

By Think College Transition Project

Accommodations are supports and services provided at no cost to eligible students with disabilities to have equal access and opportunity to benefit from classes, programs, and activities.

Accommodations are different for every student, because every student has unique needs. To request an accommodation, you have to register with the Disability Services Office, or DSO. This office may have a different name on your campus, such as Student Support Services or Office of Accessibility. Your admissions representative or college advisor can help you find the office and make an intake appointment.

In addition to accommodations, talk with a DSO staff member about getting training in assistive technology, or accessing the academic learning center on campus to connect with a learning coach. You can also look for a peer mentoring program or student support group to join. Each campus may be a bit different, but staff can recommend the many supports available to students.

COMMON COLLEGE ACCOMMODATIONS

EXAM MODIFICATIONS

Extended time	Reader	Scribe	Testing in a quiet room with no distractions
			

Note-taking services	Interpreters	Textbooks in an alternate format	Preferential seating
			

Use of laptops for tests and exams	Use of calculators for tests and exams	Priority registration for courses	Permission to make audio recordings of classes	Access to audiobooks, voice recognition software, and text-to-speech programs
				

STEPS TO GETTING ACCOMMODATIONS

To request accommodations, you must go through an accommodations process at your college. This is a bit different depending on your school, but here are some general steps to take:

STEP 1

Contact the Disability Services Office (DSO) and register with them as a student with a disability. Start early! You may want accommodations for the placement tests or to request books in alternate format, and this process can take several weeks.

STEP 2

When you meet with a DSO staff member, give them a copy of your most recent disability documentation, or paperwork. You can often find out what documentation is required by looking on the college's website or by contacting the DSO. An IEP or Summary of Performance (SOP) may not be considered enough documentation, but you can still include them.

STEP 3

Talk about accommodation needs with a DSO staff member. Discuss the accommodations you used in the past, what has worked, and what you think you will need while in college.

STEP 4

The DSO will review your documentation and decide if you are eligible for services. If you are eligible, staff in charge of accommodations will figure out what accommodations the college will provide. You will receive a letter of accommodation to tell your professors about what you will need to succeed in their classes.

STEP 5

Give your accommodation letter to your professors and be prepared to talk with them about how these accommodations will work. You can do this any time, but it works much better if you talk to them early in the semester! Keep in mind that your accommodations only start when you give your letter to your professor.

STEP 6

Professors must give you the accommodations that are specified in the letter. They also must keep this information confidential. If your professor has questions about the letter that you do not feel comfortable answering, ask them to talk to the DSO.

STEP 7

For the rest of the semester, pay attention to your accommodations. Are they working for you? Do you need more or different accommodations? If so, contact the DSO.

Adapted with permission from www.going-to-college.org (Rehabilitation Research and Training Center, Virginia Commonwealth University).