

A decorative graphic on the right side of the page. It features three blue circles of different sizes, each containing three concentric white circles. Three light gray lines originate from the top left and fan out towards the right, passing behind the blue circles.

Missouri AHEAD College Guidebook

Missouri Association on Higher Education and Disability

www.moahead.org

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Acknowledgments..... | 5 |
| Introduction to the Missouri College Guidebook | 6 |
| How to Use This Guidebook..... | 7 |
| Section 1 Documentation | 8 |
| What documentation will I need for accommodations on college entrance exams? | 8 |
| What documentation will I need for accommodations in college? | 9 |
| What documentation will I need for accommodations for a learning disability? | 9 |
| What documentation will I need for accommodations for ADD/ADHD? | 10 |
| Section 2 Laws..... | 11 |
| IDEA, Section 504, and the ADA..... | 11 |
| Responsibilities under P.L. 94-142 Amendments, Section 504, and ADA | 12 |
| Section 3 Transition | 13 |
| Differences between High School and College | 13 |
| Legal | 13 |
| Academic Environment..... | 13 |
| Responsibility | 14 |
| Stress/Support and Physical Environment..... | 15 |
| Differences between Vocational-Technical Schools, Community Colleges, and Bachelor Degree/Colleges and Universities | 16 |
| What to Expect from Postsecondary Institutions | 16 |
| What Disability Support Services Offices Do | 16 |
| Importance of Technology | 17 |
| Alternative Textbooks | 17 |
| Learning Styles | 18 |
| Student Responsibilities..... | 18 |
| Section 4 Preparation | 19 |
| Ways Parents Can Encourage Students to Prepare for Postsecondary Education..... | 19 |
| Ways Students Can Prepare for Postsecondary Education | 20 |
| Residential Housing Considerations | 20 |
| Tips on Self-Advocacy | 23 |
| Get Ready For Your First Meeting with the College/University Disability Support Services Office ... | 23 |
| Section 5 Resources | 24 |
| Educational Planning..... | 24 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Financial Aid | 24 |
| Assistive Technology | 24 |
| Alternative Text..... | 24 |
| Career Planning..... | 24 |
| General Information | 25 |
| Disability Specific | 25 |
| Vision..... | 25 |
| Learning Disabilities | 25 |
| Health Related | 25 |
| Psychological..... | 25 |
| Neurological | 26 |
| ADD/ADHD | 26 |
| Division of Vocational Rehabilitation..... | 26 |
| Rehabilitation Services for the Blind..... | 28 |
| Section 6 College Profiles..... | 29 |
| Section 7 Appendix | 30 |
| Junior Year Checklist | 31 |
| Senior Year Checklist..... | 34 |
| Get Ready For Your First Meeting with the College/University Disability Support Services Office... | 38 |
| Sample Letter to Admissions Office | 41 |
| Sample Letter to Disability Support Services Office | 42 |
| Postsecondary Education Inquiry Form Regarding Services for Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing Students..... | 43 |
| Postsecondary Education Inquiry Form Regarding Services for Students with Visual Disabilities | 44 |
| Postsecondary Education Inquiry Form Regarding Services for Students with Mobility Disabilities | 45 |
| Feedback | 46 |
| References | 47 |

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This guide is a service project of the Missouri Association on Higher Education and Disability.

Introduction to the Missouri College Guidebook

Students with disabilities have been entering postsecondary programs in ever increasing numbers since 1985. While postsecondary institutions are aware of their responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to meet the needs of qualified students with disabilities in their programs, students have equal, if not greater, responsibilities to be partners with educational facilities in meeting their needs.

Students must know their rights as well as their responsibilities under the law. They must understand their disability and they should know what accommodations are needed for successful completion of coursework, independent living needs, and needs relating to personal/social skills. Students with disabilities must look very closely at the programs and services offered by a campus to ensure a good match for their needs.

The Missouri AHEAD College Guidebook focuses on information that students, teachers, and parents should know for students to be successful in postsecondary education. Students with disabilities must be much stronger self-advocates than other students.

The Missouri AHEAD College Guidebook was written to help students with disabilities achieve access into postsecondary educational institutions and find success once they are enrolled. It was also written to help postsecondary institutions establish connections with secondary schools in order to recruit qualified students with disabilities into programs. The guidebook should also be helpful to secondary special education teachers and parents of students with disabilities.

The authors hope that this guidebook provides a “roadmap” for students, teachers, and parents as they plan for the transition from high school to postsecondary educational institutions.

NOTE: Information contained in this guidebook is not, nor is it intended to be, legal advice. For specific questions about the law or circumstances at your institutions, please consult your legal counsel directly.

How to Use This Guidebook

This guidebook was primarily written for students who are interested in attending a postsecondary institution. Parents, teachers, and counselors can also benefit from the guidebook. Postsecondary personnel can utilize information in the guidebook to help secondary personnel better prepare students for the transition to postsecondary education, develop networks with other campuses serving students with disabilities, and better work with students who have disabilities who are already on campus.

The guidebook is broken into different sections, each with a different topic related to transition. A brief description of each section follows.

Section 1 Documentation – This section explains what kind of documentation will be needed to access services in a postsecondary setting. It stresses that documentation should be current, relevant, and contain specific information related to the disability and academic accommodations the student may request.

Section 2 Laws – This section is a summary of the laws protecting students with disabilities. This summary compares the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This will help students understand their legal rights and responsibilities. Parents, teachers, and counselors may also find this summary helpful.

Section 3 Transition – This is an important section for students interested in postsecondary education as it outlines some of the differences between high school and vocational-technical postsecondary training, community colleges, and four-year institutions.

This section also provides information about the role of disability support services offices on postsecondary campuses.

Section 4 Preparation – This section will be most useful for students and parents as it provides information and forms related to decision making, choosing a college, and self-advocacy skills. There are also sample letters students can use to gather information from disability support services offices and a checklist for students and parents to help in preparation for transition.

Section 5 Resources – This section is full of resources that will be useful to students, parents, teachers, and postsecondary personnel serving students with disabilities.

Section 6 College Profiles – The college profiles provide information about accessibility and services, as well as contact information for a number of postsecondary institutions in the state of Missouri.

This section is only available in the [web version](#).

Section 7 Appendixes – This section contains printable versions of each of the forms presented throughout the Guidebook.

Section 1 Documentation

What documentation will I need for accommodations on college entrance exams?

ACT

There are three (3) accommodation options offered by ACT:

- Standard Time National Testing with Accommodations
- Extended Time National Testing
- Special Testing with Extended Time and Alternate Format

Documentation requirements include:

- **Qualified Diagnosticians** – documentation must be provided by a qualified professional whose credentials are appropriate to the disability. Name, title, and professional credentials must be clearly stated in the documentation.
- **Currency of Documentation** – The disability must have been diagnosed or reconfirmed by a qualified professional with the three (3) academic years prior to the date of the request. In addition to this documentation, applicants are asked to submit information regarding whether accommodations have previously been provided in an academic setting or on other standardized tests due to disability. This documentation is often the current IEP.
- **Substantiation of Diagnosis** – Documentation must provide a comprehensive evaluation with objective evidence of a substantial functional limitation. See the ACT web page or one of the ACT booklets available from ACT.

ACT
www.actstudent.org
PO Box 4028
Iowa City, Iowa 52243-4028
(319) 337-1332

SAT

There are four (4) major categories for testing accommodations:

- **Presentation** – large print, reader, Braille, Braille device for written responses, visual magnification, audio amplification, audiocassette, sign/oral presentation
- **Responding** – verbal/dictated to scribe, tape recorder, computer without grammar/cut and paste features, large block answer sheet
- **Timing/Scheduling** – frequent breaks, extended time, multiple day, specified time of day
- **Setting** – small group setting, private room, special lighting/acoustics, adaptive/special furniture/tools, alternative test site (with proctor present), preferential seating

SAT
www.sat.collegeboard.com/home
College Board SAT Program
PO Box 025505
Miami, FL 33102
(866) 756-7346

In order to be eligible for accommodations on the SAT, students must:

- Have a disability that necessitates testing accommodations
- Have documentation on file at your school that supports the need for requested accommodations and meets the *Guidelines for Documentation*
- Receive and use the requested accommodations, due to the disability, for school-based tests

What documentation will I need for accommodations in college?

