it is not

required to change the substantive content of the test. In addition, your postsecondary school does not have to make modifications that would fundamentally alter the nature of a service, program or activity or would result in undue financial or administrative burdens. Finally, your postsecondary school does not have to provide personal attendants, individually prescribed devices, readers for personal use or study, or other devices or services of a personal nature, such as tutoring and typing.

If I want an academic adjustment, what must I do?

You must inform the school that you have a disability and need an academic adjustment. Unlike your school district, your postsecondary school is not required to identify you as having a disability or assess your needs.

Your postsecondary school may require you to follow reasonable procedures to request an academic adjustment. You are responsible for knowing and following these procedures. Postsecondary schools usually include, in their publications providing general information, information on the procedures and contacts for requesting an academic adjustment. Such publications include recruitment materials, catalogs and student handbooks, and are often available on school Web sites. Many schools also have staff whose purpose is to assist students with disabilities. If you are unable to locate the procedures, ask a school official, such as an admissions officer or counselor.

When should I request an academic adjustment?

Although you may request an academic adjustment from your postsecondary school at any time, you should request it as early as possible. Some academic adjustments may take more time to provide than others. You should follow your school's procedures to ensure that your school has enough time to review your request and provide an appropriate academic adjustment.

Do I have to prove that I have a disability to obtain an academic adjustment?

Generally, yes. Your school will probably require you to provide documentation that shows you have a current disability and need an academic adjustment.

What documentation should I provide?

Schools may set reasonable standards for documentation. Some schools require more documentation than others. They may require you to provide documentation prepared by an appropriate professional, such as a medical doctor, psychologist or other qualified diagnostician. The required documentation may include one or more of the following: a diagnosis of your current disability; the date of the diagnosis; how the diagnosis was reached; the credentials of the professional; how your disability affects a major life activity; and how the disability affects your academic performance. The documentation should provide enough information for you and your school to decide what is an appropriate academic adjustment.

Although an individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan, if you have one, may help identify services that have been effective for you, it generally is not sufficient documentation. This is because postsecondary education presents different demands than high school education, and what you need to meet these new demands may be different. Also in some cases, the nature of a disability may change.

If the documentation that you have does not meet the postsecondary school's requirements, a school official should tell you in a timely manner what additional documentation you need to provide. You may need a new evaluation in order to provide the required documentation.

Who has to pay for a new evaluation?

Neither your high school nor your postsecondary school is required to conduct or pay for a new evaluation to document your disability and need for an academic adjustment. This may mean that you have to pay or find funding to pay an appropriate professional for an evaluation. If you are eligible for services through your state vocational rehabilitation agency, you may qualify for an evaluation at no cost to you.

Once the school has received the necessary documentation from me, what should I expect?

The school will review your request in light of the essential requirements for the relevant program to help determine an appropriate academic adjustment. It is important to remember that the school is not required to lower or waive essential requirements. If you have requested a specific academic adjustment, the school may offer that academic adjustment or an alternative one if the alternative would also be effective. The school may also conduct its own evaluation of your disability and needs at its own expense.

You should expect your school to work with you in an interactive process to identify an appropriate academic adjustment. Unlike the experience you may have had in high school, however, do not expect your postsecondary school to invite your parents to participate in the process or to develop an IEP for you.

What if the academic adjustment we identified is not working?

Let the school know as soon as you become aware that the results are not what you expected. It may be too late to correct the problem if you wait until the course or activity is completed. You and your school should work together to resolve the problem.

May a postsecondary school charge me for providing an academic adjustment?

No. Furthermore, it may not charge students with disabilities more for participating in its programs or activities than it charges students who do not have disabilities.

What can I do if I believe the school is discriminating against me?

Practically every postsecondary school must have a person—frequently called the Section 504 Coordinator, ADA Coordinator, or Disability Services Coordinator—who coordinates the school's compliance with Section 504 or Title II or both laws. You may contact this person for information about how to address your concerns.

The school must also have grievance procedures. These procedures are not the same as the due process procedures with which you may be familiar from high school. However, the postsecondary school's grievance procedures must include

steps to ensure that you may raise your concerns fully and fairly and must provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints.

