

College Visit Checklist for Students With Disabilities

Learning
Disabilities



Congratulations

on taking the first steps to furthering your education and creating a brighter future for yourself. Finding the right fit for your higher education experience is a long journey and may seem even more challenging for students with disabilities, but we are here to help. This guide serves as a tool to use during college visits to help you determine if the college or university will meet your specific needs and will be a good fit for you.

The guide is organized into sections based on your education route:



Two-Year: Junior Colleges/ Community Colleges

Learning Spaces and Service Animals -----	Page 2
Classroom Accommodations and Accommodation Process -----	Page 3
Dining Facilities and Campus Culture -----	Page 4



Four-Year Colleges and Universities

Learning Spaces -----	Page 5
Classroom Accommodations and Accommodation Process -----	Page 6
Housing, Dining Facilities and Serviced Animals -----	Page 7
Campus Culture -----	Page 8



Notes and Resources

Notes and Important Contact Information -----	Page 9
Resources -----	Page 10



Learning Spaces

- ☐ Schedule a tour of the facilities, including several buildings where you may have classes or lectures.
- ☐ Ask for a map of the campus so you can mark notes as you tour, to help orient yourself on the grounds.
- ☐ Locate the library, tutoring center and career services center. These are all excellent, and usually free, tools that you may need.
- ☐ Determine the best place for you to sit in classrooms/lecture halls to reduce distractions.
 - Be sure you can view a projector screen or whiteboard from this location.
 - Sit in chairs in different classrooms and lecture halls to determine any negative sensory input.
 - Identify standing room for movement in the lecture hall or classroom if needed.
 - Locate the exit points in the classroom, in case you need to leave quickly.
 - Determine the light source for positive or negative sensory input.
- ☐ Check the occupancy requirements of each classroom or lecture hall (usually posted near an exit or entrance to the room) to get a rough estimate of the class or lecture size.
- ☐ Check for a microphone in the classroom and request that the professor use one if needed.
- ☐ Request transcripts of lectures if preferred or needed.
- ☐ If you get negative sensory input from a specific climate, ask your tour guide if they perceive building, classroom, and lecture hall temperatures to run hot or cold.

Service Animals

- ☐ If you require the use of a service animal, be sure to determine the process for bringing a service animal onto campus, and where they are allowed.
- ★ NOTE: Service animals are allowed under ADA/504 with a documented disability. Colleges and universities cannot prevent you from bringing your service animal. An Emotional Support animal, however, does not meet the same requirements.

Notes:



Classroom Accommodations and Accommodations Process

Once you identify what office you'll need to go through to receive accommodations, ask these questions:

- ☐ How long does the intake process for accommodations usually take?
 - ☐ When should you start the process?
 - ☐ What documentation will be required for the college to determine reasonable accommodations?
 - ☐ How long does the determination process take?
 - ☐ When should you expect to receive an accommodation letter?
 - ☐ What is the dispute resolution process like if a professor refuses to acknowledge the accommodations or implement them in their classroom?
 - ☐ How should a student file a complaint if an approved accommodation is refused?
 - ☐ How should you notify the office of concerns regarding your accommodations?
 - ☐ What should you do if your accommodations need to change?
 - ☐ What type of training does college staff receive with regard to their responsibilities under ADA and 504?
 - ☐ Do you need documentation to use assistive technology in the classroom?
 - ☐ Do you need a different mode of communication, such as speech-to-text or text-to-speech, in order to communicate more effectively?
 - ☐ Can accommodations be provided in a course with a discussion section or required verbal participation?
 - ☐ Can Student Services accommodate for a decreased workload if you need more time and can't handle a full workload?
- ★ NOTE: This may impact your financial aid eligibility.
- ☐ Are alternate testing locations provided, or can you request an alternate testing location?

Notes:



Dining Facilities and Campus Culture

Dining Facilities

Depending on your medical needs, it may be essential to seek accommodations for dining. Be sure to tour the dining facilities and ask questions.

☐ Is there "low glycemic index food or sugar-free" food available regularly?

☐ Is there "gluten-free food" available regularly?

☐ What documentation is needed to show your dietary requirements?

★ NOTE: Determine if the documentation is required from an allergist or a primary care physician.

☐ If the school requires a dining plan, can the dining plan expense be reduced or eliminated if dietary restrictions cannot be accommodated?

Campus Culture

☐ Speak to a student and a professor about the school/college/university culture.

☐ Speak to an admissions counselor about application process accommodations if needed.

☐ Discuss the disability self-disclosure process at the college/school/university.

☐ Find out which office to go through to request accommodations, such as the student services office or the Dean of Students office.

☐ Request that the accommodations office be added to the tour.

☐ Speak to the Dean of Students to understand the culture at your prospective college/school/university.

- Disclose as much or as little information about yourself as you see fit.

☐ Possible questions to ask:

- How do professors typically respond to students with disabilities who raise complaints?

- How does the college communicate with professors about changes regarding ADA/504 policies?

Notes:



Learning Spaces

- ☐ Schedule a tour of the facilities, including several buildings where you may have classes or lectures.
- ☐ Ask for a map of the campus so you can mark notes as you tour, to help orient yourself on the grounds.
- ☐ Locate the library, tutoring center, and career services center. These are all excellent, and usually free, tools that you may need.
- ☐ Determine where in the classroom/lecture hall is the best place for you to sit to reduce distractions.
 - Be sure you can view a projector screen or whiteboard from this location.
 - Sit in chairs in different classrooms and lecture halls to determine any negative sensory input.
 - Identify standing room for movement in the lecture hall or classroom if you need to.
 - Locate the exit points in the classroom, in case you need to leave quickly.
 - Determine the light source for positive or negative sensory input.
- ☐ Check the occupancy requirements of each classroom or lecture hall (usually posted near an exit or entrance to the room) in order to get a rough estimate of the class or lecture size.
- ☐ Check for a microphone in the classroom and request that the professor use one if needed.
- ☐ Request transcripts of lectures if preferred or needed.
- ☐ If you get negative sensory input from a specific climate, ask your tour guide if they perceive building, classroom, and lecture hall temperatures to run hot or cold.