Documentation for college accommodations is similar to the documentation needed for admission/placement testing accommodations. In general, a physician with supporting medical/diagnostic evidence must document a disability. Relevant medical history should be provided that states the functional limitation(s) and the need for accommodations.

While documentation requirements may vary from school to school, many two- and four-year colleges have adopted documentation standards similar to the following:

- documentation must be current, usually 3-5 years
- documentation must be signed by a qualified professional
- documentation must provide information regarding current functioning
- documentation must explain how the disability impacts the student in an educational setting

Examples:

| <u>Disability</u> | <u>Documentation</u> |
|--------------------------|---|
| Visual Disability | Ocular Report |
| Hearing Disability | Audiological Report |
| Health Disability | Physicians Verification and Diagnosis |
| Orthopedic Disability | Physicians Verification and Diagnosis |
| Psychological Disability | Mental Health Professional's Verification and Diagnosis |

"A student requesting academic adjustments is responsible for providing documentation that clearly identifies the disability and provides sufficient information regarding the manifestations of this disability to permit the institution to make a determination as to whether the requested adjustments are appropriate."

Haywood, Lawton and Associates, Eds. (1991). Documenting the need for academic adjustments. Disability Accommodation Digest 1(3), 3. Boston, MA.

NOTE: Because each college has its own policies, it is important that you contact the disability support services office at the college of your choice to ask about their documentation policies.

What documentation will I need for accommodations for a learning disability?

For students with learning disabilities, a full, standardized assessment is required for documentation when requesting accommodations in a postsecondary setting. This assessment must be based on adult norms, which means the student must be 16 years of age or older for a valid assessment.

Under the current IDEA, Special Education departments are no longer mandated to conduct standardized three-year re-evaluations. Generally, informal assessment is deemed appropriate to determine the educational program for the following year in a K-12 setting. However, this informal assessment data is not useful to disability service providers in higher education when determining eligibility for accommodations. The following are standard documentation requirements when requesting accommodations for a learning disability:

- Diagnosis by a qualified professional
- Recent data to provide a current “picture” of the individual (usually within three to five years)
- Assessment information, including:
 - Diagnostic interview
 - Intellectual assessment – aptitude/information processing (using adult norms preferred)
 - Academic achievement levels
 - Standard scores or percentiles should be reported for all normed measures
- Specific diagnosis
- Clinical summary indicating substantial limitations to learning or other major life activities
- Any records of prior accommodations used
- Recommendations and rationale for accommodations

Once students decide that they want to attend college, they should notify the IEP team as soon as possible so transition planning can begin. If the appropriate assessment is not provided in high school, the student will be responsible for obtaining it on their own.

What documentation will I need for accommodations for ADD/ADHD?

- Provision by a qualified professional
- Recent data to provide a current “picture” of the individual (usually within three (3) years)
- Assessment information, including:
 - Evidence of early onset which, by definition in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (4th Edition) (DSM-IV), if first exhibited in childhood and manifests itself in more than one setting
 - Diagnostic interview
 - Relevant testing using reliable, valid, standardized and age-appropriate (usually adult) assessments and norms
 - Number of applicable DSM-IV criteria and description of how they affect the individual
 - Specific diagnosis
 - Clinical summary including how the effects of ADD/ADHD are mediated by the recommended accommodations

It is important to realize that accommodations can change over time and with differing environmental demands. It is also important to note that accommodations provided in higher education institutions will be granted only if directly related to the documented disability.

[Table of Contents](#)

Section 2 Laws

The information below provides a comparison among the laws that affect students with disabilities in education. K-12 schools must comply with the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), while postsecondary institutions such as colleges and universities must comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Because the laws are very different and specific to the educational setting, students and parents should become familiar with the differences.

IDEA, Section 504, and the ADA

| | IDEA | SECTION 504 | ADA |
|-------------------|--|---|---|
| MISSION | To provide a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment | To establish a “level playing field” and prevent discrimination based on disability | Strengthens Section 504 and extends coverage to employment, private institutions, and other previously unnamed agencies and organizations |
| APPLIES TO | All public schools, pre-kindergarten to 12 th grade or age 21 if enrolled in a public secondary program | All institutions and programs receiving federal financial assistance; includes private institutions where students receive federal financial assistance | Public and private education, employment, transportation, accommodations and telecommunications regardless of whether there is federal funding |
| COVERS | Those who have educational disabilities that require special education services to age 21 or until graduation | All qualified persons with disabilities regardless of whether they received services in elementary/secondary school; a person is “otherwise qualified” if the person is able to meet the requisite academic and technical standards with or with accommodations | All qualified persons with disabilities and people without disabilities who are discriminated against because of their relationship with a person with a disability |
| DEFINED AS | Disabilities covered are defined in the Act | No specific list of disabilities; the definition of a person with a disability is a person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such disability, is regarded as having such disability | Same criteria as Section 504; HIV status, contagious and non-contagious diseases are also defined as disabilities |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---------------------|
| IDENTIFICATION/PROCESS | Responsibility of the school. No expense to the parent or the student. Transfer of parental rights to the student at age 18 | Responsibility of the student to self-identify to the institution and provide appropriate documentation of disability | Same as Section 504 |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---------------------|

Responsibilities under P.L. 94-142 Amendments, Section 504, and ADA

| Issue | Responsibility at Secondary Level | Responsibility at Postsecondary Level |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Identification | School | Student |
| Assessment | School | Student |
| Programming | School/Parent | Student/Institution |
| Advocacy | School/Parent | Student |
| Decision Making | Placement Team | Student |
| Transition Planning | Placement Team | Student |

[Table of Contents](#)

Section 3 Transition

Differences between High School and College

Legal

| High School | College |
|---|--|
| Services provided under IDEA or Section 504, Subsection D | Services provided under Section 504, Subsection E of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) |
| School district responsible for identifying and evaluating disability at no cost to student or family | Student must self-identify and provide documentation of disability |
| School provides evaluation | Student must pay cost of evaluation |
| School is responsible for the cost of special programming | Postsecondary institutions responsible for costs involved in providing accommodations and/or essential auxiliary aids based on documentation of disability |
| Provides special programs and comprehensive support services | Postsecondary institution not legally required to provide special programs with comprehensive support services |

Academic Environment

| High School | College |
|---|--|
| Tasks more structured | Tasks less structured |
| Step-by-step instructions given | Student held responsible for developing a method to complete tasks |
| Grades based on a variety of activities | Grades based on fewer tasks or larger projects; semester grades sometimes based on two or three test scores and exams cover more information |
| Assignments are modified or shortened | Assignments are not modified or shortened |
| Extra time given to complete assignments | Assignments must be completed by deadline; students are expected to modify course load in order to meet deadlines (i.e., take fewer courses) |
| Teachers help prepare students for exams | Students responsible for own exam preparation |
| Exam questions tend to be objective | Exam questions more difficult to predict; exams require more writing, and essay exams more common |
| Just memorizing facts may be sufficient to pass tests | Harder work required for earning good grades; more major writing assignments; effective communication skills more important; paying attention in class more important; studying more important |
| Teachers trained in teacher education programs | Instructors trained in content/skill areas; instruction often provided via lecture; lecture may cover different information than textbook; instructors rarely suggest ways to learn materials; much less direct instructor contact; student must |

| | |
|---|--|
| | be flexible and learn at pace established by instructor |
| Homework requires limited time | Students spend two to four hours doing homework for every hour spent in class |
| Homework assigned on a day-to-day basis | Long-range, comprehensive assignments given |
| Instruction more experiential; student learns by doing and experiencing | Effective reading comprehension skills more important; good notetaking more important; few visual and study aids provided; identifying main ideas more important |
| Most classes meet every day | Classes may meet less often; less time in the classroom |
| Most classes have a maximum of 25-30 students | Classes have from 20-500 students |
| Monitoring of progress done by other people | Student progress may not be monitored closely by instructors; student needs to self-monitor progress |
| Exam questions may be clarified and paraphrased | Reader for exams read questions only; reads questions exactly as written; no paraphrasing or clarification of questions |
| Student may rely on external motivators | Self-evaluations; motivation must be internalized |
| Teachers recognize the need to help students and provide the help | Student must independently seek additional and supplementary sources of information; student must initiate requests for additional help |
| | Student has opportunity to take web-based course, telecourses or distance learning courses |

