



## Glossary of Terms

- ◆ *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):* a law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability.
- ◆ *Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973:* designed to eliminate discrimination on the basis of a disability in any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.
- ◆ *Qualified Individual with a disability* (as it relates to postsecondary education): a person who meets both the disability criteria of Section 504/the ADA and the institution's academic and technical standards for admission or participation in programs and/or activities.
- ◆ *Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):* a law that ensures all children with disabilities receive a free, appropriate public education. This law does not apply to postsecondary institutions.
- ◆ *Individualized Education Program (IEP):* a document that describes what special education and related services you received while attending school.

This fact sheet and others can be found at [www.mdtransition.org](http://www.mdtransition.org) and [www.mdworkforcepromise.org](http://www.mdworkforcepromise.org).

Questions?

Contact the Maryland Department of Disabilities

# Postsecondary Disability Support Services

## Overview

Transitioning from high school to postsecondary education is a difficult and stressful process for most individuals. For individuals with disabilities, it can be a daunting task. Is it the same as high school? Where do I begin? What do I need? To whom should I speak? Am I still covered under IDEA? Are my parents still going to be meeting with the school on my behalf? These are questions commonly asked by individuals with disabilities when they are preparing for college. This fact sheet will assist in answering some of those questions. For additional information, please contact the institution you are interested in attending. You should begin planning your postsecondary education a year or two before you graduate.

## Differences between High School & College

### Am I still covered under IDEA and my IEP/504 Plan?

No. When you were in high school, you were covered under a law called IDEA which provided a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. Under IDEA, it was the school's responsibility to seek you out and provide services.

IDEA does not apply to colleges and universities. They are governed by a set of other laws: the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, and other pertinent state laws. The responsibilities of colleges and universities are significantly different from those of your former high school. If you attended a private school or were home schooled, you may not have had an IEP/504 Plan,

but you may still require services in order to succeed in college.

The most significant difference is you (not your parents) will have responsibilities as a college student that you did not have as a high school student. These laws make it your responsibility to request services and provide appropriate documentation of your disability. You must be actively involved in the process. The responsibility now rests on you.

### Will I get the same accommodations as high school?

Not necessarily, as your high school IEP/504 plan does not carry over to college. The college will determine what accommodations you will receive after your documentation has been reviewed and information has been gathered from you.

## Receiving Services at College

### Where do I go for services?

Every college/university has an individual who assists students with disabilities. This individual is often in the Disability Support Services (DSS) office. Please consult your institution's directory for the appropriate location. To receive accommodations and/or services, you must first self-identify to your college/university disability service offices. It is your responsibility to talk to your college/university about your needs.

### When should I request services?

Although you may request accommodations from your college/university at any time, it is recommended that you make an appointment with the appropriate individual as soon

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## Receiving Services at College (continued)

as possible and no later than one month before the semester begins. Colleges/universities are committed to working with and providing you with reasonable services and accommodations. However, arranging services and accommodations takes time. Some academic adjustments may take more time to provide than others. You should follow your institution's procedures to ensure that there is enough time to review your request and provide an appropriate academic adjustment.

Accommodations cannot be made retroactively. Policies concerning students who are in poor academic standing are the same for individuals with and without disabilities. Check your institution's policy for how this may affect you.

### What kind of documentation do I need to provide?

Schools may set reasonable standards for documentation. Some schools may require more documentation than others, but all schools will require you to provide documentation prepared by an appropriate qualified professional. You will be responsible for any fees associated with obtaining required documentation.

Essential elements of documentation include the following:

- ◆ A diagnostic statement identifying the disability.
- ◆ A description of the diagnostic methodology used.
- ◆ A description of the current functional limitations as it relates to both academic and residential settings.
- ◆ A description of the expected progression or stability of the disability.
- ◆ A description of current and past accommodations, services and/or medications.
- ◆ Recommendations for accommodations, adaptive devices, assistive services, compensatory strategies, and/or collateral support services.

Although an IEP or Section 504 plan may help identify services that have been effective for you, it generally is not sufficient documentation for a postsecondary institution. There is a difference in the laws and postsecondary education presents different demands than high school education. What you need to meet these new demands may be different.

## Receiving Accommodations at College

### What accommodations/modifications are provided?

Accommodations are modifications to the academic requirements that are necessary to ensure equal access to qualified individuals. Reasonable accommodations may include extended time on tests, books in alternate format, sign language interpreters, screen-readers, voice recognition, and other assistive technology. Your DSS office will work with you to set up reasonable accommodations. Be aware that an accommodation cannot be provided if it creates a fundamental alteration of the coursework.

### What accommodations are not provided?

Accommodations that are of a personal nature or will impact the essential requirements of the individual program of study will not be provided. These include personal care attendant, private tutors, and waiving of required coursework.

## Other Considerations

### Will I be required to follow the same requirements as others?

Yes. Colleges and universities are not obligated or able to change requirements that are essential to their programs. Having a disability that makes specific course content difficult will not automatically result in such courses being waived. In some cases, course substitutions may be accepted for students with disabilities. This should be discussed and determined when you enter college.

### What will I need to do to earn a college degree?

You will be required to meet the requirements of your program of study as mandated by the state of Maryland and the institution you are attending.

## Resources / References

### *Association of Higher Education & Disability*

Voice / Text: (704) 947-7779

Email: ahead@ahead.org

Website: www.ahead.org

### *HEATH Resource Center of George*

#### *Washington University*

Email: AskHEATH@gwu.edu

Website: www.heath.gwu.edu

### *Maryland Department of Disabilities*

Voice / TTY: (410) 767-3660

Voice / TTY: (800) 637-4113

Email: mdod@mdod.state.md.us

Website: www.mdod.maryland.gov

### *Maryland Higher Education Commission*

Voice: (410) 260-4500 or (800) 974-0203

TTY: (800) 735-2258

Email: osfamail@mhec.state.md.us

Website: www.mhec.state.md.us

### *U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights*

Voice: (800) 421-3481

TTY: (877) 521-2172

Email: OCR@ed.gov

Website: www.ed.gov/about/offices/  
list/ocr/index.html