

Get Ready for College

# Facilitator's Guide



Center on  
transition  
innovations  
 **VCU**

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## Acknowledgements

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For further information about the Center on Transition Innovations, please visit our website at [CenterOnTransition.org](http://CenterOnTransition.org).

# Introduction

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Postsecondary education has many benefits for individuals with and without disabilities, including increased employability skills, greater job opportunities, higher wages, and improved skills related to self-determination. Additionally, college and university experiences allow students to enhance social and professional networks and further explore areas of career interest.

The [National Center for Education Statistics](#) indicates that 19% of undergraduate students were those with disabilities, compared to 81% of students without disabilities. This accounts for the students who chose to inform institutions of a disability. According to the [Virginia Special Education Performance Report](#), 33% of Virginia students with disabilities were enrolled in higher education after graduation from high school.

These statistics highlight the critical need for positive change in the way we plan and prepare students with disabilities for higher education.

## Purpose of the Guide

The *Get Ready for College Facilitator's Guide* is a resource for secondary educators, school counselors, service providers, and families who are supporting students with disabilities in the college planning and preparation process. This guide is a companion resource for the free, online course [Get Ready for College](#) that was developed by the [VCU Center on Transition Innovations](#). It provides guidance on how to facilitate the course in small group or whole class instructional settings for a successful transition to postsecondary education.



# Course at a Glance

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*Get Ready for College* contains eight lessons with two or more video lectures, resources, and portfolio activities. It will take students approximately 20 hours to view the videos and complete the activities. The Course at a Glance provides an overview of these lessons. For each lesson, you will find a lesson title, videos with their length, potential discussion questions, and a brief description of each portfolio activity. Use this information when planning how to pace the course for students. The total time for all videos is 2 hours and 5 minutes.

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## Introduction

### Video

Introduction (2 min, 45 sec)

### Questions

Why do you think people choose to go to college?

Do you know anyone who has attended college? What was their experience?

What do you think college life will be like based on what you have seen on television or in the movies?

### Portfolio Activities

**Portfolio:** Students will create a portfolio to keep all documents and activities in.

**College Readiness Assessment:** Students will be assessed on what they know about preparing for the transition to college.

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## Lesson One:

### The Differences between High School and College

### Videos

Understanding the Differences (5 min, 31 sec)

Differences in the Law (3 min, 59 sec)

**Total:** 9 min, 30 sec

### Questions

How else might college be different from high school, aside from what has been discussed in this lesson?

What, for you, will be the best change between high school and college?

What differences do you feel will be most challenging for you?

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**Lesson Two:**  
**Postsecondary  
Education and  
Training**

**Videos**

Why Postsecondary Education? (6 min, 41 sec)

Community Colleges (6 min, 52 sec)

Four-Year College and Universities (4 min, 27 sec)

Additional Postsecondary Options (8 min, 10 sec)

**Total:** 26 min, 10 sec

**Questions**

What are some reasons you may need postsecondary education after you graduate from high school?

Of the postsecondary education and training options discussed, which one do you feel is the best option for you, and why?

**Portfolio Activity**

**Career Search:** Students will answer the question “What do I want to do for a living?” By the end of the activity, students will have a list of three jobs of interest and important information about each job.

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**Lesson Three:**  
**Knowing Myself**

**Videos**

How You Learn (6 min, 57 sec)

Knowing Myself (7 min, 21 sec)

**Total:** 14 min, 18 sec

**Questions**

Why is it important to know your strengths, preferences, interests, and needs (SPIN)?

What are some ways you could increase awareness of your abilities and needs?

**Portfolio Activity**

**Knowing Myself Profile:** Students will identify their learning style, strengths, preferences, interests, needs, and challenges.

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## Lesson Four:

### Goal Setting and Action Planning

#### Videos

Setting Goals (5 min, 24 sec)

Making Goals SMART (3 min, 55 sec)

Turning Goals into Action (7 min, 6 sec)

**Total:** 16 min, 25 sec

#### Questions

Why is it important to set goals?

Think about a goal that you set for yourself in the past that you were unable to achieve. Based on the information presented in this lesson, describe the goal and what you could have done differently to turn that goal into a success.

How do you feel about your progress on your goals in your IEP?