Responsibility

| High School | College |
|--|---|
| Fewer responsibilities | More independent living (i.e., car, insurance, gas) |
| Career decisions not expected | Student expected to know career goal |
| Student assisted with decisions | Increased number of decisions; student expected to make independent decisions |
| Limits set for student by parents and teachers | More self-evaluation and self-monitoring required; more independent reading and studying required; student establishes and attains own goals; student accountable to whomever pays for education; interest in learning generated by student |
| Schedule set by school | Students are responsible for designing a schedule of courses in which they can be successful (i.e., type of courses, number of courses, time of day, etc.) |
| Attendance and progress well monitored | Attendance and progress not monitored |
| Student's time structured by home and school | Student responsible for managing time and commitments; more "free" time during day; time management and organizational skills critical |
| Special education teacher liaison between student, other teachers, administrators, and parents | Student determines when help is needed |
| Help readily available | Student must locate the appropriate resources |
| Student need not seek out help | Student responsible for self-advocacy; student must self-identify disability and request services; |

| | |
|---|---|
| | student required to provide recent documentation of disability which clearly supports requested accommodations; student must independently seek help using effective communication skills; services must be requested well in advance |
| Student labeled as “special education” | Student not labeled |
| Student possibly served separately from other students | Students not served separately from other students |
| Personnel talk freely with parent about student progress and planning | Other students and faculty will not know about student’s disability without student’s permission; faculty only notified of required accommodations; personnel cannot discuss student without student’s written permission |

Stress/Support and Physical Environment

| High School | College |
|---|---|
| Lighter workload; slower pace; less stress | Increased workload; faster pace; more stress; entire course completed in 16 weeks |
| Fewer social distractions | Student experiences new and increased; social pressures and new social expectations; relationships with family and friends change |
| More contact with instructors | Less contact with instructors |
| Less academic competition | Less individual feedback; more academic competition |
| School must work with students with behavior problems | Behavior problems not tolerated; student more independent and accountable for behavior |
| Student given structure | Student given a little direction |
| Goal of secondary education is completion of degree | Goal of postsecondary education is access to opportunities; student expected to know what he/she wants from postsecondary education, classes, life, etc. |
| Live at home with family and friends for support | Student may leave home where family and friends not readily available for support; personal support network different; student experiences increased financial responsibilities |
| Most high schools have one building | Most colleges have several buildings and mobility is the responsibility of the student |
| Home environment with set eating and sleeping patterns | Student is responsible for own meals and sleep if living away from home |

Differences between Vocational-Technical Schools, Community Colleges, and Bachelor Degree/Colleges and Universities

| Vocational Technical Schools | Community Colleges | Four-Year Colleges/Universities |
|---|---|---|
| Prepare for a specific occupation through skills training | Offer associate degrees and certificates in variety of areas; other programs academic based | Multitude of degrees; associates, bachelor, and graduate programs |
| Integrate academic curriculum with hands-on | Some certificate programs may be hands-on | Few hands-on programs; most academic based |
| Tuition varies | Tuition is reasonably priced | More costly; charge higher tuition and fees |
| Typically no residential halls | Typically no residential halls | Option for residence hall living or commuting |
| Admissions requirements vary | Open admissions; some majors have selective admissions requirements | Competitive admissions |
| Public or proprietary | Public or proprietary | Public or private |
| Support services vary | Typically offer more support services and allow more time for adjustment to college life | Requires quicker adjustment to independent life |
| Smaller student/teacher ratio | Smaller student/teacher ratio | Tend to be larger both physically and student/teacher ratio |

What to Expect from Postsecondary Institutions

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines *accessible* as "capable of being reached." Disability support services offices exist on postsecondary campuses for that reason – to ensure equal access to programs and activities. **The effort to achieve success must come from the student.**

What Disability Support Services Offices Do

- Empower students to be independent
- Assure that the appropriate academic adjustments/auxiliary aids provided for students who register with the disability support services office.
- Ensure that no student is discriminated against by the institution on the basis of disability
- Ensure that other campus offices are prepared to serve students with disabilities
- Protect the student's right to confidentiality – disability support services offices will not give out specific information about a student's disability
- Establish clear procedures for documentation of disabilities and arrangement of academic adjustments/auxiliary aids – even if students choose not to access these services

"Students who choose not to access these established channels may be able to negotiate their academic adjustments/auxiliary aids needs on an individual basis, but may not bring a complaint for lack of accommodations if arrangements so negotiated prove to be unsatisfactory."

Jarrow, Jane E. (1983). Subpart E: The Impact of Section 504 on Postsecondary Education, AHEAD, Columbus, OH

Student requests need to be made in a timely manner and must be reasonable. It is important to remember that academic adjustments/auxiliary aids cannot:

- Substantially modify program requirements
- Result in fundamental alterations
- Cause undue administrative burden

Importance of Technology

Today more than ever before, technological advances assist people with disabilities in the classroom. For example, students who need help reading can use screen reading software. Students with problems in written communication or orthopedic disabilities can use speech recognition software. Other adaptive technology that might be available includes Braille machines, talking calculators, spellcheckers, computer notetaking systems, assistive listening devices, and adaptive software for the computer. Contact the disability support services office to get more information about what is available at each institution you are considering.

Alternative Textbooks

Depending on the functional limitations identified in the documentation, students with learning, visual, and physical disabilities may qualify for alternative textbooks. An alternative textbook may come in a digital audio CD format or an e-text that can be used with screen reading software.

Digital audio CD textbooks may be helpful to a variety of students. For example, this might be an alternative to Braille for students who are blind or have low vision, a student who has a learning disability in reading, or a student who finds it difficult to carry books or turn pages due to a physical disability. Students listen to the digital audio CD textbook using a digital CD player or computer software.

E-text is most often obtained from the textbook publisher and may come in a PDF or Microsoft Word document. Students access e-text using screen reading software programs, so as with digital audio textbooks, students with different disability types can benefit.

Due to copyright laws, textbook publishers require that the student purchase the textbook and provide proof of purchase to the disability support services office prior to receiving the digital audio or e-text version.

It is a good idea to try audio textbooks and e-text prior to attending college so you can learn how to listen and take notes from them. This skill will enhance your chances of success if you have a print access disability.

In order to make sure your textbooks arrive on time, you will need to order them as early as possible. Consult with the disability support services office at the institution you plan to attend to get more information about the process for requesting and ordering alternative textbooks.

Learning Styles

Individuals take in and process information in different ways (e.g., seeing/hearing, reflecting/acting, logic reasoning/intuitive skills). For example, when a student with a visual learning style is in a classroom with an instructor who lectures only, the student may have a difficult time learning the information presented. This may not be the best learning environment for this student.

It is helpful for students to understand their learning preferences to maximize academic performance and perhaps learn to bolster their weaker areas. Students wishing to investigate their particular learning styles should contact an academic counselor at their school.

