



Toto, I Have a Feeling We're Not in High School Anymore...

***A College Transition Guide for Parents
of Students with Disabilities***

May 2014

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for Parents of Students with Disabilities**

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Statement of Nondiscrimination

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Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

The Age Discrimination Act of 1967

Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

Section 402 of the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974

NH Law Against Discrimination (RSA 354-A)

Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008

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Statement of Availability in Alternative Formats

This publication is available in alternate formats upon request. Please contact the Office of Disabilities Services at 603-230-4000 x 4117 or x4432; tty 603-223-2316

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NHTI does not discriminate in the administration of its admissions and educational programs, activities, or employment practices on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or marital status.



Introduction: The Land of Oz

Dear Parents,

As a parent, you have watched your son/daughter go through enormous changes, changes that seem to turn the world on its head. After those first steps, nearly everything in the house is within reach and, without warning, the pace of life suddenly leaps into warp speed. Or how about when your child first began to read, learned to drive or started dating? Again, everything seemed to change, almost overnight.

Another of those world-tilting events is about to happen. Your young adult is starting college. He/she might feel very much like Dorothy and Toto in the Wizard of Oz – one minute in good old Kansas, the next in the Land of Oz. Everything may seem completely unfamiliar, both terrifying and wonderful all at once.

Once your child turns 18 years old, he/she is legally an adult, responsible for his/her own actions and decisions – and free to make them. As students leave secondary school to enter a career in higher education, fundamental changes occur with respect to their education as a person with a disability. Any child who attends public schools has, for the most part, a legal entitlement to an education, regardless of a disability. He/she must also receive his/her education in the least restrictive environment possible.

In higher education, your son/daughter has a civil right to have **access** to his/her education. The fundamental principle at work is that your son/daughter is responsible for himself/herself; it is not the responsibility of the institution. This distinction can make all the difference.

So how can we best explain these differences? After much writing and research, we found that we could not improve upon the college transition guide created by the Disabilities Services folks at the University of Montana - Missoula. It approaches a tough transition with both straight talk and warmth. We hope this guide will help you to better understand these distinctions, these shifts of responsibility, and provide tips on how best to support your new college student on this exciting new road.

Sincerely,
 NHTI Concord's Community College
 Disabilities Services
 Beverly Boggess, Ph.D.

How has my role as a parent changed?

When your child was in public school, you were the ever-present safety net. You attended the parent/teacher conferences and IEP or 504 planning meetings. You were readily involved in his/her life. You were there to make sure your child was getting the appropriate education entitled to all children. After all, that's the role of a parent.

In high school, you may have begun to see some changes in your adolescent. He/she began to assert his/her independence. He/she began make choices and advocate for him/herself.

At the postsecondary level, this transition continues. You increasingly give your support in a slightly different fashion. Your role shifts to a subtle hand of guidance when it comes to the process involved in your student's education. College is the first testing ground where your new student will and must be his or her own advocate.

Here are our recommendations based on years of experience with many students.

Expect him/her to develop independence further through making the suitable arrangements to ensure success in classes. Encourage him/her to take responsibility for academic concerns and limitations. Both of you should acknowledge the disability and the limitations that stem from it. This will allow him/her to identify areas in which he/she should consider accommodations to level the playing field. It will also make it easier to convey his/her requests for accommodations to instructors, other students, and anyone from whom he/she may seek assistance.

Encourage your student to register with Disabilities Services, where he/she will be coached on how to proceed in obtaining reasonable accommodations.

What services does Disabilities Services provide?

When a student completes the three step process (attends an information session, sends in documentation, meets with the Coordinator of Disabilities Services) to register with Disabilities Services, the student will have a **Reasonable Accommodations Plan (RAP)** which will list accommodations that have been deemed appropriate. Some examples of accommodations that may be in the RAP include extended time on tests and/or separate, quiet testing room, assistive technology, alternate text formats, note-takers.

Students who are eligible for Disabilities Services may choose to meet individually with Disabilities Services Specialists for **Academic Coaching**. Academic Coaching focuses on skill building in such areas as: balance, organization, study skills, problem solving. The goal is to support academic success by promoting independent, self-directed learning in a positive environment. Disabilities Services Specialists also teach student how to use the technology on loan to help level the playing field.

What is the difference between "entitled to education" and "right to equal access to education"?

Unlike elementary and secondary schools, post-secondary education offers **access** rather than **entitlement** to academic programs. Most parents of a child with a disability at some time learn something about the laws that govern their child's education. In 1975, Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. This act, commonly known as Public Law 94-142, provided that any child with a disability was "entitled to a free and appropriate education" in public school systems.

Adapted with permission from "Toto, I Have A Feeling We're Not in High School Anymore," University of Montana Disability Services for Students, Emma B. Lommasson Center 154, Missoula, MT 59812.