#### Portfolio Activity

**College Action Plan:** Students will develop an action plan to assist with getting closer to reaching postsecondary and training goals needed for their career.

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## Lesson Five:

### Applying and Paying for College

#### Videos

Applying to College and Training Programs (7 min, 46 sec)

Understanding College Costs (5 min, 31 sec)

Understanding Financial Aid (3 min, 59 sec)

**Total:** 17 min, 16 sec

#### Questions

What information should you know/have before you apply to a college?

What are ways to save on college expenses?

What do you think are some college expenses that may not be covered by financial aid?

#### Portfolio Activity

**Financial Aid:** Students will use a checklist to help them navigate the financial aid process and get the most money possible for college.

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**Lesson Six:**  
**Selecting a  
College**

**Videos**

Finding the Right College for You! (8 min, 53 sec)

College and Community Resources (6 min, 44 sec)

**Total:** 15 min, 37 min

**Questions**

What are some things you are doing or can do to prepare for postsecondary education?

Based on the information presented on college and community resources, what resource would you like to learn more about and why?

What other resources or experiences would you like to pursue on a college campus, such as recreation/leisure?

**Portfolio Activity**

**Comparing Colleges:** Students will research and compare three colleges to find the best match.

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**Lesson Seven:**  
**Disability Support  
Services in  
College**

**Videos**

Why Disability Support Services? (6 min, 2 sec)

Getting Accommodations (3 min, 57 sec)

**Total:** 9 min, 59 sec

**Questions**

What do you consider to be the most important factors to consider for success in a college environment? Explain.

What are your thoughts about attending college and/or what more would you like to know?

What are the benefits of registering with the Disabilities Support Services office at college?

What are some concerns you may have with giving the accommodation letter to an instructor?

**Portfolio Activity**

**Exploring Disability Support Services:** Students will research and compare colleges to find out which ones offer the support and resources they will need when they go to college.

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**Lesson Eight:**  
**Exploring  
Technology**

**Videos**

Technology to Enhance Learning (4 min, 20 sec)

Tools and Accessibility Features (5 min, 15 sec)

**Total:** 9 min, 35 sec

**Questions**

What are some ways you have used technology in high school to enhance your learning?

What are some features or apps on your phone, tablet, or computer that you find helpful in your life and/or in learning that were not demonstrated in this lesson?

**Portfolio Activity**

**Exploring Technology:** Students will select three types of technology that they are interested in learning more about.

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**Conclusion**

**Video**

Conclusion (2 min, 59 sec)

**Portfolio Activity**

**College Readiness Assessment:** Students will identify areas of growth needed to prepare for college and specific areas they may still need to learn about to increase knowledge and skills.

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# Course Implementation

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This section provides specific guidance to facilitators who will be implementing the *Get Ready for College* course. These guidelines will assist with planning by identifying information, activities, and decisions that need to occur before, during, and at the conclusion of the course. Decisions about how to administer the course content should be based upon the needs of the students and the desire to support decisions that students make about postsecondary education and training.

## Before Course Implementation

Planning and preparation is key to successfully implementing the *Get Ready for College* course in a group setting. Before the course begins, there are several factors to consider. Facilitators are strongly encouraged to complete the following steps before the start date of the course.

### Become Familiar with the Course

Thoroughly review the course content. Take the course from a student's perspective by viewing the videos and completing the activities. Determine if any extra resources or additional lessons are needed to supplement the content based on the needs of the students.

**NOTE:** Participants who complete the course are eligible for a certificate of completion. This course takes educators and other professionals approximately 10 hours to complete the videos and review the resources. Participants may use the hours for recertification (as approved by their school division) or for Continuing Education Credits (CRCs).

### Determine Delivery Format

Facilitators can implement this course in small or large groups in a variety of ways:

**Direct Instruction:** Facilitator explicitly presents course content.

**Hybrid:** Facilitator develops interactions between online and face-to-face learning.

**Peer-to-Peer:** Facilitator provides reinforcement and support as students complete the course with a partner.

**Student-Directed:** Facilitator provides support as students work at their own pace.

## Determine Staff

The decision on which format to use for *Get Ready for College* will greatly depend on the personnel assigned to implement the course. Suggestions for facilitators could include resource teachers, school counselors, or designated transition personnel. Service providers and family members may also serve as facilitators. Consider a facilitator's prior knowledge of transition planning for students with disabilities and the ability to commit time for planning and instruction when choosing a facilitator. The role of the facilitator could be assigned to one person or several personnel over the length of the course as staffing allows.