For more information on learning styles, visit www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ilsweb.html

Student Responsibilities

- Register with the disability support services office. This is recommended even if the student chooses not to use accommodations
- Present comprehensive, recent documentation of disability
- Have knowledge of how the disability will affect learning
- Request accommodations in a timely manner and follow the procedures established by the disability support services office
- Be willing to talk about accommodation needs with your instructors
- Seek out and use campus resources (library, learning labs, counselors, etc.)
- Maintain contact with the disability support services office staff
- Demonstrate self-advocacy skills
- Inform the disability support services office staff of problems or schedule changes as soon as they occur
- Use assistive technology responsibly and inform staff of problems

[Table of Contents](#)

Section 4 Preparation

Ways Parents Can Encourage Students to Prepare for Postsecondary Education

- Encourage your student to realistically examine whether postsecondary education is a suitable option.
- Work with your student in exploring and choosing postsecondary options keeping the comprehensive educational and vocational assessment of your student's abilities and limitations in mind.
- Encourage your student to select and apply to postsecondary institutions that will offer both the curriculum and the necessary level of disability related support services.
- Encourage your student to find out if they will meet the entrance requirements for the institution they plan to attend.
- Work with your student when selecting appropriate campus housing, if planning to live away from home. A small residence hall may be more conducive to studying and developing friendships than a large residence hall or apartment.
- Encourage your student to ask questions and register with the disability support services office early to arrange for accommodations.
- Determine financial requirements and work with your student to ensure they meet financial aid deadlines.
- Work with your student to prepare them to meet the variety of challenges at the postsecondary level such as:
 - less teacher contact and time in class;
 - more time studying independently;
 - fewer tests covering a broader base of knowledge, making it more difficult for student and teacher to monitor progress;
 - increased freedom, requiring self-discipline and self-management (e.g. going to class, completing assignments, scheduling time);
 - adjustment to new social expectations and a different personal support network.
- Work with your student to link up with support services such as Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic, and other adult service agencies.
- Work with your student to plan for personal care, transportation, mobility, print access, and technology needs.
- Encourage your student to collect educational documents pertaining to his or her secondary school program that will help to facilitate service delivery in the postsecondary setting. This packet should include a copy of most recent diagnostic evaluation and IEP and all other testing/evaluations. This should go into the student's college portfolio.
- Encourage your student to complete the activities listed in "What Students Can Do to Prepare for Postsecondary Education." (See next section)

- Encourage your student to ask the Resource or Special Education teacher to complete the **Get Ready for Your First Meeting with the College/University Disability Support Services Office** included in this guide. The student should keep this in his/her college portfolio.
- Request a full diagnostic evaluation to be completed during junior or senior year. This evaluation should use tests that are based on adult norms. Under IDEA, parents and students can access this service by asking for "an evaluation to determine if a disability still exists."
- Become aware of the transition components of the IEP.
- Promote development of student responsibility and control by increasing opportunities for student to advocate for self.
- Provide opportunities for student to practice making decisions.
- Foster student independence through increased responsibility and opportunity for self-management.
- Provide as much support as needed for student during the adjustment phase.
- Communicate confidence in your student's ability to be successful in a postsecondary setting.
- Encourage your student to develop maximum independence in learning, study, and living skills critical to success in postsecondary settings.
- Encourage your student to be proactive in developing a support network and seeking help and guidance when needed. Caution him or her about becoming overly dependent on support systems.

Ways Students Can Prepare for Postsecondary Education

It is a lot easier for the junior or senior in high school to worry "tomorrow" about what happens after high school. However, with a little planning now, and with the help of your high school counselor, your move to a postsecondary school, such as a community college or university, will be much smoother.

To guide you through transition planning, we have provided a [Junior Year Checklist](#) and a [Senior Year Checklist](#) in Section 7 so that you can keep track of what needs to be done and what has already been completed. These lists are just a beginning, so there's no doubt you will have many more questions. Continue to look at the checklists regularly with your parents and counselor.

Residential Housing Considerations

For many students, deciding where to live on campus is almost as challenging as deciding what college to go to in the first place. If you think you might need accommodations in your residential setting, here are some things to consider:

- **Do your homework on the different options.** Many schools have created "first year experiences" where all first year students live in certain buildings while upper-class students live elsewhere. Know exactly what living options exist. Also, know what will exist for future years.
- **Talk to people** about the general pros and cons of each option while getting information on aspects such as:

- General noise level and activity of the building (quieter or louder; do quiet hours exist; visitation rules; etc.)
 - Community bathrooms/showers, suite style (2-4 rooms per bathroom/shower), or bathroom/shower within each room?
 - Location to academic building where you will take classes (near, far, or in the middle)
 - How many students per floor? The more students who live on one floor, the greater the likelihood of increased activity. Is this a good thing?
 - How many housing staff per floor?
 - Where is the nearest location for meals in each building? Do meal location options change on the weekend?
 - What supports are available if there are roommate problems?
 - Any themed floors or themed buildings (Business students, pledge to not smoke/drink, Honor students, etc.) that might be of interest to you?
 - Do you have to live on campus as a first year student? If so, when is the first year when you can live off campus?
- **Know the housing registration process!** Most schools should have something in place to consider specific accommodation requests. However, the initial registration process is usually the same for all students. Just because you need an accommodation, it does not mean that you will be “bumped” to the head of the line. When at all possible, always know what housing options you want and apply as early as possible. Doing so will give you the most options and will increase the likeliness that your primary preferences are met.
 - **Know the housing accommodation process.** Are accommodation requests made on the initial housing application? Or, do you need to speak with someone separately? How are requests considered and approved?
 - Realize that, in **choosing to live on campus**, you will be living in an environment full of activity. While some buildings are busier and noisier than others, the college residential experience is about social interaction (Thursday night TV parties, late night hallway talks, video game tournaments, etc., etc.). There are times when it will be noisy and when quality studying will only be possible away from your room. Distractions are inevitable. In choosing to live on campus, you are often choosing to partake in this environment. It is your responsibility to know when you have time to relax and when you need to focus on homework. Most universities do not guarantee a residential environment to be fitting for studying during some or all of the day. Quiet study areas are located throughout most campuses for this purpose. If a highly active residential environment might be problematic for you, give serious consideration as to whether or not you do indeed want to live on campus.
 - If you have **learning accommodation needs**, here are some things to consider:
 - Some students with learning disabilities, attention deficit disorders, psychiatric disabilities, etc., want a single room to minimize distraction when studying. However, many universities do not approve single room accommodations for students with learning disabilities or attention deficit disorder. If a student has difficulty with

successfully living in a residential building, it is often because of the overall building activity and not the specific room arrangement. You will have to manage this environment yourself.

- If a university does offer a single room as an accommodation, you will often have to pay the single room rate (which is usually higher than a double room rate) even if the single room is approved as an accommodation. Make sure you know what expenses you will incur with or without an accommodation.
- If you have **physical accommodation needs**, things to consider include:
 - How accessible is the building? Are there accessible rooms already in place?
 - If you will need to request a physical modification to a room (strobe fire alarm, raised desk to accommodate a wheelchair, roll-in shower, etc.), who on campus do you make this request to? How early do you need to notify? The more physically involved an accommodation to a room might be, the longer it will take to complete the work. Requesting the accommodation with ample advanced notice in such instances is important to assure that your request can be completed on time.
 - Are you considering a personal attendant who will either visit daily or perhaps live in the room with you? If so, how does the university handle this request? Be sure to talk about costs. Personal attendant costs are almost never the responsibility of the university. The student pays for these services. A live-in personal care attendant will likely be charged the same room rate that a student occupying that space would be charged. It is extremely important to develop a concrete plan with the appropriate university contact if a personal attendant is involved.
 - If you will need a single room to accommodate your needs, can you request this? What rate will you be charged? Even though you might be approved for a single room as an accommodation, you will likely pay a higher single room rate. Make sure you get the specifics.
 - Most universities do not have personal transportation services (from residential hall door to academic building door). Transportation is viewed as your responsibility. Some universities have campus shuttles, but you will likely still have to travel some distance to get to these points. Keep this in mind when you decide where to live.
 - Any major crossroads or intersections that might be problematic?
 - Anything you need to consider about the climate where you will be going to school?
- **Understand the contract!** Many residential housing contracts are 100% binding. When you sign up for housing, you are committed to paying the terms of the contract for the duration of the academic year. Whereas many apartment complexes might have an option to pay a fee for early termination, many campus residential contracts do not offer this possibility. Getting out of a housing contract once it is submitted and approved is often very difficult if not impossible to accomplish. Know exactly what you are getting into when you sign the contract. If it is binding and if you are unsure as to whether residential living is right for you, ask yourself if you need to think about it a little longer before signing.