That law, along with its numerous re-authorizations, reflects the nation's commitment to educating all its children, whether they have disabilities or not. In sum, PL 94-142 and its successors (including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 and Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 1997, with your inputs and appropriate assessments, would determine what was most appropriate for your child's education in grades K-12. Then they were required to provide that education.

Now, however, your child has reached his/her majority under the law, and the rules of the game have changed. The principles of PL 94-142 and IDEA, including the required IEP (Individualized Education Program), no longer apply. Colleges prepare accommodation plans based upon the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Although 504 plans and IEPs may be considered among the documents reviewed for college Disabilities Services, these are not by themselves sufficient documentation.

When Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act In 1990, it was modeled on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The ADA is a civil rights law. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, as long as the person is otherwise qualified. In the case of publicly funded colleges and universities, ADA affirms the right of a student with a disability the same opportunities as any other qualified student.

That means that colleges must ensure **access** to all students who are **otherwise qualified**. Access means more than ramps, elevators, and wide parking spaces. It also means access to information and to technology. Therefore, NHTI must make reasonable accommodations for student's disabilities, in order that he/she may be able to demonstrate his/her ability.

It is the mission of the New Hampshire Community College System to provide educational access, opportunities, and experiences to all qualified students with documented disabilities who register with the college's Disabilities Services office. Reasonable accommodations are provided to students to allow them to achieve at a level limited only by their abilities and not by their disabilities. Assistance is provided in a collaborative way to help students develop strong and effective independent learning and self-advocacy skills, as students assume responsibility for reaching their academic goals.

Civil rights laws and the reasonable accommodations they call for are in no way intended, nor are they able, to guarantee success. A student can expect an equal chance to do the same work as his/her peers.

What is meant by "reasonable accommodation"?

Reasonable accommodations are made in order to "level the playing field" for qualified individuals with disabilities. As much as possible, accommodations are designed to minimize the functional limitations of an individual in a given task.

These adjustments permit students with disabilities the opportunity to learn by removing barriers that do not compromise academic standards. Thus, wherever possible, the disability is minimized as a measure of performance in the academic environment.

Consider these examples:

- ◆ A student who is deaf cannot hear class lectures. Provision of sign language interpreters as an accommodation gives the deaf student access to the information discussed in the classroom at nearly the same time it is presented, if their first language is American Sign Language. Thus, the student has a better opportunity to interact with the rest of the class. Students who are deaf are also often provided with note-takers, even though the lectures

are interpreted. This is because it is virtually impossible to follow a signed lecture and take notes at the same time.

- ◆ A student whose physical limitations prevent him/her from writing efficiently or from writing at all may request note-taking services as an accommodation. It may also be possible for him/her to use a scribe for taking exams. Thus, the student will not be graded on the ability to physically write, but on the ability to learn and to demonstrate how well he/she has learned the material.
- ◆ Students with mobility limitations, such as wheelchair users, may request that classroom locations be moved if they are not accessible on a ground floor or by elevator.
- ◆ Blind students may be accommodated by receiving printed materials (textbooks, course syllabi, handouts) in Braille, on audio tapes, from text-to-voice technology, or from live readers.
- ◆ Depending on the limitations of their particular type of learning disability, students with learning disabilities may be accommodated in a variety of ways, e.g. extra testing time, read-aloud texts, use of electronic spellcheckers/dictionaries, and assistance with note taking, etc.

All students, including those in the above examples, must meet the **academic standards**. They must demonstrate their mastery of assigned materials. In other words, they don't receive "help in a passive way," but they can choose to participate in academic supports and activities to support their learning in an active way, thus enjoying their civil right to learn and compete on the same level as their peers. The ADA assumes that people with disabilities have contributions to make and that qualified students have every right to pursue studies at colleges and universities – regardless of whether they have a disability. Thus, **access** means empowering students with disabilities to take better control of their academic environment, permitting them to demonstrate their skill and knowledge. It also expects, however, that they can meet the academic standards with or without appropriate accommodations.

What is meant by “otherwise qualified”?

At the college level, the term “**otherwise qualified**” places greater weight and responsibility on the individual than may have been the case in high school and certainly elementary school. It means that students must meet academic standards. In grades K-12, this refers only to the age of the individual as being appropriate for elementary or high school. In higher education, it ultimately refers to a student's academic proficiency and ability to demonstrate learning. College course requirements are not modified; the faculty are not required to substantially alter requirements.

Terms such as “placement” and “least restrictive environment” are not valid for college. Placement in an environment which is restrictive or protective in any way would be a violation of an individual's civil rights and counter to the spirit of Section 504 and the ADA.

Some services provided to high school students under Section 504 may not be provided in higher education, because they, in fact, reduce the academic standards. Shortening assignments, for example, is viewed as compromising academic standards, and therefore is not “reasonable” to request in college.

