

Important Information For Students with Learning Disabilities

Students with learning disabilities need to be aware of important information as they research colleges that will meet their needs.

A Shift in Responsibility

- In high school, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require schools to provide all necessary assessments and accommodations for students to get special education services.
- IDEA does not apply to colleges and universities; however, colleges are prohibited from discriminating against a person because of learning disabilities.
- In college, even though it is your right to be accommodated, you have to ask for accommodations and provide documentation of your disability and needs.
- Colleges are not permitted to ask whether a student has a learning disability; it is up to each student to decide whether she/he will inform a college of a disability.
- It is also each student's responsibility to find out what documentation colleges require in order to demonstrate that you have a learning disability and that you are requesting services.
- Any documentation that you provide can be no more than 3 years old.
- Although colleges must provide "reasonable accommodations" for their students with LD, they do NOT have to change admission criteria in order to accommodate them.
- Colleges are not required to design special academic programs for students with disabilities.

College Entrance Exams

You must get permission from the College Board or from the ACT in order to take your college entrance exams with accommodations. See www.collegeboard.com or www.actstudent.org for more information regarding accommodations. You should also check with your counselor or case manager.

The Good News for Students with Learning Disabilities

With increased awareness of LD, multiple intelligences, and different learning styles, colleges now provide a broad range of student support. More students who have learning disabilities than ever before are applying to, enrolling in, and graduating from America's colleges and universities.

Three Levels of Support Services Available at Colleges

Structured or Comprehensive Programs: These programs have significantly more services for students with LD/ADHD. Because they offer more than what they are required to offer under the law, they will have additional fee for services, which may include: Special admission procedures, specialized and trained professionals, compensatory strategies, one-one-one tutoring, compulsory participation, and monitoring.

Coordinated Services: These colleges have fewer services, but still more than the minimum required by law. There may or may not be a nominal fee. Services are usually less structured and programs may or may not be involved with admission decisions.

Basic Services: These colleges comply with the law and provide minimal services. They rarely have specialized LD staff, do not monitor, and are completely dependent on student advocacy. There is no fee for services at these colleges

Questions to Ask as You Research?

- What level of support, or what type of program, is available for students with LD?
- Do I need to apply to the college AND to the special needs program?
- What documentation does the college require to receive services?
- Is there an additional fee for services?
- What specific accommodations, services, and equipment are provided?
- Does the college offer curriculum modification?

Online Resources for Students with Learning Disabilities

- National Center for Learning Disabilities: www.nclld.org
- HEATH Resource Center: www.heath.gwu.edu
- Association of Higher Education and Disability: www.ahead.org

Books:

- Princeton Review: *The K & W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities or ADD.*
- Peterson's: *Colleges with Programs for Students with Learning Disabilities or ADD.*
- Lipkin, Midge: *The School Search Guide to Colleges with Programs or Services for Students with Learning Disabilities.*