The role of a facilitator is to assist a group of students with increasing knowledge of specific content objectives. A good facilitator manages the process for learning and creates an active environment within a group dynamic.

### Facilitator Responsibilities

- Clarify content information
- Facilitate group discussions
- Develop collaborative learning opportunities
- Provide content reinforcement and student support
- Identify students' strengths, interests, needs, and preferences, as they pertain to postsecondary education
- Track student progress
- Provide feedback on assignments
- Inform students' case managers of assessment data
- Assist students in developing a portfolio

## Determine Schedule and Location

Consideration may be given to offering the course as part of a regularly scheduled counseling session, as part of a study skills course, or as a supplement to any course content. The course may also be offered during “study hall” if the option for delivery is as a student-directed, self-paced course. Time of day will depend on students’ instructional schedule and availability of staff.

## Check Technology

Check to make sure the technology, materials, and resources to view videos and complete the portfolio activities are available in the location where the course will be offered. Although there is no required textbook, the course facilitator and/or students will need a computer with (preferably high-speed) internet access to watch the video lectures. It is wise to have paper copies of Fascinating Facts and Portfolio activities as back-up in the event of any issues accessing digital formats. If offering the course using a hybrid or self-paced format, be sure that all students have registered for the course on the [CTI website](#).

## Determine Pacing

This online course contains eight lessons with two or more video lectures, resources, and a portfolio activity for most lessons. Facilitators are encouraged to pace this course appropriately depending upon class and student needs. It is recommended that 30 - 60 minutes be allotted for each lesson to allow students time to master lesson objectives. Length of time for each lesson will depend on whether students are able to complete portfolio activities during the meeting session or as a homework assignment.

## Direct Instruction or Hybrid Formats

If using direct instruction or hybrid formats, it may be wise to divide lessons with several videos to allow time for group discussion. Other options are to chunk the course by offering the first four lessons during one session, (for example, per quarter or semester) and the second four lessons at a different time. This may allow facilitators to ensure students have the foundational knowledge as they begin to consider college as a postsecondary option.

## Peer-to-Peer or Student-Directed Format

If the decision is made to use the peer-to-peer or student-directed format, a start and end date should still be established. The facilitator will need to schedule times for consultation and periodic monitoring to answer questions, checking for understanding, and ensuring students are on track for completion. These check-in sessions should also be an opportunity to determine if support is needed for the portfolio activities.

## Develop Assessments

Facilitators may choose to develop a pre- and post-assessment for each lesson to gauge students' progress. Discussion, portfolio activities, and information that is gathered also provide pertinent transition assessment data that can be used to plan for a student's life after high school. Consider using the videos to develop four to five assessment questions to determine mastery of content per module. Review and modify the quiz at the end of each lesson, as needed.

## Develop Lessons

Begin by determining the purpose, intent, and expectations for course completion. In addition to a pre-assessment, facilitators are encouraged to have a "warm-up" activity related to the lesson to prepare students for instruction. These could include one of the discussion questions, poll questions, or other interactive strategies (such as wearing the colors of a favorite college team, and reviewing college brochures) to engage students. Facilitators will also want to determine an effective grading system for assignments provided in this course.

## During Course Implementation

As with any instruction, it is important to set the tone for success by building on students' prior knowledge, interests, and strengths. Begin by reviewing the syllabus for ***Get Ready for College*** and share the purpose and expectations for completing the course.

### College Readiness Assessment

Have the students watch the introductory video first before completing the College Readiness Assessment. The College Readiness Assessment is the first portfolio activity. This assessment is both a pre-test and a post-test, but does not receive a grade. It is a self-assessment for students and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the course content.

The pre-test will help students determine their present level of knowledge related to preparing for the transition to college. The post-test will allow students to identify areas of growth in preparing for college and specific areas that may need to be reviewed to increase knowledge and skills. Students' individual responses at the conclusion of the course will serve as an indicator of their mastery of course objectives. This activity will help students determine their present level of knowledge when it comes to preparing for the transition to college.