Changes in Expectations for College Students

Perhaps the most important result of these differences lies in the changes in expectations for students with disabilities. For example, in high school, students with disabilities, such as Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders, aren't always expected to perform or achieve at the same levels as their peers in high school. In other words, they may not be expected to learn as much in high school. High school examples include allowing an ADD student with limitations in short-term memory to use notes on exams – when other students can't. Perhaps a student with learning disabilities that limit reading comprehension is provided an aide for tests. The aide's job is to explain the question in different words to the student.

At the college level, however, both of these examples are considered a reduction of academic standards and therefore, are not available. These examples are not considered "reasonable" accommodations, nor is it required that any department or instructor permit activities that substantially lower standards or alter essential elements of courses. At college the environment may be adjusted in order to give students with disabilities an equal opportunity to meet academic standards; however, the academic requirements for them are not reduced in order to ensure success and to preserve self-esteem. In a competitive academic environment, **all** students must meet the academic standards, whether they have accommodations or not.

Individuals are afforded access and equal opportunity to pursue programs of study, and requirements are not fundamentally altered. Individuals who meet admissions standards have an opportunity to earn a degree or certificate. To remain enrolled in programs of study, it is expected that each individual continues to demonstrate that he/she is otherwise qualified by meeting or exceeding academic standards set by the institution and that he/she must do so whether or not he/she requests accommodations.

In higher education, therefore, students with disabilities must be able to demonstrate skills in all aspects of learning, including higher level critical thinking skills. Students with disabilities are urged to use strategies commensurate with the academic expectations in college and later, in their professional careers. Such ever-increasing expectations necessitate more sophisticated strategies in many cases. Reasonable accommodations can create equal access, but once achieved, the student must then demonstrate skills and knowledge adequately.



What is meant by “with or without reasonable accommodations”?

Understanding this phrase is critical to understanding the distinction between a civil right and an entitlement. Put bluntly, it's legal for a student with a disability to flunk out of college. There is no guarantee of success. Civil rights do not mandate a safety net. Students with disabilities must perform at the level that their academic and professional programs expect of all students. The college will strive to level the playing field, but ultimately the student's work must be his/her own and be of satisfactory quality.

In addition to guaranteeing civil rights to reasonable accommodations, the ADA also guarantees any individual with a disability the absolute right to **refuse** any accommodation. That means that Disabilities Services doesn't make sure that students request accommodations.

While the Disabilities Services Coordinator relies heavily on documentation of the disability when determining accommodations, he/she also draws the student into a discussion of functional limitations and possible strategies. If a student doesn't request an accommodation, however, the consequences of that decision belong to the student. The care and concern parents and teachers show students in grades K-12, ensuring they have services and use them, would be viewed in the adult world as paternalism and unwarranted interference. While it is perfectly legitimate for parents and other important people to influence some decisions for children, adults make their own choices.

The bottom line, then, is that students with disabilities must perform at satisfactory levels in their academic pursuits at NHTI. If they do not request reasonable accommodations and perform poorly without them, their civil rights have not been violated. The student must then live with the consequences of unsatisfactory academic performance.

Who will manage my son's or daughter's educational services?

The student is ultimately responsible for managing his/her own education, understanding his/her functional limitations and requesting accommodations for a disability.

As adults, all students go through a process of learning about themselves. They develop the skills of self-determination, including confidence enough to advocate for the things they need in order to thrive and achieve. In the case of a student with disability, that includes advocating for equality – their civil rights.

Disabilities Services endeavors to promote this kind of self-knowledge. With respect to disabilities, each individual must be able to explain his/her functional limitations, that is, how his/her disability affects him/her or limits the ways in which tasks are performed. Students must also understand how those limitations can be effectively accommodated to create a level playing field for them in school. They will need to be prepared to be firm in their conviction that what they ask for is reasonable.

It is in the development of these skills that Disabilities Services' support and academic coaching can best guide the student with a disability in his/her educational growth. These skills are critical because it is the student, not Disabilities Services, who will approach instructors, other staff, and even other students to request the accommodations that are reasonable for them to receive. Clearly, students need these skills when they leave NHTI and move successfully into their chosen careers and/or a four-year program.

What happens if my son or daughter refuses services?

Your student may feel shame or uneasiness about having a disability and want to turn away from it. Students rightly want to feel that the work they do in school is of equal value to that of their classmates. They often express discomfort at feeling like they are getting some **advantage** others may not have, and they struggle with feeling that they could be the object of charity by some well-meaning adults. They often tell us, "I just want to make it on my own, without any **help.**"

Disabilities Services Staff do not "help" students. We do not look over students' shoulders to ensure that they are getting their homework done and going to class. We don't hold hands to get them through registration or financial aid problems, or reduce the academic standards so they won't experience feelings of failure. These things, while intended to be helpful, more likely cement the conviction that the student is less capable than other students. Rest assured: kids recognize when this is happening. In the long run, that kind of help actually hurts and can contribute to serious academic consequences when a student gets to college.