Tips on Self-Advocacy

Communicating your needs effectively involves a number of factors. Students with disabilities who succeed in postsecondary education generally possess the following characteristics:

- Ability to articulate one's talents and abilities clearly
- Knowledge of the nature of one's disability and of the kinds of teaching strategies, tools and services, which best help one compensate
- Maturity and initiative to assume the greater share of one's own advocacy
- Adherence to effective, routine study habits, to whatever degree is necessary for success
- Acceptance of the fact that they may need help and the initiative to seek assistance for
- Acceptance of the idea that it may take longer to graduate than one's friends and that he/she may have to study harder than friends
- Recognition of the concept that postsecondary education is meant to be a challenge and that temporary frustrations are a part of the normal growth process.
- Regular, frequent communication with parents, friends, classroom professors, academic advisors, and support services personnel.

It has also been observed that the college-level student with a disability must be self-reliant and able to cope with the ever-changing challenges of daily living. Students with disabilities who have learned to rely heavily on both parents and teachers to direct them and manage their lives may have difficulty adjusting to the demands of college life. Thus, as a student, the task is to find a college/university that will stretch and develop talents, interests, and abilities while at the same time be respectful and supportive of needs.

Get Ready For Your First Meeting with the College/University Disability Support Services Office

As a student moving from high school to college, you should be prepared to describe your disability and the accommodations you have successfully and unsuccessfully used. The [Get Ready for Your First Meeting with the College/University Disability Support Services Office](#) in [Section 7](#) will assist you in collecting that information so you are prepared when you arrive for your first appointment with the college/university disability support services office. You may need to work with your resource teacher to answer some of the questions, but you should better understand your abilities and disabilities once complete.

[Table of Contents](#)

Section 5 Resources

Educational Planning

- [ACT](#) – Find information about the ACT, online registration, and test dates and locations
- [SAT](#) – Find information about the SAT, online registration, and test dates and locations
- [GRE](#) – Find information about the GRE, online registration, and test dates and locations
- [College View](#) – Get information about colleges, financial aid, and careers and majors
- [Office of Postsecondary Educations](#) – Information about postsecondary educational planning
- [College Is Possible \(CIP\)](#) – The American Council on Education’s (ACE) K-16 youth development program
- [National Center for Postsecondary Improvement](#) – Information about transition to higher education
- [Education Quest](#) – Free college planning services
- [Education Index](#) – See ratings and reviews for U.S. schools

Financial Aid

- [College Connection](#) – Find information on college scholarships
- [HEATH Resource Center](#) – Provides financial aid information on grants, work study, and loans
- [FinAid](#) – Student guide to financial aid
- [Student Aid on the Web](#) – Federal student aid information
- [Federal Student Aid-FAFSA](#) – Complete your FAFSA online
- [Career One Stop](#) – Financial Aid Center

Assistive Technology

- [Missouri Assistive Technology](#) – strives to increase the access of assistive technology by all Missourians with all disability types and of all ages
- [RESNA](#) – Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America
- [AbleData](#) – Assistive technology database
- [Alliance for Technology Access](#) – The mission of the ATA is to increase the use of assistive technology by children and adults with disability and functional limitations

Alternative Text

- [Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic](#) – Provides digital audio textbooks
- [National Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped](#) – Free Braille and audio materials to eligible borrowers

Career Planning

- [Career Builder](#) – Search for jobs and post a resume
- [True Careers](#) – Search for jobs and post a resume
- [Careers.org](#) – Provides information about various jobs and occupations
- [Careers.org-Missouri](#) – Job and occupation information specific to the state of Missouri
- [Employment Guide](#) – Provides information about various jobs across the U.S.
- [Dictionary of Occupational Titles](#) – Provides basic occupational information
- [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#) – Provides information about various occupations including training and education needed, earnings, what workers do on the job and more
- [Occupational Information Network](#) – A database of occupational requirements and worker attributes

- [Job Web](#) – Offers job search and career advice for new college graduates
- [Net Temps](#) – Job search for temporary, contract and full-time
- [USA Jobs](#) – Job search
- [Federal Jobs Digest](#) – Job search
- [Monster College](#) – Job search and career information for college students and new college graduates
- [Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#) – Provides information on job accommodations to individuals and employers
- [Equal Employee Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](#)

General Information

- [Association on Higher Education and Disability \(AHEAD\)](#)
- [Vocational Rehabilitation](#)
- [Rehabilitation Services for the Blind](#)
- [DisabilityResources.org](#) – Disability related information on a variety of topics
- [National Council on Disability \(NCD\)](#) – Federal agency to promote policies, programs, practices, and procedures that guarantee equal opportunity for all individuals with disabilities
- [National Rehabilitation Information Center](#)
- [Disability Access Information and Support](#) – A resource for the higher education community
- [National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities](#)
- [The Federation for Children with Special Needs](#)
- [Council for Exceptional Children](#)
- [Governor’s Council on Disability](#)

Disability Specific

Vision

- [Visual Impairment Guide](#)
- [American Foundation for the Blind](#)
- [National Federation of the Blind](#)

Learning Disabilities

- [Learning Disabilities Online](#)
- [National Center for Learning Disabilities](#)
- [Learning Disabilities Association of America](#)

Health Related

- [Meningitis Foundation of America](#)
- [National Multiple Sclerosis Society](#)

Psychological

- [Internet Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Behavioral and Medical Links](#)
- [National Alliance for the Mentally Ill](#)
- [Obsessive-Compulsive Foundation](#)
- [National Mental Health Association](#)

Neurological

- [National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Strokes](#)
- [Nonverbal Learning Disabilities](#)
- [Missouri Head Injury Advisory Council](#)

ADD/ADHD

- [Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactive Disorder](#)

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Central Office

<http://vr.dese.mo.gov>

Jeanne Loyd, Assistant Commissioner

3024 Dupont Circle Jefferson City, MO 65109-0525

(573) 751-3251 voice (877) 222-8963 toll free

(573) 751-1441 fax (573) 751-0881 tdd

Cape Girardeau VR

PO Box 1087

3102 Blattner Dr Suite 103

Cape Girardeau MO 63702

Ph: 573-290-5788; 877-702-9883

TDD: 573-290-5385; Fax: 573-290-5921

Poplar Bluff VR

1903 Northwood Drive Suite 3

Poplar Bluff MO 63901

Ph: 573-840-9550; 800-281-9894

Fax: 573-840-9551

Chillicothe VR

603 W Mohawk Road

Chillicothe MO 64601-3919

Ph: 660-646-1542; 866-572-4049

Fax: 660-646-9741

Rolla VR

1101 W Kingshighway

PO Box 550

Rolla MO 65401-0550

Ph: 573-368-2266; 800-890-2867

Fax: 573-368-2382

Columbia VR

1500 Vandiver Dr

Suite 111

Columbia MO 65202-1563

Ph: 573-882-9110; 877-222-8961

Fax: 573-884-5250; TDD: 573-882-9117

Sedalia VR

2115 W Broadway

Sedalia MO 65301-2114

Ph: 660-530-5560, 800-924-0419

Fax: 660-530-5567

Farmington VR

901 Progress Dr, Suite 100

PO Box 230

Farmington MO 63640

Ph: 573-218-6100; 800-640-7110

Fax: 573-218-6107; TDD: 573-218-6119

St. Charles VR

3737 Harry S Truman Blvd, Suite 400

St. Charles MO 63301-4052

Ph: 636-940-3300; Fax: 636-940-3313

Hannibal VR

112 Jaycee Dr
Hannibal MO 63401-2275
Ph: 573-248-2410; 877-222-8960
Fax: 573-248-2409

Jefferson City VR

1500A Southridge Dr
Jefferson City MO 65109-1135
Ph: 573-751-2343; Fax: 573-526-4474

Joplin VR

801 E 15th St
Joplin MO 64804-0922
Ph: 417-629-3067; 877-222-8964
Fax: 417-629-3148

Kansas City Downtown VR

615 E 13th St
KC State Building Room G-3
Kansas City MO 64106-2870
Ph: 816-889-2581; Fax: 816-889-2586

Kansas City East VR

243 NW Executive Way
Lee's Summit MO 64063
Ph: 816-622-0600; Fax: 816-662-0610

Kansas City North VR

310 NW Englewood Rd Suite 300
Gladstone MO 64118-0040
Ph: 816-467-7900; 877-270-0198
Fax: 816-467-7924; TDD: 816-270-0201