#### Assess

If the decision is made to develop pre- and post-assessments for each lesson, administer the pre-test at the beginning of each session, then use a warm-up activity and/or brief review of previous lessons, as time permits, to prepare students for new content.



#### Watch Videos

The course contains a total of 22 videos and provides over 2 hours of instruction to assist students with the transition to college. Each video is captioned and a transcript is provided.

After completing the video lectures within each lesson, encourage students to take part in whole class or small group discussions. Group discussions are a beneficial component to any course because they allow for further dialogue and assessment of knowledge of a topic. A list of potential discussion questions can be found in the [Course at a Glance](#) (page 5).



## Review Fascinating Facts

Each lesson contains a Fascinating Facts document. Fascinating Facts offer a snapshot of pertinent information relating to individual *Get Ready for College* lessons.

Facilitators can use the Fascinating Facts as study guides to review individual lessons or for a review of the entire course. Another idea is to compile these one-pagers in a binder as a reference for college preparation. Students may refer to them as a quick resource when engaging in activities to enroll in college. Facilitators may use the Fascinating Facts during IEP/transition planning meetings to inform and support discussions related to attending college.



## Supplement Lessons with Expanding Knowledge Activities

Facilitators are encouraged to use strategies such as role play, games, and other activities to enhance course content and accommodate different learning styles. Consider inviting guest speakers such as college students with disabilities, local college representatives, or vocational rehabilitation counselors to further engage students during group discussions.

Each lesson contains Expanding Knowledge activities. This provides additional activities and resources for students desiring to expand knowledge about a given topic. Expanding Knowledge provides the opportunity to further explore individual areas of interest and need for decisions about college.

Facilitators may use Expanding Knowledge activities as homework assignments, have students select one or two for a special project, or employ them as strategies to engage family members in the college planning discussion. The recommended tasks listed for each lesson could be used as coordinating activities to support transition planning and postsecondary goals in the IEP.



## Complete Portfolio Activity

Conclude each lesson with a review of the portfolio activity and administer the post-assessment, if applicable. These portfolio activities allow students to immediately use the knowledge and skills they have learned. Students can create a portfolio by compiling lesson activities and course resources. This portfolio also provides an organized way to archive the course materials for future reference.

By the end of the course, students will have a visual representation of their strengths, preferences, interests, and needs, as well as their plans for the future. The portfolio may be shared with school personnel, family members, agency providers, and any others who can support decisions made about college and other postsecondary goals.

# After Course Implementation

Once the students have viewed the Conclusion video and completed the College Readiness Assessment post-test, facilitators and students should compare results of the pre-test and post-test to determine how the course impacted their knowledge and preparation for the transition to college.



## Portfolios

Facilitators should also allot time to review each student's portfolio. Check for formatting, accuracy, and whether any more instruction is needed. Students are encouraged to have both a digital and paper copy of their portfolio. Be sure that students are able to update their portfolios when needed.

Encourage students to share their portfolio, with an emphasis on their strengths and interests, with their family members, case managers, counselors, and appropriate agency personnel. This information is critical for planning for students' next steps for life after high school.

### Other Items to Include in the Portfolio

In addition to course materials compiled into the portfolio, other items may be included in the portfolio. These items can include (but are not limited to):

- Psychological and educational evaluations (if appropriate)
- IEP
- Medical records (if appropriate)
- Summary of Performance
- Age-appropriate transition assessments (such as work samples)
- Resume
- High school transcript
- Letters of recommendation
- Award certificates
- Certifications (for example, CPR, WISE Certification)

## Evaluation

Provide students the opportunity to share verbally and/or in writing what they gained from ***Get Ready for College***. Preserve these testimonials for future course participants and to assess the effectiveness of the course. Be sure that students and facilitators complete the course evaluation.

Facilitators should make sure that all students receive a certificate of completion to add to their portfolio. To receive a certificate of completion, participants must view the video presentations and resources for each lesson. After students have completed the lessons, they need to fill out the course evaluation. Once the evaluation is completed, students will receive a link for a printable certificate of completion.

Follow-up with students who completed the course after graduation from high school to further document the impact the ***Get Ready for College*** course had on their decision for postsecondary education/training.

