WINAHEAD

Western Iowa & Nebraska Association on Higher Education And Disability

AHEAD Association on Higher Education And Disability®

TRANSITION

to College for Students with Disabilities

This publication compares the differences between high school and college settings and looks at the information students, parents and teachers must know for students to be successful in their educational college experience.

Students with disabilities entering the world of college education may find the experience overwhelming and intimidating.

When a student moves from high school to college, reality as he or she knows it is forever altered.

Statement of Intent

WinAhead member institutions desire to create an accessible community where individuals with disabilities have an equal opportunity to pursue their educational goals, limited only by their abilities, not their disabilities.

Each institution is committed to:

1. Providing direct, reasonable accommodations and support services for individuals with disabilities.
2. Encouraging self-determination, independence and personal responsibility for students with disabilities.
3. Providing resources, advocacy, collaborative services, and information to their various constituencies.
4. Promoting an open and welcoming environment around campus for individuals with disabilities.
5. Informing and educating institutional communities about disability-related laws, rules, regulations, and policies.

College is Different from High School

For students with a disability, there are three major differences between high school and college.

1. Students must become self-advocates. No longer will someone else see that their needs are addressed.
2. Different laws apply in college than in the public school system.
3. The goals and responsibilities of the public school system are different than those of the college setting.

In college, students are expected to exercise greater self-determination and to be more independent than in high school.

For many students and their parents, this change can be threatening and confusing.



COMPARISON: High School vs. College

ADVOCACY

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
The student's parent serves as the primary advocate.	The student must assume the responsibility for his/her own advocacy.

LAWS THAT APPLY

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
• Individuals With Disabilities Act (IDEA).	
• Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA).	• Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
• Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Subpart D).	• Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Subpart E).
• Civil Rights Restoration Act.	• Civil Rights Restoration Act.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
IDEA – a funding law enforced by the U.S. Department of Education (U.S. DOE).	ADA/§504 - A civil rights law enforced by the Office of Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Justice (U.S. DOJ) and also the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

SYSTEM GOALS: MANDATORY VS. VOLUNTARY

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
A student covered by IDEA has a legal entitlement to an education regardless of disability.	An individual has a civil right to have access to the educational programs and services of an institution.
	A college education is not an entitlement.
Education must be offered in the least restrictive environment.	Institutions are obligated to provide access to, and opportunity to participate in the programs and services available. To facilitate access, the institution is obligated to provide reasonable accommodations.
Public schools are mandated to provide special/regular education services to ensure that the student has a free, appropriate public education.	Institutions have no obligation to guarantee an education. A college education is a voluntary opportunity; it also includes costs (e.g. tuition, fees, room, board, etc.).
The school is to do everything it can to help the individual succeed.	Institutions are not obligated to ensure that the individual succeeds.

WHICH STUDENTS ARE COVERED?

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
IDEA covers K-12 students for whom a disability has been documented until age 21 or until graduation. IDEA lists specific disabilities that bring an individual under its coverage.	ADA/§504 does not have a specific listing of disabilities or covered age range.

COMPARISON: High School vs. College

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
The school district has almost all the responsibility for the student and his/her education.	The student and the institution each have responsibilities.
The **High School** is required to: • Identify students with disabilities . • Provide (and pay for) assessment of learning disabilities. • Classify disabilities according to specified diagnostic categories.	The **College** must inform students of: • Their rights and responsibilities. • The location of support offices. • Procedures for requesting accommodations. The College must also provide appropriate reasonable accommodation at no cost to the student.

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Education plans are required for each student covered by IDEA and/or §504.	
An IEP or a §504 Plan determines services and accommodations. Parents, teachers and counselors are involved, and the plan requires the parent's signature.	The "§504 Plan" developed at a high school will NOT be binding at a college or university. IDEA and §504 plans do not apply.

ACCOMMODATIONS & SERVICES

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Public schools provide non-academic personal services.	The College has no obligation to provide services of a personal nature .
Examples: • Appropriate services are provided by the school health service. • Teachers and parents actively remind the student of responsibilities and assist in setting priorities. • Parental care, guidance and involvement in the educational program is expected.	• The student meets with Disability Service personnel to discuss the disability and accommodations needed. • The student interview and supporting information provided by the student is used to determine the eligibility for accommodations. • If the student is qualified, the institution must determine whether a reasonable accommodation is possible. • Work with the student to identify appropriate reasonable accommodations.
"Effort counts." Courses and/or expectations are usually structured to reward a "good-faith effort."	Make reasonable adjustments in teaching methods which do not alter the essential content of a course or program.
Subjects may be waived for a student before graduation, if they were specifically related to the student's disability.	After careful consideration, occasionally course substitutions may be possible; waivers are not possible.
	Ensure that off-campus and contracted program facilities also comply with Section 504 (Subpart E) and ADA.

