

# COLLEGE PLANNING

FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES



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## A Supplement to College Prep for Juniors and Seniors

This publication will guide you through unique steps you should take to become an effective self-advocate, complete the college admissions process, and understand what to do after you select a college.

For general college-planning information, ask your school counselor for a copy of our *College Prep publication* or order one for free via “About Us” at [EducationQuest.org](https://www.educationquest.org).

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-ADVOCACY

In college, **you** will be responsible for identifying and requesting support services.

To be an effective self-advocate, you must understand your disability, know how it impacts your learning, and become comfortable with describing your disability and academic-related needs to others.

These practices will help you move in that direction:

**Review your case file** with your parents/guardians and Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan team. Ask for copies of your IEP/504, summary of performance, multi-disciplinary report, and other assessment reports.

Ask these questions:

- What is my disability and what terms are used to describe it?
- How does it affect how I learn?
- What are my academic strengths?
- How do I learn best?
- What strategies and accommodations can I use to help me learn?
- How can I get an updated assessment as a junior or senior?



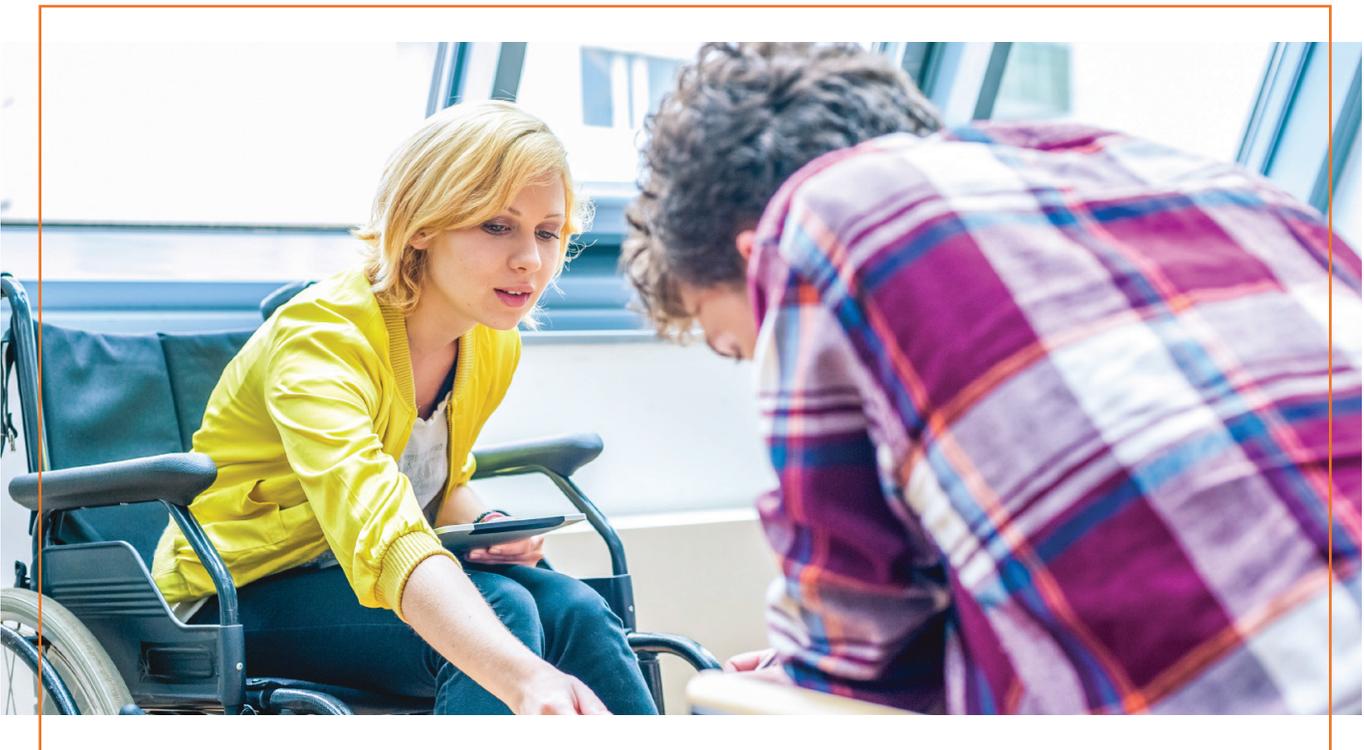
**Take an active part in the discussions at your IEP/504 meetings.** Understanding your learning strengths and weaknesses can influence your IEP planning and the services you may request in college.