Kansas City Transition VR

243 NW Executive Way
Lee's Summit MO 64063
Ph: 816-622-0611
Fax: 816-622-0618

St. Joseph VR

State Office Building
525 Jules, Room 201
St. Joseph MO 64501-1990
Ph: 816-387-2280; 877-702-9876
Fax: 816-387-2089

St. Louis Downtown VR

220 South Jefferson Street, Suite 110
St. Louis MO 63103
Ph: 314-877-2940; Fax: 314-877-2959

St. Louis North VR

4040 Seven Hills Road
Florissant MO 63033
Ph: 314-877-3200; Fax: 314-877-3201

St. Louis South VR

3248 Laclede Station Road
St. Louis MO 63143
Ph: 314-877-1900; 877-222-8968
Fax: 314-877-1920

St. Louis West VR

9900 Page Avenue, Suite 104
St. Louis MO 63132
Ph: 314-877-1500; Fax: 314-877-1530
TDD: 314-877-1524

Springfield North VR

613 East Kearney
Springfield MO 65803
Ph: 417-895-5863; 877-222-8965
Fax: 417-895-5869; TDD: 417-895-7934

Springfield South VR

1735 West Catalpa Suite C
Springfield MO 65807
Ph: 417-895-5720; 877-222-8967
Fax: 417-895-5725

Kirksville VR

1412 N Osteopathy, Suite B
Kirksville MO 63501-3581
Ph: 660-785-2550; 877-222-8962
Fax: 660-785-2552

West Plains VR

3417 Division Dr, Suite 2
West Plains MO 65775
Ph: 417-256-8294; 877-222-8959
Fax: 417-256-8479

Nevada VR

621 E Highland, Suite 2
Nevada MO 64772-3971
Ph: 417-448-1332; 800-598-3471
Fax: 417-448-1351

Rehabilitation Services for the Blind

Rehabilitation Services for the Blind State Office

<http://www.dss.mo.gov/fsd/rsb>

615 Howerton Court PO Box 2320 Jefferson City, MO 65102-2320
(573) 751-4249 voice (573) 751-4984 fax (800) 735-2966 tdd

Kansas City North Office

615 E. 13th St., Room 409
Kansas City, MO 64106
(816) 889-2677 voice
(816) 889-2504 fax

Kansas City South Office

4900 Swope Parkway, Suite 2 South
Kansas City, Mo 64130-2800
(816) 929-7171 voice
(816) 929-7170 fax

St. Louis North District

10449 St. Charles
Rock Road
St. Ann, MO 63047-1827
(314) 890-4200 voice
(314) 426-3560 fax

Mid-Missouri District

308 E. High St., Suite B101
Jefferson City, MO 65101
(573) 751-2714 voice
(573) 526-4526 fax

Southwest District

149 Park Central Sq.
Springfield, MO 65806
(417) 895-6386 voice
(417) 895-6392 fax

Southeast District

106 Arthur St., Suite E
PO Box 369
Sikeston, MO 63801
(573) 472-5240
(573) 472-5393

St. Louis South District

2 Campbell Plaza, Suite 300
St. Louis, MO 63139
(314) 877-0151 voice
(314) 877-0168 fax

[Table of Contents](#)

Section 6 College Profiles

The college profiles can be found on the [MO-AHEAD website](#) in the Resources section.

Note: Information contained in the college profiles is provided by each institution. Missouri Association on Higher Education and Disability (MOAHEAD) does not endorse any particular campus or service.

[Table of Contents](#)

Section 7 Appendix

Please feel free to print copies of the forms and sample letters for students to use as they plan their transition to postsecondary education.

[Appendix A: Junior Year Checklist](#)

[Appendix B: Senior Year Checklist](#)

[Appendix C: Get Ready For Your First Meeting with Disability Support Services](#)

[Appendix D: Sample Letter to Admissions Office](#)

[Appendix E: Sample Letter the Disability Support Services Office](#)

[Appendix F: Postsecondary Education Inquiry Form: Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#)

[Appendix G: Postsecondary Education Inquiry Form: Visual Impairments](#)

[Appendix H: Postsecondary Education Inquiry Form: Mobility](#)

[Appendix I: Guidebook Feedback](#)

[Appendix J: References](#)

Junior Year Checklist

Here is a checklist to help you get started on the right track. Check off each item as you complete it. This list is just a beginning, so there's no doubt you will have many more questions. Continue to look at this checklist regularly with your parents and counselor.

SEPTEMBER

- ☐ Start planning for postsecondary education as soon as you can. Talk to your high school counselor, go online, or visit the public library to get information and resources such as college/university catalogs.
- ☐ Begin the process of exploring and choosing postsecondary options with an assessment of your interests and abilities and a comprehensive vocational assessment.
- ☐ Start a folder of everything you collect on postsecondary education. This should include contact names, addresses, phone numbers, emails, etc.
- ☐ Understand the differences between the academic organizations and differences in expectations of high school and postsecondary education (see Section 3).
- ☐ Consider joining clubs and participating in other high school activities. Colleges/universities like to see that future students are involved in various aspects of their education.
- ☐ Talk with your high school counselor to see if you should consider taking a practice college entrance exam. Arrange for accommodations as needed. Community colleges do not require college entrance exams.
- ☐ During this year attend at least one College Night or Future Fair in your area and try to meet with representatives from different colleges or universities.
- ☐ Know your Social Security Number. You'll need to know it for financial aid applications, summer jobs or work at college. If it has been lost, obtain another card from the Social Security Administration.

OCTOBER-DECEMBER

- ☐ Investigate features of postsecondary education that seem to suit your interests, needs and abilities (such as size, type of school, location, fields of study offered, academic quality and demands, cost, social environment, necessary facilities, desirable programs, and special opportunities).
- ☐ Determine and understand the specific support services, academic adjustments, and auxiliary aids that you will need to succeed in postsecondary education and search for an institution which best meets those needs.

- ☐ Make contact with your local Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) counselor. You must apply for services and your DVR counselor will determine your eligibility for services. This is a possible source of some financial help for postsecondary education.
- ☐ Meet with your school counselor to review your credits for this year and possible credits for next year. Be sure you are on track for graduation and that you are taking the courses you need for admission to the institution of your choice.
- ☐ Make sure that you understand your disability and can explain your strengths and weaknesses. You should be able to explain how your disability affects learning.
- ☐ Understand your learning style and be able to explain it in meaningful terms.
- ☐ Be able to explain and justify the accommodations you may need.
- ☐ Try out and learn to use a range of accommodations and technological aids while in high school (i.e. audio text books, grammar and spell checkers, computer voice synthesis, etc.).
- ☐ Research Recordings for the Blind & Dyslexic to see if the audio textbooks they provide will work for you. If so, discuss options for membership with your VR or RSB counselor.
- ☐ Fill out the form "Get Ready for Your First Meeting with Disability Support Services" with your Resource or Special Education teacher. You can find this form later in this section.

JANUARY

- ☐ Start writing to colleges/universities you're thinking about attending and ask for information on their academic programs, admission criteria, financial aid, and disability support services. If you need help writing letters, see your counselor and the sample letters later in this section.
- ☐ Ask your counselor if you should take the SAT or ACT assessment this spring. Many students take admission tests more than once. You may apply for accommodations, i.e., extended time, readers, interpreters, etc. - but you must make advanced arrangements for these. Read the directions for these adaptations carefully with your counselor and parents. Be sure to act early.
- ☐ Keep your grades up. Postsecondary programs are concerned about grades. It's also the road to possible scholarships.
- ☐ Read your school bulletin boards. Watch for notices of college or career meetings, test dates, special grants or scholarships. Read your local newspapers for this type of information, too.

FEBRUARY

- ☐ This is a good time to start estimating how you and your family will pay for your postsecondary education. Ask your school counselor and Vocational Rehabilitation counselor for information on meeting costs of attending college. See the Financial Aid section in Section 5 for additional information.