# Moving Forward

By following the recommendations in this guide, facilitators will provide students with the knowledge needed to make an informed decision on whether college is for them. The tools in this guide will also prepare students, families, and other IEP team members to plan for the successful transition to postsecondary education and/or training.

## Additional Suggestions

Below is a list of additional suggestions to help guide facilitators in increasing effective transition planning.

### **Share course information**

Share the information and resources from the course with families, colleagues, and others to increase their knowledge, skills, and ability to use effective transition planning practices.

### **Help students and parents understand the differences between high school and postsecondary education**

Share information on these differences early, beginning in middle school, for informed decision-making.

### **Learn more about postsecondary education**

Visit the [Center on Transition Innovations](#) to learn about the most up-to-date resources and information on postsecondary education and training options for students with disabilities.

### **Check out other CTI self-paced courses**

*Get Ready for College* is one course in a free series of online courses for students with disabilities offered by VCU's Center on Transition Innovations. [Get Ready for Your Career](#) and [Get Ready for Independent Living](#) courses support effective practice and prepare students and families for successful transition from school to adult life.

# Glossary

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## **Accommodations**

Any change that removes a barrier to access learning or completing a task (such as setting, presentation, response format) for an individual with a disability. (Lesson 7)

## **ACT**

American College Testing is one of the two major standardized tests that colleges and universities may use as criteria for admission. (Lesson 5)

## **ADA**

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (1990) is a law that protects people with disabilities from discrimination. (Lesson 1)

## **Advanced Studies Diploma**

The diploma that is closely aligned with entrance requirements for four-year universities. (Lesson 2)

## **AP courses**

Advanced placement (AP) is a program of classes developed by the College Board to give high school students an introduction to college-level classes and allow them to gain college credit before graduating high school. (Lesson 5)

## **Applied Associates Degree**

The degree offered by community (two-year) colleges that prepares graduates to enter careers immediately after graduation. It provides a pathway to middle-skills jobs. (Lesson 2)

## **Apprenticeship**

A system of skills training that combines on-the-job training and related classroom instruction under the supervision of a trade professional. (Lesson 2)

## **Associate's Degree**

The degree awarded by a community (two-year) college after completion of study. May be used as a pathway to transfer to a four-year college or university. (Lesson 2)

## **Assistive Technology**

Assistive technology (AT) is any item, piece of equipment or device, bought or made, that helps a person with a disability to maintain, increase, or improve functional capabilities. (Lesson 8)

## **ASVAB**

Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) is a series of tests that measure ability and predict future academic and occupational success in the military. (Lesson 2)

## **Auditory**

Learning style where a person learns best by listening. (Lesson 3)

## **Bachelor's Degree**

A degree that is awarded typically after four years of study at a college or university that prepares a person to work in entry-level or management positions. (Lesson 2)

## **Career & Technical Education**

Career and Technical Education (CTE) provides students of all ages with the academic and technical skills, knowledge, and training necessary to succeed in future careers and to become lifelong learners. There are programs that offer a board-approved license or certificate that will allow entrance into the workforce immediately after high school. (Lesson 2)

## **Community College**

Also known as “junior college,” refers to two-year, non-residential institutions that offer various associate degrees and certificate programs for students who have earned a high school diploma. (Lesson 2)

## **Disability Support Services**

Also referred to as Accessibility Services, this is where students with disabilities may request accommodations in college. (Lesson 6, 7)

## **Distance Learning**

An option for accessing classes or degree programs from home, over the internet, and without physically attending classes. (Lesson 6)

## **Doctoral Degree**

The most advanced degree offered by a college or university that is time and labor intensive, and usually takes several years to achieve. A master’s degree is often required to attempt a doctoral program. (Lesson 2)

## **Documentation**

Educational or medical records, reports, or assessments required by colleges to verify level of disability and need for requested accommodations. (Lesson 7)

## **Employability Skills**

Skills developed as a result of education and training that determines readiness to obtain and maintain a job. (Lesson 2)

## **Extracurricular Activities**

Experiences outside of the academic setting that colleges use to determine admission (such as sports, clubs, volunteer experiences, or community service). (Lesson 5)

## **FAFSA**

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is a form used to determine eligibility for financial aid to pay for college. (Lesson 5)