**Before each IEP/504 meeting:**

- Review the report from your last meeting.
  - Understand the goals listed.
  - Practice saying how you accomplished the goals.
- Establish new goals and be prepared to state them.

**At the IEP/504 meeting:**

- Summarize your past goals and accomplishments.
- State your new goals and ask for feedback.
- Request the support you will need to accomplish your goals.
- Ask what accommodations you will need in classes and for standardized testing such as the PSAT, SAT and ACT.



# CONSIDERATIONS DURING THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

As a student with a disability, you have unique considerations as you prepare for college admission. This section will help you through the process.

## FINDING THE RIGHT COURSE OF STUDY

Follow these steps to explore potential career options.

- 1) Ask your school counselor and IEP manager about career interest inventories and transition planning assessments to help you explore your career interests. Ask how your learning needs may influence these career areas.
- 2) Discuss career options with your parents/guardians and people working in jobs that interest you. Look into job shadowing, attend career fairs, and explore volunteer opportunities in your areas of interest.
- 3) Become involved in extracurricular activities. Volunteer and paid work can teach responsibility, reliability, and teamwork.

## PREPARING FOR COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS

### ACT and SAT

You'll take the ACT exam in the spring of your junior year and may want to take the SAT as well. Many students retake the exam(s) in the fall of their senior year to increase their score.

To request accommodations for these exams, visit [actstudent.org/register/disab](http://actstudent.org/register/disab) or [sat.collegeboard.org/register/for-students-with-disabilities](http://sat.collegeboard.org/register/for-students-with-disabilities).

### Accuplacer and Companion

If you plan to attend a community college, the school may require you to take a pre-enrollment assessment such as Accuplacer which tests your knowledge in math, reading, and writing. A paper-and-pencil version of the test, called Companion, is also available.

For more information, visit [accuplacer.collegeboard.org](http://accuplacer.collegeboard.org). To request accommodations, contact your college's test center.

#### Accommodations for the ACT, SAT, Accuplacer, and Companion may include:

- Individual administration of the test
- An mp3 file or an e-file that goes to an e-reader
- Special answer sheets
- Extended testing time and breaks
- Braille editions

## SELECTING A COLLEGE

Once you narrow your college choices, meet with the disability services coordinator at each college to determine services and accommodations that may be available. This may help determine which college will best meet your needs.

### Questions to ask the disability services coordinator:

- What documentation must I bring to identify myself as a student with a disability? How current must it be?
- Are the accommodations I need available?
- How do I access textbooks in a format that accommodates my disability?
- Is tutoring provided? What is the cost?
- Are waivers or substitutions granted to students who, because of their disabilities, cannot pass certain courses?
- Are courses in basic skills or study skills offered?
- Is there an adaptive technology lab on campus?
- Will I have both a disabilities advisor and a regular academic advisor?



### Questions you may be asked:

- What is your disability?
- How does it affect your learning?
- How comfortable are you in discussing accommodations with teachers?
- What are your academic strengths?
- In what areas do you have difficulty or problems?
- What accommodations will you need?
- What kind of support services have you used in high school? What was most helpful?



## APPLYING FOR ADMISSION AND FINANCIAL AID

As you visit colleges, ask about deadlines and the process for applying for admission, financial aid, and college-based scholarships. Ask if scholarships are available for students with disabilities.

### How disability-related expenses may affect financial aid

After you apply for financial aid, inform the college of your disability-related expenses. Financial aid will not cover expenses already covered by assisting agencies.

Possible disability-related expenses include:

- Special education equipment related to your disability and its maintenance
- Special transportation
- Medical expenses relating directly to your disability not covered by insurance
- Services for personal care attendants

### SEEK HELP

The financial aid process may seem overwhelming, so ask for help from the college financial aid office or EducationQuest.