PRIVACY ISSUES

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Student has little or no privacy.	The College is obligated to protect a student's right to privacy and confidentiality.
• A team of school personnel and the student's parents are involved in planning the student's educational and extracurricular program.	• The Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA) does not allow institutions to release information to the parents without permission of the student. • Students may disclose, to whom and when they choose, information about the disability. Students must "own" their disability in order to enjoy a level playing field. • Instructors receive information that applies to the accommodations a student needs, but not about the disability itself.

Some Things to Consider...

Should I Disclose My Disability?

- When preparing to go to college or university, students with disabilities may need to decide whether to disclose their disability to staff and faculty of the college.
- When you tell someone something that they don't already know, you are practicing disclosure. Disclosure is a form of the word "disclose," which means to open up, to reveal, or to tell.
- The decision to disclose a disability belongs only to the person with the disability. Disclosure is a very personal choice and should be done only after careful thought. If you have a disability, there are no requirements that you disclose your disability to anyone at any time, but in order to receive accommodations at work or in college, you must disclose.
- When you disclose, you are intentionally releasing personal information about yourself for a specific purpose. Some personal information, such as identification numbers, financial records, or health information, may be important to keep private. It is important to keep in mind that your decision to disclose is personal and doing so should help you in some way.
- You are not required to share personal information about your disability. However, if you are requesting reasonable accommodations, you will need to disclose: (1) information about how your disability affects your ability to learn and perform effectively; (2) what kind of support, services and environment you will need in order to access and participate in your studies or job, and in the community.

It is up to you to decide how much of this sensitive information is necessary to reveal in order to get the accommodations you need.

Circumstances in which you may choose to disclose a disability include:

- *To a potential employer when requesting job accommodations.*
- *To new friends who have invited you to a concert because you need accessible seating close to the stage in order to see.*
- *To your coach because your math tutoring sessions overlap with team practice after school.*
- *To a benefits counselor if you are applying for financial benefits.*

Adapted from The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth
https://iel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/411_Disability_Disclosure_complete.pdf.

DEFINITIONS

The definition of an "individual with a disability" covered by and used in §504 and the ADA:

- *Is an individual who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities and*
- *Is qualified to be a student (In college, students must also meet the admission criteria and meet or maintain standards and requirements that are required for continued participation in a program of study or for graduation, whether they have a disability or not).*

The definition of a "reasonable accommodation"

An accommodation is something provided for the student. It is an adaptation designed to help the student display knowledge around the learning barriers caused by the disability.

- *Reasonable accommodations are TOOLS.*
- *Reasonable accommodations are NOT intended to guarantee success, but to provide access.*
- *Reasonable accommodations are intended to ensure that a student with a disability has an opportunity to succeed.*

Academic adjustments/auxiliary aids cannot:

- *Result in fundamental alterations to courses or programs.*
- *Substantially modify program requirements.*
- *Cause undue administrative or financial burden.*

EVIDENCE OF DISABILITY

- Includes a diagnosis of a specific disability.
- States how the disability limits a major life activity.
- Explains how the disability affects the student's academic performance.
- Suggests educational accommodations appropriate to a college setting.

A "qualifying disability" is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of a student; or having a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment.

Major life activities include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working.

The term "qualified individual with a disability" means: "An individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable modifications, meets the essential eligibility requirements (e.g., any academic and/or technical standards required for admission or participation in the educational program or activity) for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by a public entity."

An accommodation is an adaptation, designed to help the student display knowledge around the learning barriers caused by the disability.

THE DISABILITY SERVICES OFFICE

PURPOSE OF DISABILITY SERVICES

- Provide services and accommodations to qualified students with disabilities.
- Serve in an advisory and supportive capacity to faculty and staff.
- Provide equal access for individuals with disabilities.
- Assist in and/or facilitate the development of reasonable accommodations for students.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- The specifics and documentation about a student's disability are confidential and will not be released without written authorization from the student.

  (The student may choose to disclose information.)
- Any inference about a particular student and the disability is inappropriate.

RESPONSIBILITIES IN A NUTSHELL

Issue	High School (IDEA)	College (ADA/§504)
Identifying students with disabilities.	School System	Student must initiate
Requesting services.	School and Parent	Student
Obtaining disability documentation and establishing need for accommodation.	School	Student
Providing accommodations.	School	College
Advocating to obtain services.	Parent and Student	Student
Deciding what courses to take.	Student and Parent/Educator team	Student

Student Responsibilities

Colleges have an obligation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to provide qualified students with disabilities access to their programs and services.

Institutions also have an obligation to provide reasonable accommodations. HOWEVER, students also have equal, if not greater, responsibilities to be partners with educational institutions in meeting their needs.