School publications, such as student handbooks and catalogs, usually describe the steps you must take to start the grievance process. Often, schools have both formal and informal processes. If you decide to use a grievance process, you should be prepared to present all the reasons that support your request.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome from using the school's grievance procedures or you wish to pursue an alternative to using the grievance procedures, you may [file a complaint](#) against the school with OCR or in a court. You may learn more about the OCR complaint process from the brochure *How to File a Discrimination Complaint with the Office for Civil Rights*, which you may obtain by contacting us at the addresses and phone numbers below, or at <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/howto.html>.

If you would like more information about the responsibilities of postsecondary schools to students with disabilities, read the OCR brochure *Auxiliary Aids and Services for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities: Higher Education's Obligations Under Section 504 and Title II of the ADA*. You may obtain a copy by contacting us at the address and phone numbers below, or at <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/auxaids.html>.

Students with disabilities who know their rights and responsibilities are much better equipped to succeed in postsecondary school. We encourage you to work with the staff at your school because they, too, want you to succeed. Seek the support of family, friends and fellow students, including those with disabilities. Know your talents and capitalize on them, and believe in yourself as you embrace new challenges in your education.

To receive more information about the civil rights of students with disabilities in education institutions, you may contact us at:

Customer Service Team
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
Web site: www.ed.gov/ocr

*You may be familiar with another federal law that applies to the education of students with disabilities—the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). That law is administered by the Office of Special Education Programs in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the U.S. Department of Education. **The IDEA and its Individualized Education Program (IEP) provisions do not apply to postsecondary schools.** This pamphlet does not discuss the IDEA or state and local laws that may apply.

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LEARNING DISABILITIES IN THE COLLEGE SETTING: A DIFFERENT BALL GAME THAT HIGH SCHOOL

By Stephen Strichart

I am frequently surprised to find how many high school students with learning disabilities, and their parents, think that college is just a slightly more difficult version of high school. From this perspective, the major challenge is to get accepted into college. I don't agree with this perspective. I've found that given a little persistence, and in some cases a lot of money, most LD students can get into a college somewhere, albeit not always one of their first choices. The major challenge is not that of being accepted, but of being successful. Unfortunately, LD students are often poorly prepared for the increased demands of college.

IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

1. **Public Law 94-142 no longer applies.**

In high school, PL 94-142 mandates a free and appropriate education delineated in an IEP that spells out specific services. LD students receive these; they don't have to seek them out. This law does not apply at the college level. Instead, there is Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a far reaching, but rather nonspecific law. To gain access to accommodations and services through this law, LD students must document and make their disability known, and in many cases, identify the assistance they need to succeed in college, and then self-advocate to get this assistance.

2. **There is much less structure.**

Programs for LD students at the high school level are extremely structured and supportive. Students take a specific schedule of classes that is the same each day. The same group of peers are in most of their classes. Teachers consistently review their expectations and monitor student progress. This is not the case in college, where each day's schedule can vary widely, and each class consists of a different group of students. College professors rarely take attendance, check to see if reading assignments are being done, or concern themselves with the quality of the notes being taken by students. Students have to analyze each class and professor to determine what will be required for success. This varies from class to class.

3. **There is greater academic competition.**

Unlike going to high school, going to college is a voluntary matter. Poor achievers and unmotivated students rarely reach the college campus. Consequently, students moving on to college find themselves in a "bigger pond" where peers have higher abilities and drive, and teachers have higher expectations. Memorization may have carried the day in high school, but high levels of analysis and synthesis is what is needed now. In terms of both the quality and the quantity of their work, LD students must be more productive than they have ever been before.

4. **There is a need for greater independence.**

The nature of high school LD programs tends to foster dependence in students. This presents a major problem in the college setting, where students are required to function

in a relatively independent manner. High school students don't have to declare a major, and for the most part, their course of study is prescribed. This, of course, changes dramatically in college. College students must make important career choices, and must carefully plan their sequence of courses, to include selecting from an array of elective courses. They must make good use of the many hours they are not in class and learn to fully utilize the many learning resources available on campus. Further, students must learn to establish and maintain work and study schedules, while balancing their academic and social lives. Decision-making and problem-solving skills become paramount.