- ☐ Get leads on local sources of financial aid by reading the newspaper, accessing websites, and seeing what scholarships and awards graduating seniors are receiving. Write to these programs for information you can use next year.
- ☐ Review your academic skills with your counselor to see if you have any weak areas that need improvement. Consider signing up for tutoring or for summer programs to help with any academic deficiencies.
- ☐ Attend seminars on ways to be successful in postsecondary classes - learning strategies, test preparation and test taking strategies, study skills, time management, organizational skills, generalized study skills, outlining, notetaking, memory techniques, and word processing skills for example.
- ☐ Develop personal qualities such as a positive self-image by stressing strengths, willingness to take risks, social skills, and self-advocacy skills.
- ☐ Plan your senior classes carefully with your school counselor. Consider admission requirements to postsecondary education when planning.

MARCH

- ☐ Be sure to check arrangements for April ACT/SAT. Make sure everything is in place, including accommodations if necessary. If you are attending a community college, you will not need to take the ACT/SAT.
- ☐ Continue staying in contact with your Division of Vocational Rehabilitation counselor.

APRIL

- ☐ It's time for the ACT/SAT - double check date, time, and place.
- ☐ Have you attended a College Night or Future Fair? Contact your school counselor.

MAY

- ☐ Consider making campus visits in conjunction with any summer trips you plan to take. Write to or call college/university admission offices and disability support services offices for more information on visits.
- ☐ Work during the summer if you can. This is good experience and can help pay for some of your college expenses.
- ☐ Read as much and as widely as you can. Set aside time for reading every day. It's important to keep up your skills in English and math during the summer months.

Senior Year Checklist

Here is a checklist to help you get started on the right track. Check off each item as you complete it. This list is just a beginning, so there's no doubt you will have many more questions. Continue to look at this checklist regularly with your parents and counselor.

SEPTEMBER

- ☐ Be sure to continue collecting information on options for postsecondary education. Keep it all in a folder.
- ☐ Be sure that your psycho-educational testing is up-to-date. For students with cognitive disabilities, request that your final evaluation contain standardized intelligence and achievement tests using adult norms.
- ☐ Beware of "senioritis!" Your senior year grades, especially from the first semester, count heavily in postsecondary admissions. If you do well, it is a plus for you. Although good grades are important all through high school, colleges/universities believe your junior and senior year grades often are a good indication of how you might do in postsecondary education.
- ☐ You might think about taking a study skills class or program through your community college or high school.
- ☐ Be sure you know your learning strengths and weaknesses and compensating techniques or accommodations that work best for you.
- ☐ If you need audio textbooks, be sure you register with Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic and Wolfner Library to secure an audio player.
- ☐ Make sure that your independent living skills are adequate (e.g. keeping a checking account, doing laundry, cleaning, cooking, and transportation).
- ☐ Learn about Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. These laws explain what kinds of accommodations postsecondary institutions must provide when a student requests them. It is your responsibility to ask for the necessary accommodations (See Section 2).
- ☐ Be sure to sign up to take an admission test (SAT/ACT) if one is required by the college/university that interests you. Ask your high school counselor for test registration forms. If you need testing accommodations, such as a reader or additional time, so that test scores will accurately reflect your knowledge, talk to your counselor about making these arrangements.
- ☐ Stay in contact with your Division of Vocational Rehabilitation counselor.
- ☐ Create a checklist of deadlines for admissions application, test registration, fees, test dates, financial aid applications, and other materials you will need to submit. Keep all of this in a folder. Make sure you know the necessary steps to have your transcript sent to the colleges/universities to which you are applying.

- ☐ Narrow your postsecondary options to 3 or 4. Write for application materials. Inquire about support services to be sure they can meet your needs. Ask for the number of students with disabilities who attend and whether or not there are modified admission procedures for students with disabilities.

OCTOBER

- ☐ If a postsecondary institution requires an application essay, begin preparing notes and outlines this month. The essay is an important part of your application. It deserves special attention. You might want to ask your English teacher for some help.
- ☐ Visit colleges and universities and attend College Fairs to help decide which postsecondary institution is best for you. Do these places have the support services you will need? Again, it's best to visit and be sure.
- ☐ If you need letters of recommendation for your college application, talk to your teachers, past employers, coaches, etc. and give them copies of forms provided by the postsecondary institution to which you are applying.
- ☐ Most postsecondary institutions charge a nonrefundable fee (usually from \$10 to \$30) at the time you file your admission application. Remember to enclose a check! Community Colleges do not have application fees.

NOVEMBER

- ☐ Some postsecondary institutions have application deadlines as early as November 1, particularly for early decision plans. Check application deadlines for postsecondary institutions that interest you, and ask if there are early deadlines to qualify for certain majors, campuses, or housing.
- ☐ Your library has books and pamphlets about financial aid; look for special state, federal, and local programs. Continually check out all possible sources of financial aid. Ask about any private programs, such as churches, community groups, or minority organizations and write for more information and application forms. You can find out about these programs at your local public library and your school counselor's office.
- ☐ You should try to complete the first draft of your application essay this month. Give yourself enough time to revise.
- ☐ Keep working on your grades since your transcript will be sent with your applications.

DECEMBER

- ☐ To get financial aid, you have to apply for it. Ask your school counselor for the College Board's Financial Aid Form (FAFSA) packet, which consists of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and the FAFSA. Find out from the postsecondary institutions to which you are applying which forms to fill out.
- ☐ Check also to see if the postsecondary institutions have a separate institutional aid application. Many do. Begin filling them out now and avoid the rush created by pressure from end-of-year holidays and term papers.

- ☐ Are there any postsecondary institution representatives visiting your school this month? Check bulletin boards and the counseling office and make appointments with appropriate school representatives.
- ☐ Complete the final draft of your essay. It should be typed, neat, attractive, interesting, easy to read, and grammatically correct! Remember to keep a copy for your records before mailing it.
- ☐ Double-check your admission application deadlines.
- ☐ The holidays are a good time to talk with relatives and older friends who may have gone to college. They may have some suggestions for you.

JANUARY

- ☐ Now is the time to complete your financial aid forms. Send them in as soon after January 1 as possible. Be sure to include all postsecondary institutions you want to receive copies of your forms.

FEBRUARY

- Men 18 years and older must prove draft registration in order to receive federal financial aid. Inquire at the local post office about registering.
- ☐ If your grades and test scores are high, consider taking College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams. CLEP tests generally are offered each month for credit at participating postsecondary institutions. For more information about CLEP, ask your school counselor.

MARCH

- ☐ If any of the postsecondary institutions you are considering have application deadlines in March, be sure you meet them. Many students like to pick some "wishful thinking" postsecondary institutions to apply to, some "probable," and some "sure things." You never know which applications may pay off.
- ☐ Watch announcements, bulletin boards, and newspapers carefully for scholarships. Many local organizations and individuals award scholarships to students at each local high school.

APRIL

- ☐ You may start receiving offers of admission and financial aid this month. Continue to make long-range plans with your family about how you're going to pay for postsecondary education.
- ☐ Stay in contact with your Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) counselor. Financial aid information must be updated regularly with your DVR counselor.
- ☐ Develop a college portfolio of materials to document your secondary school program and to facilitate service delivery in the postsecondary setting. The following list are possible items to include in your college portfolio:
 - ✓ Get Ready for Your First Meeting with DSS form
 - ✓ Documentation of disability
 - ✓ Copy of most recent IEP

- ✓ ACT/SAT results(4 year colleges)
 - ✓ High school transcripts
 - ✓ 2 teacher recommendation letters (4-year colleges)
 - ✓ Awards/scholarships
 - ✓ SS#
 - ✓ Newspaper articles
 - ✓ Vocational assessments
 - ✓ Resume/activity sheet
- ☐ Review your “Get Ready for Your First Meeting with DSS” form with your Resource/Special Education teacher.
 - ☐ Understand and be able to discuss the contents of your reports concerning your disability history and diagnosis.

MAY

- ☐ As soon as you have decided which offer to accept, notify the postsecondary institution of your decision. Be sure to let the financial aid office know if you intend to accept or decline their offers. Also, tell your high school counselor which postsecondary institution you've selected so that final grades, class rank, and proof of graduation can be submitted.
- ☐ Find out who is responsible for assisting students with disabilities at the postsecondary institution of your choice. Get an appointment as soon as possible before starting school to discuss your disability, the documentation requirements needed, and the accommodations you will need.
- ☐ If you are placed on a postsecondary institution's waiting list and you intend to enroll, you should call or write to the director of admissions to ask how to strengthen your application. Recent evidence of high academic achievements or other accomplishments might help.
- ☐ Be sure to arrange to have your final transcript showing graduation sent to the postsecondary institution you will attend. Also, have one sent to your Vocational Rehabilitation counselor. Sign release of information so your records can be sent as needed.