Students may come to terms with their disabilities in one of two ways. The most important is changing their attitude about having a disability. This requires assuming the attitude that disability is a normal part of life, and that the student has every right to be here. It means that students must look at accommodations, not as a reduction in expectations, but as a means of providing fair access – because the college is **not** required to reduce the academic standards. Students must also acknowledge the functional limitations of their disabilities and refuse to apologize for being who they are.

If you are even partly successful in communicating these ideas to your student, you will have done more for them than you will ever know. But for many students who come to NHTI wanting to shed their disability "status" like a snake sheds its skin, they may likely experience the second way of coming to terms with their disability. They may not come to Disabilities Services until they are in trouble with grades or with Financial Aid. It may seem that some students need to be knocked down hard before they are ready to hold up their heads without shame. This is an unfortunate, but common, aspect of the disability experience.

As parents, what else can you do? Keep sending the message that you have faith in them, that they have nothing to be ashamed of or to apologize for, that it's up to them. Let them know that a visit to Disabilities Services doesn't mean a commitment. Being in control of their academic career and civil rights also means that students have the right to refuse any accommodation. Before your students decide, encourage them to become **fully informed** about their choices. Then, let them decide for themselves.

How do students advocate for themselves to ensure that they receive appropriate accommodations?

Again, in order to ensure equal access, students must advocate effectively for the accommodations they require at NHTI. This assumes that the student understands his/her disability and the ways in which it limits his/her functioning at college. The limitations of the disability, not the disability itself, are the reason accommodations are recommended and provided.

Disabilities Services provides some of these accommodations known as auxiliary services. For some accommodations, however, the student makes the request of the instructor. For instance, when requesting a separate, quiet testing environment or extended time, the student must identify himself/herself to the instructor to make the request. The student then takes responsibility for reserving a testing space in the Learning Center and arriving on time for the exam.

What if my son or daughter had some subjects waived in high school – why aren't they automatically waived in college?

“Automatic” waivers do not exist in higher education. In fact, there are no waivers at all. Rather, under certain circumstances, students may be granted substitutions for some courses. Substitutions, however, will be considered only when the students demonstrate that they are both “otherwise qualified” and that the substitution removes a disability-related barrier to their academic program.

Remember that the ADA provides for reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Under ADA, however, it is not reasonable to lower the academic standard. Therefore, requests for substitutions must be accompanied by convincing documentation supporting the claim.

Are students automatically registered with Disabilities Services if their IEPs were sent to Admissions?

No. Unlike high school, each student must register separately with Disabilities Services to ensure access to accommodations. Each student must come to Disabilities Services to begin the process of verifying a disability and determining which accommodations may be reasonable. From there, your student will be coached on how to obtain those accommodations.

Remember, 504 Plans and IEPs from high school are not automatically implemented in higher education. They are neither binding on a college or university, nor can they be used to verify a student's disability for civil rights purposes.

Urge your student to be active in requesting his/her accommodations. Do not assume the professor will take care of it, that Disabilities Services will pull your student through or that you will do it for him/her. This is college. He/she is a capable adult whose education is largely his/her own responsibility.

Also, your student's registration with Disabilities Services is confidential. The disclosure of this information to faculty, other students, university staff – or parents – is his/her choice as an adult.

What do you mean, you “cannot disclose any information to me about my son’s or daughter’s services”!

Once your student enrolls in post-secondary institution, whether he/she is 18 years old or not, he/she becomes the sole guardian of all records maintained by that institution. Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1976 (FERPA), the student has the right to access his/her own records upon written request. The parent or guardian does not share that right. This means that parents do not have legal access to their student’s grades, transcripts, or any information concerning the services he/she is being provided through Disabilities Services. This information is confidential.

The student may, however, sign a written release of information which gives the institution the right to disclose his/her records to their parents. The only time a student’s record may be disclosed without written consent would be to comply with a subpoena or in an emergency where the health and safety of the student or another individual is threatened.



Conclusion: Off to see the Wizard

So here you are, your child is entering the world of adulthood and taking the first steps of a marvelous journey. It’s a world completely different from any other – both strange and wonderful. The things that you and your student came to expect before enrolling at NHTI, almost as black and white at times, are gone. It’s all in Technicolor now.

We hope that this guide helps in preparing you and your student for what’s coming next. It may be very trying at times, but it can also be very extraordinary. Welcome to NHTI-Concord’s Community College!





