

ACCESSING DISABILITY SERVICES

ACTIVITIES 36-43

Goal: You will understand what is required to obtain disability services in college.

Objectives -- You will:

- ▶ **Learn about** the disability law that affects what you must do to obtain support services in college in Activity 36.
- ▶ **Understand** the requirements and demands of college course work when you complete Activity 37.
- ▶ **Research** disability services available at several colleges and compare them in Activities 38 and 39.
- ▶ **Understand** support services in college and how to obtain those services in Activities 40-43.

You are now either in the process of being admitted to a college or you already have been admitted. As you have been learning, disability services in college are different than those in high school. This section will teach you about the rights and responsibilities you will have as a college student. You will also explore the difficulty of college course work and consider accommodations that may assist you. You will research through reading and interviewing. Use the Post-ITT Website as a gateway to this new knowledge!

At the end of these activities you will have met with a disability services coordinator and accomplished the tasks necessary to receive services.

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ACTIVITY 36

Learn about your legal rights and your responsibilities as a student in high school and in college according to the federal laws: the *IDEA*, *Section 504* and the *ADA*.

VOCABULARY

- *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*
- *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504)*
- *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*



Visit the Post-ITT Website and click on **Disability Law**. Click on each of the following laws:

- *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*
- *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504)*
- *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*

Review the summary statements, questions and answers for each law. You may want to continue reading detailed information on these laws.

Click on Comparisons between the *IDEA*, *Section 504* and the *ADA*. In this section and in the summary statements mentioned above, find the information you need to answer the following questions.

- Which of the three laws apply to public schools? To colleges?
- What is the purpose of each law?
- Who is protected under each law?
- Which law no longer applies after high school graduation?
- Whose responsibility is it to identify students having academic difficulty in public schools? In colleges?
- How is eligibility to receive services determined for a high school student? College student?
- Under each law, who is responsible to advocate for students with disabilities?



Discuss what you learned with a special education teacher or a guidance counselor (or in a classroom discussion). As a college student, what will you do to qualify for disability services?

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ACTIVITY 37

Learn about the requirements and demands of college course work.

VOCABULARY

- syllabus

In this activity you will use the Post-ITT Website to explore assignments, readings and expectations for college classes.



Go to the Post-ITT Website. Click on **Colleges** and select a college of interest to you.

Visit one of the classes. Read the course description and syllabus. Be aware that colleges structure their websites in different ways. Some may not have course syllabi online. You may have to try several colleges and several courses to do this activity.

Hint: Use the website search feature to search for “syllabus” or “course description”. Don't get discouraged. If you are unable to find a syllabus on a college website, use a college bookstore (see below) to review a textbook.



Try to find the information on at least two freshman courses (100 level). With each course, list all of the requirements a student must complete to pass. Think about how these courses differ from high school.



Visit a local college bookstore and look through a textbook for a 100 level course. Make a note of:

- The number of pages
- How long it takes you to read a page
- The length of a chapter
- The use of pictures, illustration and study aids
- The difficulty of the vocabulary
- The length of sentences



Ask yourself how this book differs from those you used in high school. How will you get the information you need from this text?

Discuss with a teacher or parent what you discovered and what you think it means for you.

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ACTIVITY 38

Learn about the range of services available through disability services. Learn how colleges may provide different services.

VOCABULARY

- disability services
- academic accommodations

Nearly all colleges have an office designated to assist students with disabilities who have identified themselves and requested accommodations. This office may be called Disability Services, Disability Support Services, Student Services, Access Services or other names.



Select the **Colleges** tab on the navigation bar on the Post-ITT Website. Research and write down who and how you can contact the disability services office for one or more colleges of interest. A form is available for Activity 38, on the Post-ITT Website.*

Next, read about the various accommodations and support services available at this college. Either print out this section or take notes to summarize those services.



Write a paragraph or an outline to compare the differences and similarities in support services at each of these schools.



Discuss what you learned with a parent or a special education teacher or guidance counselor.

*Go to the **Post-ITT Website**, click **Guidance Activities**, select **Forms** and choose **Activity 38 worksheet**.

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ACTIVITY 39

Learn about assistive (or adaptive) technology and your need for these services.

VOCABULARY

- assistive or adaptive technology

In Activities 10-17 you learned how assistive technologies can accommodate limitations caused by a disability. This activity helps you explore the assistive technology services available at colleges.



Using the Glossary look up a definition for assistive technology. Write the definition in your own words. List several examples.

Use Post-ITT to research the types of assistive technologies available at a college of interest.

Read the assistive technology section and take notes on any equipment that you may have used or you have developed an interest in as a result of Activities 10-17.



Repeat with a second college of interest. Compare the differences and similarities between the schools.



Visit the DO-IT site on the Internet at <http://www.washington.edu/doi/>. Click on the highlighted word **technology** and explore the information available on adaptive technology used by DO-IT scholars.

Visit the website of the Assistive Technology Resource Center in your state by using the index in Post-ITT. Start with the **Resources tab** and follow the links for assistive technology.



Discuss with a family member, your special education teacher, or guidance counselor how assistive technology will help you succeed in college.