JUNE

- ☐ Send thank you notes to anyone who helped you on your postsecondary education quest, such as school counselors, teachers, and other adults. They'll appreciate it.
- ☐ Use the summer to earn extra money for postsecondary education.
- ☐ If you decide at the last minute that you want to pursue postsecondary education, you may still have a "walk-in" option. During the two-to-three week period just before classes begin, postsecondary institutions sometimes discover that they still have room for students. If you apply, you might be accepted.

Get Ready For Your First Meeting with the College/University Disability Support Services Office

Name _____ Social Security # _____

Name of High School _____ Expected Graduation Date _____

Resource Teacher's Name _____ Resource Teacher's Phone _____

Current disability diagnosis (if learning disability, please indicate areas of concern, i.e. math, reading, memory, etc.)

Date of diagnosis _____

Give a brief description of your education background (i.e. length of time in special education classes, resource, or class-within-a-class)

Current Level of Functioning

| | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------|
| Reading | Grade Level _____ | Test Used _____ | Date _____ |
| Math | Grade Level _____ | Test Used _____ | Date _____ |
| Written Communication | Grade Level _____ | Test Used _____ | Date _____ |

| Special Education Services Received in High School | Junior Year | Senior Year |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Resource Help (minutes per week) | | |
| Class-Within-A-Class (list classes) | | |
| Special Education Classes (list classes) | | |
| Speech/Language | | |
| Other | | |

| Testing Accommodations | Used in High School | Recommended for Postsecondary |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Tests read orally to student | | |
| Clarification of test questions** | | |
| Tests answered orally or on tape | | |
| Extended time to complete tests | | |
| Enlarged tests | | |
| Interpreter | | |
| Use of calculator | | |
| Hours per week of resource | | |
| Spell checker/proofer | | |
| Other | | |

**Not usually provided in postsecondary education

| Specific Accommodations | Used in High School | Recommended for Postsecondary |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Extended time to complete assignments | | |
| Audio textbooks | | |
| Reader | | |
| Writer | | |
| Notetaker | | |
| Enlarger/enlarged materials | | |
| Adaptive technology | | |
| Computer | | |
| Modified curriculum* | | |
| Taped lectures | | |
| Tutor** | | |
| Other | | |

*Cannot always be provided in postsecondary education

**Some colleges do not provide as a free service

| Please rate each area as a strength or weakness. 1 = Weakest to 5 = Strongest | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Study Skills | Weakest.....Strongest | | | | |
| Notetaking | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Organization of time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Organization of material | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Ability to complete work independently | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Motivation/persistence | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Test taking strategies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Computer (key boarding) skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| Please rate each area as a strength or weakness. 1 = Weakest to 5 = Strongest | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Social Skills | Weakest.....Strongest | | | | |
| Interaction with adults and/or authority figures | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | | | | |
| Self-Advocacy Skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Knowledge of specific disability | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Ability to discuss disability with others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Ability to discuss accommodation needs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Are you registered with any of the following:

Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic _____ Yes _____ No
 The National Library Service _____ Yes _____ No
 A local audio textbook service _____ Yes _____ No

Do you have a Division of Vocational Rehabilitation or Rehabilitation Services for the Blind counselor?

_____ Yes (provide name, address, and phone #) _____ No

Have you received a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation? (should be included in your college portfolio)

_____ Yes _____ No

Have you received a vocational assessment? (should be included in your college portfolio)

_____ Yes _____ No

What career goals have you considered, based on the results of the vocational assessment and your interests and abilities?

Describe your learning style.

List any special skills and abilities you want people to know about you.

Sample Letter to Admissions Office

Date

Institutions Name

Admissions Office Name and Location

Address

City, State, Zip

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is _____ and I am a student at _____
high school. I would like to request information about your admissions requirements, housing facilities,
and financial aid. I would also like a catalog and an application.

I would appreciate hearing from you soon. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone

Email

Sample Letter to Disability Support Services Office

Date

Institutions Name

Disability Support Services Office Name and Location

Address

City, State, Zip

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is _____ and I am a student at _____ high school. I would like to request information about your disability support services office. I have enclosed a checklist that will help me determine if your postsecondary institution will be able to provide the accommodations and services I need to be successful. Please include information about the process for requesting accommodations with your office.

I would appreciate hearing from you soon. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone

Email

Postsecondary Education Inquiry Form Regarding Services for Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing Students

Name of Postsecondary Institution _____

Contact Person _____ Phone Number _____

Please check the accommodations your office commonly provides and provide explanations as necessary.

| Accommodations | Available on Campus | Comments |
|---|---------------------|----------|
| Assistive Listening Devices | | |
| Notetakers | | |
| Permission to tape class lectures | | |
| Tutoring | | |
| Speech & Hearing Clinic on campus | | |
| Assistance with registration | | |
| Telephone amplification, TTY/TDD, videophone for campus or residence hall use | | |
| Televisions with closed captioning | | |
| Videotaped/instructional material with closed captioning | | |
| Sign language, oral, or cued speech interpreters | | |
| Speech-to-Text transcribers | | |
| Testing accommodations | | |

What other services are available for students with hearing loss?

Are there any organizations or clubs on campus for students with hearing loss?

Are there any special programs for students with hearing loss?

Postsecondary Education Inquiry Form Regarding Services for Students with Visual Disabilities

Name of Postsecondary Institution _____

Contact Person _____ Phone Number _____

Please check the accommodations your office commonly provides and provide explanations as necessary.

| Accommodations | Available on Campus | Comments |
|--|---------------------|----------|
| Transportation available between various parts of campus | | |
| Instructor notifications | | |
| Notetakers | | |
| Testing accommodations | | |
| Computers with speech access and enlarging capabilities | | |
| Types of reading machines | | |
| Assistance with registration | | |
| Alternative print formats, Braille, large print, audio textbooks | | |
| Assistance with advocacy | | |
| Tutoring | | |
| Reader services | | |
| Scribe services | | |
| Adaptive technology (i.e., CCTV) | | |

What other services are available for students with visual disabilities?

Are there any organizations or clubs on campus for students with visual disabilities?

Are there any special programs for students with visual disabilities?

Postsecondary Education Inquiry Form Regarding Services for Students with Mobility Disabilities

Name of Postsecondary Institution _____

Contact Person _____ Phone Number _____

Please check the accommodations your office commonly provides and provide explanations as necessary.

| Accommodations | Available on Campus | Comments |
|---|---------------------|----------|
| Accessible buildings | | |
| Accessible transportation | | |
| Personal attendants available through school or community | | |
| Instructor notification | | |
| Notetakers | | |
| Testing accommodations | | |
| Adaptive equipment | | |
| Computer with speech access | | |
| Assistance with registration | | |
| Assistance with advocacy | | |
| Tutoring | | |
| Reader services | | |
| Adapted physical education/athletic facilities | | |
| Lab assistants | | |

What other services are available for students with mobility disabilities?

Are there any organizations or clubs on campus for students with mobility disabilities?

Are there any special programs for students with mobility disabilities?

Feedback

We continually strive to improve this resource and keep all content current. If you are aware of services, programs, websites, or resources that would be beneficial to students during their transition planning, please let us know. Also, tell us about your experience using the Missouri Association on Higher Education and Disability College Guidebook. You can send comments and suggestions to info@moahead.org.

If you would like to update your school's profile, please complete the Guidebook Profile Update form.

References

Section 2 Law

Adapted From:

Brinckerhoff, L.C., Shaw, S.F., and McGuire, J.M. (1992) Promoting access, accommodations, and independence for college students with learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 25(7), 417-429. Reprinted with permission.

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Section 3 Transition

Adapted From:

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Section 4 Preparation

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A College Selection Guidebook for Students with Disabilities, Their Parents, and High School Staff; Virginia Department of Education, June 1993.

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[Table of Contents](#)