

## College Accommodations

College accommodations are those supports and services provided at no cost to eligible students with disabilities to have equal access and opportunity to benefit from classes, programs, and activities. Common academic accommodations may include priority registration, note takers, extended time on tests, testing in a limited distractions room, accessible classrooms, interpreters, and textbooks in an alternate format. Using accommodations can make a big difference in student learning and grades achieved.

### Key differences between high school and college

Getting college accommodations is a very different process than in high school. Understanding the differences and learning how to navigate this process is **critical** to understand before going to college.

Areas	High School	College
<b>Legal Protection</b>	IDEA: <b>entitled</b> to services through a Free & Appropriate Public Education.	ADA & Rehab Act: must be <b>eligible</b> for services.
<b>IEP</b>	Students have access to general & special education classes through an IEP.	IEPs are not used in college. Classes include students with & without disabilities. The curriculum is not modified.
<b>Disability Documentation</b>	The school district is responsible for identifying and evaluating students with disabilities.	Student must provide the college with current documentation of a disability at his or her expense. Student's IEP may be used as supplemental information but other documentation is typically required.
<b>Receiving Accommodations</b>	The IEP process identifies student accommodations.	Student must initiate the process & register with the Disability Support Services office on campus.
<b>Advocating</b>	Teacher, parents, & students advocate for services.	Student advocates for accommodations & services.
<b>Parent's Role</b>	Parents can see student records and are notified and must sign permission for any changes or decisions for the student.	Students are protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Parents do not communicate with professors or have access to grades & student information.

## Where do you start?

First, learn about the office on your campus that provides accommodations. This office is often called the Disability Support Services (DSS) but may go by other names such as Office of Student Accommodations, Student Disability Access Center, or Office of Educational Accessibility. The only way to get accommodations in college is through this important office. Find out what type of documentation is required for your disability, the steps you need to take to get accommodations, and the forms you need to complete to register as a student with a disability. This information is often online, but you may have to call the office.

## Register with DSS

Once you are accepted to a college, follow the registration process for that college's DSS office. Make a copy of your most recent disability documentation and gather the forms required to register. Complete the forms and send this information, including your documentation, to the DSS office.

## Talk with the DSS Coordinator

Start early. When your registration forms and documentation have been submitted, schedule a meeting with the DSS Coordinator to review your information and to request accommodations. You may want accommodations for the placement tests or to request books in alternate format; this process can take up to six weeks. The Coordinator will authorize accommodations based on your documentation and your discussion.

## Give accommodation letters to your professors

The DSS office will provide letters for you to give to your professors as well as instructions for note-takers and testing procedures each semester.

## Tips for success

- Keep in mind that every college is different with their policies & procedures. Review the DSS policies and procedures for each of the colleges where you apply.
- IEP forms are generally not acceptable as documentation of a disability; however, they can be included along with the required documentation.
- Your disability information is kept confidential. When you receive your accommodation letter, it will not specify your disability, only the accommodations you are to receive.
- Although you can request accommodations at any point in the semester, it is advisable to do so in the beginning of each semester. Accommodations are not retroactive and only begin at the time you present your accommodation letter to your professor.