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ACTIVITY 40

Learn how to qualify for disability services at college.

Prerequisite: Completion of Activities 1-9.

Different colleges may have different requirements, but as you have learned, all colleges require documentation of a disability in order to provide accommodations. WAPED, the professional organization of disability service coordinators in Washington State, has developed guidelines for the documentation required to be eligible for accommodations. Compare your documentation with these guidelines, using the *Disability Documentation Evaluation Worksheet* (Activity 40 worksheet on the Post-ITT Website*).



Obtain a copy of your current disability documentation. You will need the assistance of a teacher or parent/guardian.

Obtain a copy of the appropriate disability documentation guidelines from the Post-ITT Website.



Using the Disability Documentation Evaluation Worksheet, compare each required element from the guidelines to your own documentation. Work with a family member, school counselor, or special education teacher. Determine if you have questions for a disability services coordinator or if there is a need for additional information in your documentation. **If your disability documentation does not meet the requirements, you will need to obtain additional documentation.** For more detail see Post-ITT Website Resources.



Select one or two colleges from the Post-ITT Website that you are considering attending. Follow the links on Post-ITT or college web pages to learn about how to qualify for disability services.



Think about and discuss with your teacher or family member how qualifying for services in college is different than qualifying for services in high school.



Write a summary of the action steps to get the necessary documentation.

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Discuss your action steps with a teacher or guidance counselor. Identify which steps you will take while you are still in high school to prepare yourself for eligibility. Record those activities on your *Planning Calendar* (see Activity 24) and take action to accomplish each activity.

*Go to the Post-ITT Website, click **Guidance Activities**, select **Forms** and choose **Activity 40 Worksheet**.

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ACTIVITY 41

Make an appointment with a disability services (DS) coordinator.

VOCABULARY

- disability services

Prerequisite: Completion of Activities 1-9.



Identify one or two colleges that you are considering.

Using the contact information from Activity 38, compose an email or letter to each disability services coordinator with the following information:

- Introduce yourself, your grade, and the name of your high school.
- Tell why you are interested in the college.
- Inform the coordinator of your specific disability, your learning strengths, and the accommodations that you currently receive.
- Request the specific requirements that this college has for disability documentation.
- Request a time to meet with the disability services coordinator through a phone conference.

Arrange for a teacher, counselor, or a career counselor to be present during your scheduled phone conference.

Before sending your email message or letter, have it checked by a teacher, counselor, or parent.

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ACTIVITY 42

Coordinate a phone conference with a disability services (DS) coordinator.

Prerequisite: Completion of Activities 1-9, 38, 40, and 41.

Be prepared for your telephone conversation with the disability services coordinator(s) you contacted.

In Activity 31 you researched accommodations at college.



Visit the Post-ITT Website and review information on disability services at the college(s) where you have interviews. Read the procedures used by the disability services office and the accommodations that are frequently provided.



Be ready to provide information about your academic strengths and difficulties. Consider:

- What are your academic strengths?
- What is your disability?
- How does it interfere with your learning?
- What kind of support services have you used in high school?

Make a list of the questions or concerns you will address with the disability services coordinator. Some examples are:

- How do students contact you for help?
- How often will I work with you?
- How are my instructors informed of the accommodations I will need?
- What are my instructors told about my disability?
- What documentation will I need to establish my eligibility for services? Use the *Disability Documentation Evaluation Worksheet* developed in Activity 40.
- If I were to apply to and be accepted at (college name), when would be the best time to have my first meeting with you?
- Please give me an idea of the support services that I may be able to receive.

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Now its time to make your call!

Along with the teacher, counselor and/or parent, talk with the DS coordinator over a speaker phone. Ask your interview questions and write down the answers (or ask the person with you to write the answers so you can concentrate on the conversation). When the interview is complete, ask for clarification on any points you didn't understand. Ask the disability services coordinator about the next steps you should follow. Of course, remember to thank everyone for their time and help.



Discuss your interview with the adult who participated with you and write down on your *Planning Calendar* (see Activity 24) important dates reflecting action you must take.



Take action on each task you have recorded.

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ACTIVITY 43

After your admission to a college is confirmed, meet with disability services to establish your eligibility for services.

Prerequisite: Activities 36-42 and Admission to a college.

Once you have been admitted to a college, it is important to meet with a disability services coordinator at the earliest possible date. This will allow you to resolve any difficulty with your documentation and give the disability services office sufficient time to arrange for accommodations.

Accommodations such as books on tape and Braille text may require 4 to 6 months.



Schedule an appointment to meet on campus with the disability services coordinator. If you are still uncertain, be sure to ask what type of information and documentation you must bring to this meeting to establish your eligibility for service. See Activity 40-2. Take notes or ask to record this conversation.

Present your documentation and discuss anything you need to add to the information you currently have.

Talk about the responsibilities and procedures that you as a college student must follow to access support services.

Discuss the accommodations you think you are eligible to receive.

Write down any tasks that you will need to complete and record all deadlines on your *Planning Calendar*. (See Activity 24.)



Review what you learned and tasks to be completed with your teacher, parent and/or counselor.



Take action on each task you have recorded.