# STEPS TO FOLLOW ONCE YOU SELECT A COLLEGE

Once you select a college, you must perform these tasks to receive disability-related services:

## 1) GATHER REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION.

- Request a copy of your high school IEP/504 Plan and your most recent assessment.
- Request an original copy of your diagnosis from your physician or other psychological service provider.

## 2) MEET WITH THE DISABILITY SERVICES COORDINATOR AT YOUR COLLEGE.

- Review the documentation and discuss possible accommodations.
- Keep in mind that federal guidelines do NOT state that all students with a disability must receive ALL accommodations – especially accommodations that would fundamentally change a college program or impose an undue burden on the college.



### 3) REQUEST ACCOMMODATIONS.

You must contact the disability services coordinator each term or semester to arrange accommodations. Although the college may not always agree to your specific request, they are required by law to provide an effective and reasonable accommodation.

Potential accommodations include:

- Early registration
- Notetakers, tutoring, proofreaders, and editing services
- Textbooks and other educational materials in alternative form, such as Braille, e-files, mp3 files, or other technologies
- Educational materials in advance
- Sign language, oral interpreting, and real-time captioning services
- Test-taking alternatives such as extended time, taped tests, oral tests, alternate test site, elimination of computer scored answer sheets, and use of a computer or spell-checking device
- Closed-caption devices, amplified telephone receivers, low-vision reading aids, mp3 files, Braille devices, and computer enhancements
- Equal access to classes, activities, and services
- Opportunity to make up quizzes, exams, or assignments if the absence was disability related
- Preferential seating in classroom
- Extended timeline to complete specific courses and to complete certification or degree requirements
- Option to take foreign culture class instead of foreign language

### 4) BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT.

**Register for campus orientation.** The disability services coordinator may also provide an orientation.

**Determine where to go and who to contact in case of an emergency.** If you have medical needs, inform the college of any advance preparation that should be in place.

**Ask the admissions office if a summer transition program is offered.**

**Obtain a copy of your class schedule** and visit all buildings where your classes will be held. If necessary, ask for accommodations to access the buildings.

**If you are commuting and will drive yourself,** become familiar with parking facilities and procedures.

**Consider signing a release of information** so the school has permission to share information with parents/guardians.

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU SUCCEED

##### TRIO Student Support Services

Ask if your college offers this federally-funded program.

##### Nebraska VR

877-637-3422 or

<http://vr.nebraska.gov/>

##### Nebraska Commission for the

##### Blind and Visually Impaired

877-809-2419 or

[www.ncbvi.ne.gov/services](http://www.ncbvi.ne.gov/services)

##### Nebraska Commission for the

##### Deaf and Hard of Hearing

800-545-6244 v/tty or

[www.ncdhh.ne.gov](http://www.ncdhh.ne.gov)

##### WINAHEAD

<https://www.ahead.org/about-ahead/about-overview/affiliates/winahead>

#### WANT TO KNOW YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND WHO TO CONTACT FOR DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS?

Visit <https://eqf.org/SWDrights>.

# EDUCATIONQUEST CAN HELP YOU START YOUR JOURNEY TO COLLEGE.

We're a nonprofit organization that provides *FREE* services and programs for Nebraska students and families including:

- College-prep information and tools at **EducationQuest.org**
- One-on-one help at college planning offices in Omaha, Lincoln, Kearney, and Scottsbluff
- Outreach services for community agency clients
- Statewide efforts such as college fairs, financial aid programs, and *Apply2College* campaign
- *Look2College*, *KnowHow2GO*, and *Exploring College* programs for younger students.

We also provide need-based scholarships for students referred by colleges or community agencies, and award *College Access Grants* to Nebraska high schools.

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FOR **FREE HELP** WITH COLLEGE PLANNING,  
CONTACT THE LOCATION NEAREST YOU.

**OMAHA**

Rockbrook Village  
11031 Elm St.  
402.391.4033  
888.357.6300

**LINCOLN**

1300 O St.  
402.475.5222  
800.303.3745

**KEARNEY**

2706 Second Ave.  
308.234.6310  
800.666.3721

**SCOTTSBLUFF**

1601 E 27th St.  
800.303.3745,  
ext. 6654



EducationQuest.org

Materials and resources are available in Spanish.  
Materiales y recursos disponibles en español.