For Parents Only: College Discussion Topics

The transition from parenting a high school student to guiding a college student can be challenging. Keeping the lines of communication open while your student is preparing to enter college may include a combination of sharing your own experiences and learning new information that will help your student succeed. The following list is designed to help initiate and facilitate conversation as your family prepares for this change.

- We have shared our college stories with our student and are giving her the opportunity to experience college in her own way.
- We have talked with our student to make sure he has contacted his advisor.
- Our student and her advisor share responsibilities for making sure she is on the right track, and our student has shared this information with us.
- Our student has had an opportunity to share the specifics of daily college life with us, so we understand where we may offer advice or support.
- We have asked our student what he likes and dislikes about living in his residence hall.
- We have encouraged our student to become as involved in campus life as time allows.
- We have asked our student about her academic major and have encouraged her to talk to her advisor about her decision.
- If our student is questioning her choice of major, we have encouraged her to discuss this immediately with her advisor.
- Our student has shared her academic plan with us. We are encouraging our student to monitor it every term with her advisor.
- We know about the registration process and when it is scheduled. We have given our student feedback on her decisions about which courses to take.
- We have discussed the possibility that academic problems may arise with our student and how we might support her as she addresses and works through them.
- We have discussed the differences between course selection and course scheduling with our student and have encouraged her to consult with her advisor about her choices.
- We have asked our student about his instructors and the syllabus for each course.
- We have talked to our student about his classes. We have a sense of his classroom comfort level and encouraged him to be an active participant in the classroom.

- We know approximately when mid-term exams are over, and we have discussed our student's results with him. If needed, we have also talked about campus resources to help him.
- Our student has had an opportunity to share one or more of his course syllabi with us, and we discussed the importance of referring to them frequently.
- We have discussed the academic, career, and social support services available on campus with our student and when and how she might use them.
- We have a copy of the institution's catalog and have reviewed it to increase our knowledge of policies and regulations that impact our student and family.
- We have talked with our student about how the college campus is organized and what facilities are available.
- We have discussed the college's code of student rights and responsibilities, as published in the college catalog and student handbook, with our student and its implications for his academic and social life.
- Our student has shared her school calendar with us, and we have discussed how the calendar helps her stay organized.
- We have encouraged our student to get information on financial aid from his advisor and from the staff in the financial aid office and to stay on top of all deadlines.
- We have read about the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act and discussed it with our student.

Critical Differences between High School and College for Students with Disabilities

K-12 Special Education	Higher Education Disabilities Services
IDEA & Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act	Americans with Disabilities Act and ADA Amendments Act of 2008, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
Education is a <i>right</i> and must be provided in an appropriate environment to all individual.	Education is not a <i>right</i> , It is an opportunity . Students must meet certain admissions criteria defined under the ADA as "otherwise qualified." Students must also meet the criteria of the accepting institution such as health, character, technical standards, conduct code and course objectives.
School district is responsible to identify a student's disability.	Students must self-identify to receive services.
School district provides free testing and evaluation.	Students must provide documentation and are responsible for an up-to-date evaluation.
School district develops Individualized Education Plans (I.E.P.) to define educational services.	Students must identify needs and request services.
I.E.P. determines services and school district must ensure that services are provided under I.E.P. All teachers are contacted by Special Education staff.	No I.E.P. exists. Students are responsible for presenting letters of accommodation/ reasonable accommodation plans to faculty/instructors. <i>Disabilities Services will work closely with students to implement accommodations and to foster students' self-advocacy.</i>
Fundamental alteration of programs and curricula are required.	No fundamental alterations programs and curricula are required.
Personal services for medical or physical disability are required	No personal services are required.

NOTE : For further information, [Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities by U.S. Department of Education and Office for Civil Rights.](#) (current date).

*Jeanne R. Kincaid, Esq., Presentation. AHEAD Annual Conference. July 1996.
**Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education:
Know Your Rights and Responsibilities**

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More and more high school students with disabilities are planning to continue their education in postsecondary schools, including vocational and career schools, two- and four- year colleges, and universities. As a student with a disability, you need to be well informed about your rights and responsibilities as well as the responsibilities postsecondary schools have toward you. Being well informed will help ensure you have a full opportunity to enjoy the benefits of the postsecondary education experience without confusion or delay.



The information in this pamphlet, provided by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the U. S. Department of Education, explains the rights and responsibilities of students with disabilities who are preparing to attend postsecondary schools. This pamphlet also explains the obligations of a postsecondary school to provide academic adjustments, including auxiliary aids and services, to ensure the school does not discriminate on the basis of disability.

OCR enforces Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* (Section 504) and Title II of the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990* (Title II), which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. Practically every school district and postsecondary school in the United States is subject to one or both of these laws, which have similar requirements.*

Although Section 504 and Title II apply to both school districts and postsecondary schools, the responsibilities of postsecondary schools differ significantly from those of school districts.