MAKING THE ADJUSTMENT TO COLLEGE

Many of the recommendations that I offer may seem obvious and almost trivial. This may be true in the case of typical college students, but not for LD students. One thing my experience working with LD students has taught me is to never assume anything. With this proviso, I offer the following recommendations for college LD students.

1. Make your needs known.

Colleges are not required to seek out and identify LD students. What they are required to do is to respond to the needs of those students once they are identified. Consequently, LD students should make their needs known right from the beginning. They can do this by registering with the appropriate academic unit, and by discussing their needs with their professors in an open and positive manner. Once they understand the nature of an LD student's problem, most professors will do everything reasonable to assist the student to succeed in their class.

No one knows the needs of LD students better than the students themselves. Experience is the best teacher, and LD students have had much experience coping with the problems posed by their disability. Consequently, it is the students who are in the best position to articulate their special needs. While various support personnel on campus are willing and able to advocate for students with their professors, this is best done by the students. Professors may be leery of official forms apprising them of accommodations to offer to a given student. They may feel put upon or even intimidated when apprised that they are required by law to provide various accommodations. This is generally not a problem where a student personally makes his or her needs known in a non-threatening manner, offering suggestions as to how they can easily be met by the professor. Where necessary, LD students should stand behind their rights in an insistent, but reasonable manner.

2. Provide your own structure.

LD students must realize the importance of shifting from a reactive to a proactive student style. They must quickly determine the expectations of each of their professors and how best to meet these expectations. Ideally, students will meet with their professors before the semester begins. At this time they can obtain reading lists and course requirements, enabling them to prepare for the beginning of classes and get a good head start on some of the work. Once they have determined what each course requires, students must establish priorities for the use of their study time, devoting more time to difficult subjects. They must gather and organize the materials and resources they need for each course.

Planning and consistency become crucial. Students must develop and stick to an individualized study plan for each of their courses. This plan must be responsive to the academic calendar and the due dates for all exams and assignments. Students must plan ahead to allow sufficient time to complete all work as and when required.

3. Increase your effort.

College requirements are both quantitatively and qualitatively greater than those experienced by students in high school. Consequently, LD students must apply themselves in a concerted and efficient manner if they are to succeed. Students used to an hour or so of homework each night must now be committed to spending two to three hours in preparation for each hour of class. While memorizing and repeating information in written or spoken form may have sufficed in high school, most college professors require students to demonstrate the ability to analyze, synthesize, and apply information to solve problems.

LD students should strive to improve their skills in a number of areas. They will need to develop an effective textbook reading strategy, devise effective study routines, and become more effective test takers. They will need to make full use of the library as a learning resource and become adept in the use of resources such as the dictionary, thesaurus, and encyclopedia. Certainly, they will benefit by developing word processing skills. Overall, LD students must become “active” students who rewrite their lecture notes, take written notes from their texts in their own words, and integrate information from a variety of sources. Further, LD students should seek help from their peers as appropriate. Teaming with a student who is doing well in a course can be very helpful when reviewing notes, writing and editing papers, and preparing for tests.

4. Become independent.

The college experience involves far more than just continued academic preparation. It is a time when LD young adults must make important personal decisions about their career and life goals. At first, LD students should not attempt to make decisions completely on their own.

Seeking the advice of a faculty advisor and utilizing career counseling services can help students to begin to identify the appropriate bases for the important decisions they must make. As they begin to make choices about a major and course of study, LD students initiate the process of becoming full independent adults. Each time they make decisions regarding which electives to take, how to manage time between classes, and with which groups and organizations to become involved, these students move further toward independence. LD students must become increasingly willing to make decisions on their own, ultimately claiming full ownership and responsibility for their decisions. LD students will undoubtedly find college to be more difficult than high school. But by being prepared for the differences between high school and college, and taking steps to accommodate to these differences, LD students can not only succeed in college—they can excel.

Stephen S. Strichart, Ph.D., is Professor of Education in the Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education at Florida International University. He is co-author with Charles T. Mangum, Ed.D., of Peterson's Guide to Colleges with Programs for Students with Learning Disabilities, now in its third edition.