



REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Post-secondary schools each set their own procedures and requirements to request accommodations. Here are some key points and tips on effective ways to request accommodations.

Accessibility is one important way a post-secondary school can show it is inclusive. Over the last few years, many colleges and universities have been highlighting accessibility and the services they offer students with disabilities. This may help a student to decide to apply to a particular school and make it easier to find out how to apply for accommodations at a school they have selected. (Check out the [College Readiness Workbook created by PAVE to](#) see resources for post-secondary program selection.)

To request accommodations:

1. Begin by locating the campus disability services office on the school website. Type “disability” into the search bar. Often, the first result will be the office that provides accommodation for students with disabilities.

Name of Office:

Phone:

2. Call the office to make an appointment and request any forms you can complete beforehand and how to obtain them (such as by mail or downloading from the school website). Make your appointment well before classes begin. It may take 6-8 weeks to process your request, so start early to have accommodations in place by the time you need them.
 - Note that some accommodations, such as Braille or interpreter services, may take more time than others to arrange.
 - If you have an IEP, note that transition planning is mandatory beginning at age 16. Parts of a transition plan can include selecting a post-secondary program, deciding which accommodations you will need, and starting the request process on time.

Appointment Date:

Time:

Contact:

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Requirements to document a disability range widely from one post-secondary program to another. It's important to reach out to disability services to learn their specific requirements, and if possible, talk with other students who have experience with school services. [DREAM](#) (Disability Rights, Education, Activism, & Mentoring) Group [has lists of student organizations](#) to contact for this type of information.

Schools may ask for documentation from a medical or other therapeutic provider, or disability services may be able to use a student's current IEP or 504 plan.

3. You will need to submit proof of a disability that impacts activities of daily living, to meet the requirements to provide accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The proof may be a form letter for a medical or therapeutic provider to fill out, or it may be notes from such a provider. It may be your most recent IEP or 504 plan. It must be specific to the condition or conditions for which accommodation is requested.
 - Be aware that a disability which is 'mitigated', that is, made less of an impairment by a device, an accommodation, or any other strategy for coping does not change a student's rights under the ADA or Section 504.
 - The same is true for a condition that 'comes and goes'. For example, bipolar disorder, an autoimmune disorder, a gastrointestinal condition, or similar conditions in which symptoms are present at some times and not at others.
 - From a medical or therapeutic provider, schools often require that documentation must be in writing, must be current within three years, and include the following where appropriate:
 - A description of the student's disability and how he/she is affected educationally by the presence of the disabling condition.
 - Identification of any tests or assessments administered to the student
 - Suggestions for educational accommodations that will provide equal access to programs, services, and activities

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4. Documentation submitted to the college should provide clear evidence of need and demonstrate a history of use of the accommodations requested. While a high school IEP or 504 plan does not “transfer” to the postsecondary program, the disability office may accept these plans as proof of disability or use them as guidance in determining appropriate accommodations.

Collect and check the documentation you need:

- Most recent Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Most recent 504 plan, Accommodations Plan, or Service Plan
- Most recent educational evaluations
- Diagnosis and/or treatment plan
- Medical or professional service providers notes, including suggested accommodations (colleges may have a form for this)
- Make copies of the completed request forms for your home file
- Other

Remember to check the school website for any disability-specific or need-specific documentation requirements. For example, a student may be required to provide the results of a hearing assessment with expected progression or stability of the hearing loss, when requesting accommodations for a hearing disability.

5. Meet with the disability office staff to request and discuss accommodations. Complete the [How to Decide on a Post-Secondary Program worksheet](#) to help you prepare for this meeting, including organizing your questions and concerns.

Write down any additional questions to help you remember during the meeting.

6. When you receive written notice of the decision regarding your eligibility for accommodations and the list of approved accommodations, make enough copies to share with your instructors and keep a copy with you in class, in the event of a substitute instructor. Put the original in your home file for safekeeping.

Understand the limits of what the school is providing for assistive technology. For instance, many schools limit the loan of portable screen-readers to specified uses or time frames. Students may have to provide their own equipment or software outside those limits.

It is the student's responsibility to give the eligibility notice with specific accommodations to each instructor every semester.

7. If accommodations become ineffective or you are not receiving approved accommodations, contact the disability services office immediately for assistance.
8. All accommodations are provided on a case-by-case basis. If your request for accommodations is denied, contact the disability services office to determine the process for appeal and equitable resolution.
9. **Once at college, this resource may help:** [So, you're in college, now what next?](#)
[College Readiness Workbook](#)

Additional Resources:

[So, you're in college, now what next?](#)

[College Readiness Workbook](#) (contains this article and many other helpful resources)

Sources:

[How to Request Disability Supports in College](#)

[Tacoma Community College, Tacoma, WA Access Services](#)

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