Moreover, you will have responsibilities as a postsecondary student that you do not have as a high school student. OCR strongly encourages you to know your responsibilities and those of postsecondary schools under Section 504 and Title II. Doing so will improve your opportunity to succeed as you enter postsecondary education.

The following questions and answers provide more specific information to help you succeed.

As a student with a disability leaving high school and entering postsecondary education, will I see differences in my rights and how they are addressed?

Yes. Section 504 and Title II protect elementary, secondary, and postsecondary students from discrimination. Nevertheless, several of the requirements that apply through high school are

different from the requirements that apply beyond high school. For instance, Section 504 requires a school district to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to each child with a disability in the district's jurisdiction. Whatever the disability, a school district must identify an individual's educational needs and provide any regular or special education and related aids and services necessary to meet those needs as well as it is meeting the needs of students without disabilities.

Unlike your high school, however, your postsecondary school is not required to provide FAPE. Rather, your postsecondary school is required to provide appropriate academic adjustments as necessary to ensure that it does not discriminate on the basis of disability. In addition, if your postsecondary school provides housing to nondisabled students, it must provide comparable, convenient, and accessible housing to students with disabilities at the same cost.

Other important differences that you need to know, even before you arrive at your postsecondary school, are addressed in the remaining questions.

May a postsecondary school deny my admission because I have a disability?

No. If you meet the essential requirements for admission, a postsecondary school may not deny your admission simply because you have a disability.

Do I have to inform a postsecondary school that I have a disability?

No. But if you want the school to provide an academic adjustment, you must identify yourself as having a disability. Likewise, you should let the school know about your disability if you want to ensure that you are assigned to accessible facilities. In any event, your disclosure of a disability is always voluntary.

What academic adjustments must a postsecondary school provide?

The appropriate academic adjustment must be determined based on your disability and individual needs. Academic adjustments may include auxiliary aids and services, as well as modifications to academic requirements as necessary to ensure equal educational opportunity. Examples of adjustments are: arranging for priority registration; reducing a course load; substituting one course for another; providing note takers, recording devices, sign language interpreters, extended time for testing, and, if telephones are provided in dorm rooms, a TTY in your dorm room; and equipping school computers with screen-reading, voice recognition, or other adaptive software or hardware.

In providing an academic adjustment, your postsecondary school is not required to lower or substantially modify essential requirements. For example, although your school may be required to provide extended testing time, it is not required to change the substantive content of the test. In addition, your postsecondary school does not have to make adjustments that would fundamentally alter the nature of a service, program, or activity, or that would result in an undue financial or administrative burden. Finally, your postsecondary school does not have to provide personal attendants, individually prescribed devices, readers for personal use or study, or other devices or services of a personal nature, such as tutoring and typing.

If I want an academic adjustment, what must I do?

You must inform the school that you have a disability and need an academic adjustment. Unlike your school district, your postsecondary school is not required to identify you as having a disability or to assess your needs.

Your postsecondary school may require you to follow reasonable procedures to request an academic adjustment. You are responsible for knowing and following those procedures. In their publications providing general information, postsecondary schools usually include information on the procedures and contacts for requesting an academic adjustment. Such publications include recruitment materials, catalogs, and student handbooks, and are often available on school websites. Many schools also have staff whose purpose is to assist students with disabilities. If you are unable to locate the procedures, ask a school official, such as an admissions officer or counselor.

When should I request an academic adjustment?

Although you may request an academic adjustment from your postsecondary school at any time, you should request it as early as possible. Some academic adjustments may take more time to provide than others. You should follow your school's procedures to ensure that the school has enough time to review your request and provide an appropriate academic adjustment.

Do I have to prove that I have a disability to obtain an academic adjustment?

Generally, yes. Your school will probably require you to provide documentation showing that you have a current disability and need an academic adjustment.

What documentation should I provide?

Schools may set reasonable standards for documentation. Some schools require more documentation than others. They may require you to provide documentation prepared by an appropriate professional, such as a medical doctor, psychologist, or other qualified diagnostician. The required documentation may include one or more of the following: a diagnosis of your current disability, as well as supporting information, such as the date of the diagnosis, how that diagnosis was reached, and the credentials of the diagnosing professional; information on how your disability affects a major life activity; and information on how the disability affects your academic performance. The documentation should provide enough information for you and your school to decide what is an appropriate academic adjustment.

An individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan, if you have one, may help identify services that have been effective for you. This is generally not sufficient documentation, however, because of the differences between postsecondary education and high school education. What you need to meet the new demands of postsecondary education may be different from what worked for you in high school. Also, in some cases, the nature of a disability may change.

If the documentation that you have does not meet the postsecondary school's requirements, a school official should tell you in a timely manner what additional documentation you need to provide. You may need a new evaluation in order to provide the required documentation.