The qualified student has the responsibility to:

- Be a self-advocate for his/her needs
- Be independent and in charge of his/her own life
- Register with DSS.
- Provide current evidence of a disability.
- Discuss accommodation needs with disability services coordinator.
- Give accommodation letter to professors.
- Communicate with faculty as needed.

A student has the right to:

- Not be discriminated or retaliated against because he/she has a disability.
- Participate in and enjoy the educational programs and services offered by the institution the student has chosen to attend.
- An accessible education.
- Appropriate accommodations.

Postsecondary Responsibilities

Each member of the faculty plays an important role in the implementation of accommodations to students with disabilities. Providing accommodations is NOT negotiable; the way the accommodations are provided may be negotiable, and in keeping with that role...

Faculty have the right to:

- Expect students with disabilities to attend and participate in class.
- Expect students to observe the code of conduct.
- Expect that students will adhere to the academic integrity policy.
- Determine the curricula for their courses.
- Determine student progress and assign grades.
- Provide input regarding the accommodations employed in their classrooms.
- Question accommodations that would fundamentally alter the academic standards or compromise the mastery of essential competencies.
- Receive a letter of notification about accommodations a student is entitled to receive.
- Provide timely notification of specific needs.

Faculty have the responsibility to:

- Provide an atmosphere in which all students can learn course material.
- Include a Reasonable Accommodation statement on the syllabus for each course taught.
- Provide accommodations in a fair and timely manner.
- Contact the Disability Services Office with questions or suggestions regarding the appropriateness of an accommodation.
- Grade students based on their performance, without counting off for reasonable accommodation.
- Make academic adjustments in instruction as appropriate.



If Internet resources and other technologies are used, then these resources must also be as accessible to students with disabilities as they are for other students.

Which College is Right for You?

When deciding which college is right for you, make sure you ask about the college's disability services. It is important that you obtain as much information as possible about services for students with disabilities and services that are relevant to your particular disability before choosing a college or, if you have already chosen a school, before beginning classes.

You want to be sure you have done all that you can to make your educational or job training experience satisfying, rewarding and productive. Below are some sample questions you may want to consider asking when you visit colleges.



- ☑ What services are typically available? (e.g., notetakers, books on tape, extra time, etc.)
- ☑ What is the name of the director and staff persons connected to providing services?
- ☑ Where is the Disability Services Office located, and what are its hours of operation?
- ☑ Is there a document available that describes the Disability Services Office and the services available?
- ☑ Who is available to help locate services on and/or off campus?
- ☑ Do other students who have a disability like mine attend here? Is there someone with a disability like mine (or another disability) who would be willing to talk to me about their experience here so I can learn from their experience?
- ☑ What arrangements do other students make in situations similar to mine?
- ☑ Is there a representative from Vocational Rehabilitation on campus? When is s/he on campus? Where is his/her office?
- ☑ Are there local organizations or support groups for providing services to individuals with disabilities like mine? What services can I obtain through them?
- ☑ How many students with disabilities attend through graduation?
- ☑ What kind of record does the program I'm interested in have regarding providing accommodations?
- ☑ How much advanced notice is typically needed to provide a requested accommodation (e.g., taping textbooks, locating/providing interpreters, notetakers, readers, etc.)
- ☑ If an accommodation request is denied, what is the process to be followed to contest the decision?

Transition Resources on the Internet

Going to College: http://www.going-to-college.org/overview/index.html

We Connect Now: http://weconnectnow.wordpress.com/

Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology (DO-IT) http://www.washington.edu/doit/

WINAHEAD Member Institutions

- *Bellevue University*
- *Bryan College of Health Sciences*
- *Buena Vista University*
- *Central Community College*
- *Chadron State College*
- *Clarkson College*
- *College of St. Mary*
- *Concordia University*
- *Creighton University*
- *Doane University*
- *Hastings College*
- *Iowa Western Community College*
- *Metropolitan Community College*
- *Midland University*
- *Mid-Plains Community College*
- *Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis*
- *Nebraska Methodist College*
- *Nebraska Wesleyan University*
- *Northeast Community College*
- *Peru State College*
- *Southeast Community College*
- *Union College*
- *University of Nebraska-Kearney*
- *University of Nebraska-Lincoln*
- *University of Nebraska-Medical Center*
- *University of Nebraska-Omaha*
- *Wayne State College*
- *Western Iowa Tech Community College*
- *Western Nebraska Community College*
- *York College*

WINAHEAD is made up of representatives from 30 institutions. Our members are professionals employed by two- and four-year colleges and universities who work directly with students with disabilities to ensure equal access to higher education. WIN indicates the geographic area we represent: Western Iowa and Nebraska, and AHEAD is our national parent organization, the Association on Higher Education and Disability.

For more information or to request a transition presentation, contact WINAHEAD at

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http://ahead.org/affiliates/western-iowa-and-nebraska

http://winahead.wordpress.com

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