## **Financial Aid**

Money provided to eligible students, through loans, grants, scholarships, or work-study jobs, to help make college attendance affordable. (Lesson 5)

## **For-Profit College**

Colleges that are run by businesses and receive funding through stockholders and investors. Tuition is typically less than non-profit, but may be more than a public college. (Lesson 2)

## **GED**

General Education Development (GED) refers to a battery of four tests and the diploma awarded that demonstrates mastery of high school knowledge. (Lesson 2)

## **GPA**

Grade Point Average (GPA) is used to determine admission to college, particularly in core academic classes (English, Math, Science, and Social Studies). (Lesson 5)

## **Grants**

Financial aid for college expenses that does not have to be paid back and is based on financial need. In Virginia, examples include Pell Grants, Federal work-study programs, and the Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant. (Lesson 5)

## **IDEA**

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 ensures that all students receive a free, appropriate, public education. It does not apply to students in college. (Lesson 1)

## **Job Corp**

A U.S. Department of Labor program that provides eligible youth an opportunity to gain the experience they need to begin a career or advance to higher education. (Lesson 2)

## **Kinesthetic**

Learning style, also known as tactile, in which learning occurs through physical activity such as hands-on tasks. (Lesson 3)

## **Loans**

Financial aid provided to pay for college expenses that must be paid back with interest. (Lesson 5)

## **Major**

A program of study in college. (Lesson 6)

## **Master's Degree**

Degree awarded for a graduate program that allows students to specialize in an area of study after earning a Bachelor's degree. It usually requires one to two years to complete. (Lesson 2)

## **Middle-Skills Job**

A job that requires more than a high-school diploma but less than a four-year degree. (Lesson 2, 5)

## **Non-Profit College**

Private colleges that depend on tuition and private donors for funds. (Lesson 2)

## **Non-Residential**

Institutions such as community colleges that do not provide on-campus housing. (Lesson 2)

## **Postsecondary Education**

Any education or training received after graduating from high school. (Lesson 2)

## **Private College**

Colleges that are not funded through the state government. They are either for-profit or non-profit. They are run by private contributors or investors responsible for providing funding. (Lesson 2)

## **Public College**

Colleges that receive funding through the state government to assist with tuition costs. These tend to be more affordable than private colleges. (Lesson 2)

## **Residential**

Colleges that offer housing such as dorms on campus or living arrangements sponsored by the institution near the campus. (Lesson 2)

## **SAT**

Formerly known as the Scholastic Aptitude Test, it is one of the two major standardized tests colleges/universities use to determine admission. (Lesson 5)

## **Scholarships**

Financial aid awarded to students based on academic achievement or financial need that does not have to be paid back. (Lesson 5)

## **Section 504**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights law that protects individuals with disabilities from discrimination. It defines the rights of individuals with disabilities to participate in, and have access to, program benefits and services. (Lesson 1)

## **Service Learning**

Service learning experiences enable students to learn and apply academic, social, and personal skills to improve the community, continue individual growth, and develop a lifelong ethic of service. This type of learning can be a pathway to careers that do not require a four-year degree. (Lesson 5)

## **S.M.A.R.T. Goals**

Format for writing a doable goal that is Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely. S.M.A.R.T. goals define what will be done and how. (Lesson 4)

## **Standard Diploma**

The diploma that is closely aligned with entrance requirements for a community college. Many four-year colleges and universities accept standard diplomas. (Lesson 2)

## **Test-Optional**

This term describes colleges that no longer require submission of SAT or ACT scores to be considered for admission. (Lesson 5)

## **Tuition**

Tuition is the fees charged by colleges and universities to receive an education. Tuition may not include books, travel, or room and board. (Lesson 5)

## **University**

A four-year institution of higher education that offers both undergraduate and graduate degrees as well as housing arrangements. (Lesson 2)

## **Virginia Career Readiness Certificate**

Also known as the CRC, is a credential that documents an individual's workplace skills and is used by employers to match potential employees to job openings. (Lesson 2)

## **Visual**

Learning style that is characterized by the desire to see what is presented, such as pictures, images, diagrams, videos or flipcharts. (Lesson 3)

## **WWRC**

Wilson Workforce Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) provides people with disabilities comprehensive, individualized vocational and medical rehabilitation services to prepare for employment. (Lesson 2)



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