Who has to pay for a new evaluation?

Neither your high school nor your postsecondary school is required to conduct or pay for a new evaluation to document your disability and need for an academic adjustment. You may, therefore, have to pay or find funding to pay an appropriate professional for an evaluation. If you are eligible for services through your state vocational rehabilitation agency, you may qualify for an evaluation at no cost to you. You may locate your state vocational rehabilitation agency at <http://rsa.ed.gov> by clicking on "Info about RSA," then "People and Offices," and then "State Agencies/ Contacts."

Once the school has received the necessary documentation from me, what should I expect?

To determine an appropriate academic adjustment, the school will review your request in light of the essential requirements for the relevant program. It is important to remember that the school is not required to lower or waive essential requirements. If you have requested a specific academic adjustment, the school may offer that academic adjustment, or it may offer an effective alternative. The school may also conduct its own evaluation of your disability and needs at its own expense.

You should expect your school to work with you in an interactive process to identify an appropriate academic adjustment. Unlike the experience you may have had in high school, however, do not expect your postsecondary school to invite your parents to participate in the process or to develop an IEP for you.

What if the academic adjustment we identified is not working?

Let the school know as soon as you become aware that the results are not what you expected. It may be too late to correct the problem if you wait until the course or activity is completed. You and your school should work together to resolve the problem.

May a postsecondary school charge me for providing an academic adjustment?

No. Nor may it charge students with disabilities more for participating in its programs or activities than it charges students who do not have disabilities.

What can I do if I believe the school is discriminating against me?

Practically every postsecondary school must have a person—frequently called the Section 504 Coordinator, ADA Coordinator, or Disability Services Coordinator—who coordinates the school's compliance with Section 504, Title II, or both laws. You may contact that person for information about how to address your concerns.

The school must also have grievance procedures. These procedures are not the same as the due process procedures with which you may be familiar from high school. But the postsecondary school's grievance procedures must include steps to ensure that you may raise your concerns fully and fairly, and must provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints.

School publications, such as student handbooks and catalogs, usually describe the steps that you must take to start the grievance process. Often, schools have both formal and informal processes. If you decide to use a grievance process, you should be prepared to present all the reasons that support your request.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the school's grievance procedures or wish to pursue an alternative to using those procedures, you may file a complaint against the school with OCR or in a court. You may learn more about the OCR complaint process from the brochure *How to File a Discrimination Complaint with the Office for Civil Rights*, which you may obtain by contacting us at the addresses and phone numbers below, or at <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/howto.html>.

If you would like more information about the responsibilities of postsecondary schools to students with disabilities, read the OCR brochure *Auxiliary Aids and Services for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities: Higher Education's Obligations Under Section 504 and Title II of the ADA*. You

may obtain a copy by contacting us at the address and phone numbers below, or at <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/auxaids.html>.

Students with disabilities who know their rights and responsibilities are much better equipped to succeed in postsecondary school. We encourage you to work with the staff at your school because they, too, want you to succeed. Seek the support of family, friends, and fellow students, including those with disabilities. Know your talents and capitalize on them, and believe in yourself as you embrace new challenges in your education.

To receive more information about the civil rights of students with disabilities in education institutions, you may contact us at:

Customer Service Team
Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Education
Washington, D.C. 20202-1100
Phone: 1-800-421-3481
TDD: 1- 877-521-2172
Email: ocr@ed.gov
Web site: www.ed.gov/ocr

* You may be familiar with another federal law that applies to the education of students with disabilities—the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). That law is administered by the Office of Special Education Programs in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the U.S. Department of Education. The IDEA and its individualized education program (IEP) provisions do not apply to postsecondary schools. This pamphlet does not discuss the IDEA or state and local laws that may apply.

This publication is in the public domain. Authorization to reproduce it in whole or in part is granted. The publication's citation should be: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, *Students With Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities*, Washington, D.C., 2011.

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This publication is also available on the Department's Web site at <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/transition.html>. Any updates to this publication will be available on this website. On request, this publication can be made available in alternate formats, such as Braille, large print, or computer diskette. For more information, you may contact the Department's Alternate Format Center at 202-260-0852 or 202-260-0818. If you use TDD, call 1-800-877-8339.

NHTI Disabilities Services
Parent Transition Resources: Annotated Bibliography
Note: Links were accurate at the time of updated publication.

Beloit College. (2005) Mindset List ® for the class of 2009. Retrieved August 10, 2006, from <http://www.beloit.edu/mindset>

A listing of facts which give insight into the thinking of entering college freshmen born in 1987, e.g., “#16 voice mail has always been available”... Worth pondering.

Casey Family Programs (2001 updates through 2012). <http://lifeskills.casey.org>

Ready, Set, Fly A parents' guide to teaching life skills

Life Skills Assessment. Internet-based interactive assessment that will give score immediately and will maintain confidentiality. User friendly.