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Classroom Accommodations and Accommodation Process

Classroom Accommodations/ Accommodations Process

Once you identify what office you'll need to go through to receive accommodations, ask these questions:

- ☐ How long does the intake process for accommodations usually take?
- ☐ When should you start the process?
- ☐ What documentation will be required for the college to determine reasonable accommodations?
- ☐ How long does the determination process take?
- ☐ When should you expect to receive an accommodation letter?
- ☐ What is the dispute resolution process like if a professor refuses to acknowledge the accommodations or implement them in their classroom?
- ☐ How should a student file a complaint if an approved accommodation is refused?
- ☐ How should you notify the office of concerns regarding your accommodations?
- ☐ What should you do if your accommodations need to change?
- ☐ What type of training does college staff receive with regard to their responsibilities under ADA and 504?
- ☐ Do you need documentation to use assistive technology in the classroom?
- ☐ Do you need a different mode of communication such as speech-to-text or text-to-speech in order to communicate more effectively?
- ☐ Can accommodations be provided in a course with a discussion section or required verbal participation?
- ☐ Can Student Services accommodate for a decreased workload if you need more time and can't handle a full workload?
★ NOTE: This may impact your financial aid eligibility.
- ☐ Are alternate testing locations provided, or can you request an alternate testing location?

Notes:



Housing, Dining Facilities and Service Animals

Housing

- ☐ If you need a single room for medical reasons or for disability reasons, ask what documentation you will need to provide to the college.

★ NOTE: You should not be asked to pay more because this is related to your disability.

- ☐ Can the housing expense be eliminated if accommodations cannot be met?

Dining Facilities

Depending on your medical impairment, it may be essential to seek accommodations from dining. So, be sure to check out the cafeteria.

- ☐ Is there "low glycemic index" food or "sugar-free" food available regularly?
- ☐ Is there "gluten-free" food available regularly?
- ☐ What documentation is needed to show your dietary requirements?

★ NOTE: Determine if the documentation is required from an allergist or a primary care physician.

- ☐ If the school requires a dining plan, can the dining plan expense be reduced or eliminated if dietary restrictions cannot be accommodated?

Service Animals

- ☐ If you require the use of a service animal, be sure to determine the process for bringing a service animal onto campus, and where they are allowed.

★ NOTE: Service animals are allowed under ADA/504 with a documented disability. Colleges and universities cannot prevent you from bringing your service animal. An Emotional Support animal, however, may not meet the same requirements.

Notes:



Campus Culture

- ☐ Speak to a student and a professor about the school/college/university culture.
- ☐ Speak to an admissions officer about accommodations that can be given during the application process if needed.
- ☐ Discuss the disability self-disclosure process at the college/school/university.
- ☐ Find out which office to go through to request accommodations, such as the student services office or the Dean of Students office.
- ☐ Request that the accommodations office be added to the tour.
- ☐ Talk to the Dean of Students to understand the culture at your prospective college/school/university. Disclose as much or as little information about yourself as you see fit.
- ☐ Possible questions to ask:
 - Are there disability-specific student organizations or peer support services on campus?
 - How do professors typically respond to students with disabilities who raise complaints?
 - How does the college communicate with professors about changes regarding ADA/504 policies?

Notes:



Notes and Contact Information

Notes:

Important Contact Information:

Name:

Title:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

Name:

Title:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

Name:

Title:

Email Address:

Phone Number:



Additional Resources

For additional information on transitioning to college as a student with a learning disability, check out these resources:

Autism Speaks: "Ways I Deal with College Stress as a Student on the Spectrum"

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/life-spectrum/ways-i-deal-college-stress-student-spectrum>

Coping strategy tips for individuals with sensory processing disorder:

<https://www.stairwaytostem.org/autistic-sensory-sensitivity-on-campus-part-four-coping-strategies/>

Virginia Department for Aging and Disability Services (DARS):

<https://www.dars.virginia.gov/#gsc.tab=0>

I'm Determined

<https://www.imdetermined.org/>

The Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC):

<https://peatc.org/>

Postsecondary Education Rehabilitation Transition (PERT) Program

<https://www.wwrc.virginia.gov/pert.htm>

Stairway to STEM: Autistic Sensory Sensitivity on Campus

<https://www.stairwaytostem.org/autistic-sensory-sensitivity-on-campus-part-one-introduction/>

Stairway to STEM: Autistic and Transitioning to College? What Students and Families Need to Know

<https://www.stairwaytostem.org/autistic-and-transitioning-to-college-what-students-and-families-need-to-know/>

Stairway to STEM: Campus Tour for Autistic Students

<https://www.stairwaytostem.org/long-form-uc-davis-campus-tour-for-autistic-students/>

Stairway to STEM: Ten Things for Autistic Students to Remember When Choosing College Classes

<https://www.stairwaytostem.org/five-things-for-autistic-students-to-remember-when-choosing-college-classes/>

Stairway to STEM: The Ultimate College Guide: Lists, Schedules and Calendars for Autistic Students

<https://www.stairwaytostem.org/the-ultimate-college-guide-lists-schedules-and-calendars-for-autistic-students/>

Think College

<https://thinkcollege.net/>

U.S Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services Blog:

<https://sites.ed.gov/osers/>