Life Skills Guidebook. Activities to develop life skills at “teachable moments.”

Clemetson, L. (2006, December 8). *Off to college alone, shadowed by mental illness. The New York Times.* Retrieved December 8, 2006, from

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/08/health/08Kids.html>

Several college freshmen describe how they adjust to dealing with depression far from family.

Coburn, K.L. & Treeger, M.L. (2003). *Letting Go: A Parents' Guide to Understanding the College Years.* New York: Harper.

Based on real-life experience, this book offers compassionate, practical information for parents.

Farber, A. (2011). *College: what parents need to know.* Dayton, OH: Woodburn Press.

A concise, 30 page booklet on the college experience and the changing role of parents.

Hofer, B. & Moore, A. S. (2010). *The iConnected Parent.* New York: Free Press, Simon and Schuster.

Now students and parents can be in touch 24/7 with communication technologies, Is that good or bad or some of both? Hoffer and Moore present extensive research and offer guidance for parents who want to be supportive without being “helicopter parents.”

Jackson, M. (2006, December 17). More parents unready to let go. *Boston Sunday Globe*, p. G1.

This “Balancing Acts” column advises how “helicopter parents” can distinguish between supporting and smothering their young adult children.

Jarrow, J. An open letter to parents of students with disabilities about to enter college. Retrieved July 7, 2014 from <http://arkahead.org/letterfromjane.htm>

A warm, honest, and informative letter from a parent who is also President of Disabilities Access Information and Support. Full of good ideas.

Johnson, H.E. & Schelhas-Miller, C. (2000). *Don't tell me what to do, just send money: the essential parenting guide to the college years.* New York: St. Martin's Griffin.

Brimming with humor, this guide covers fundamental college issues.

Kastner, L. & Wyatt, J. (2002). *Launching years: strategies for parents form senior year to college life.* Crown Publishing Group.

This book presents practical advice for dealing with the challenges of transition for student, parents, and siblings.

MacKay, J.K. & Ingram, W. (2001). *Let the journey begin: a parent's monthly guide to the college experience.* Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.

Full of tips for adjustment, this guide follows a freshman's first college year.

Marymount University (n.d.) Tips for parents to help their student. Retrieved August 10, 2006, from <http://www.marymount.edu/parents/tips.aspx>

A short list of Dos and Don'ts for parents of college students.

Megan, K. (2006, October 5). About those calls home. *New Hampshire Union Leader*, p. B4. This bulleted article offers advice for responding to the typical calls home from a college freshman.

Megan, K. (April 24, 2006). "Gap year" a chance for students to mature, focus. *New Hampshire Union Leader*, p. C6.

A year off between high school and college can benefit some students.

Megan, K. (2006, October 5). New students are sometimes lonely, homesick but parents shouldn't react too quickly. *New Hampshire Union Leader*, p. B4.

Anecdotes from both new college students and their parents offer suggestions for a smooth transition during first semester.

New Hampshire Next: your guide to life after high school. A Parenting NH Publication. Sponsored by The NHHEAF Network.

This is a magazine published yearly which gives a wealth of information about the numerous options for students after high school and for their parents.

Rizzo, F. (n.d.) A parents guide to freshman-year woes. Retrieved August 10, 2006, from Marymount University website <http://www.marymount.edu/parents/woes.aspx>

The dean for Student Development at Marymount University (VA) offers humorous suggestions for responding to "The Top 10 Freshman Cries for Help."

Savage, M. (2003). *You're On Your Own (but I'm here if you need me): Mentoring your child during the college years.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Parent and student services professional Marjorie Savage "helps parents identify the boundaries between necessary involvement and respect for their child's independence."

Shellenbarger, S. (2005, July 28). Tucking them in – in the dorm: Colleges ward off over-involved parents. *Wall Street Journal*.

This "Work & Family" column gives examples of incoming college students who are less prepared with basic skills – and their overly involved parents. College administrators offer suggestions.

Thompson, L. (2006, December 1). Helicopter parenting. *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*.

Retrieved January 2, 2007, from <http://www.cleveland.com>

Tips for letting go of college-aged children.

There are many organizations with websites that can be sources of information for parents on transition as well as many other related topics. The following are **a few examples**. Unfortunately, websites change frequently. These sites were active when this was written.

Family Resource Connection (FRC), NH State Library

<http://www.nh.gov/nhsl/frc/contract.html>

Governor's Commission on Disability www.nh.gov/disability/

Institute on Disability <http://iod.unh.edu/Home.aspx>

Parent Information Center www.parentinformationcenter.org

Transition Toolkit www.nhspecial.org

Shared Work: Transition Community of Practice www.sharedwork.org

Statewide Independent Living www.silcnh.org

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