

Frequently Asked Questions for Parents
Accessibility Resources Office
Longwood University

What are some of the differences between high school and college for students with disabilities?

- Advocacy: You were probably your child's primary advocate in high school. You may have had help from teachers and case managers, and your son or daughter may have become a better self advocate through the years, but you were always there. In college, your son or daughter must become his or her primary advocate. You won't be able to call meetings on his or her behalf, and you won't be able to call to check in every day. We will be here to provide resources, but your son or daughter must advocate for him or herself.
- Access rather than Success: In high school, your son or daughter's IEP or 504 plan was designed and implemented to provide success. He or she may have had extensive accommodations that altered the classes he or she was taking. In college, the Americans with Disabilities Act provides for access to higher education, but it doesn't guarantee success in that environment. Accommodations are available, but they cannot fundamentally alter the course and they must be reasonable.
- Documentation: An IEP or a 504 Plan was what teachers were required to follow when your son or daughter was in high school. In college, these plans are helpful for providing us with an educational history, but they are not sufficient documentation by themselves. You can refer to our website to determine what specific documentation is needed for the type of disability that your son or daughter has.

What is your role as a parent once your child goes to college?

- You obviously don't step completely out of the picture just because your son or daughter goes to college; however, your role as your child's primary advocate changes somewhat. You can no longer call your child's teachers to see how he or she is doing. There is no principal or guidance counselor to speak with about his or her progress. What you can do is keep up the conversation with your son or daughter. Ask questions and let him or her know that you are still interested in his or her education. Your son or daughter can also sign a release that will allow us to talk with you (in general terms). We won't be calling you to give daily or weekly updates, and you won't be able to call us for that information either.

What does your son or daughter need to do in order to receive accommodations?

- Submit a registration form and appropriate documentation.
- Attend and participate in an appointment with either the director or the assistant director.
- Meet with professors to give them an accommodation letter and discuss his or her needs.
- Follow through with all policies and procedures of our office. For example, for a student to take with us instead of the professor, we require that the request be filled out three business days prior to the test date. We do not process late requests.

Will my son or daughter receive the same accommodations in college as he or she did in high school?

- Maybe, but not necessarily. As mentioned previously, accommodations are designed to ensure access. Many students come to us having had unlimited time on tests or extended time on projects. These types of accommodations alter the course, and may be unreasonable. Depending on the documentation and the disability, we can offer extended time on tests and quiet testing environments. Other examples of possible accommodations could be a note taker, ability to use a tape recorder to record lectures, large print materials, alternate format books, use of a word processor and/or spell check, and use of a calculator. It is important to note that accommodations are approved on a case by case basis and depend on the student's needs and the documentation that is presented to us.

Does the Accessibility Resources Office provide tutoring? My son or daughter had a tutor in high school.

- Our office does not provide tutoring. Longwood University offers free tutoring to all students through the Learning Center, which is located in the Greenwood Library. There is also a Writing Center that is free for students. We encourage students to sign up early for tutoring, and to discuss their needs with their professor. All professors are required to have office hours. Students can make appointments to meet with their professors during office hours to discuss expectations, projects, or receive more specific assistance. The Learning Center is also helpful for study tips and time management assistance.

Does my son or daughter have to sign up for accommodations before classes begin? What if he or she wants to try college without accommodations?

- We recommend that incoming freshman and transfer students meet with us over the summer prior to their enrollment, or at least during the first week of classes. However, students can apply for accommodations at any time during the school year. Students must keep in mind that if they wait until the school year begins, there will be some wait time between when they contact us initially and when they begin receiving accommodations. For example, if a student contacts us on a Monday because he or she has a test on Tuesday and wants accommodations, we probably won't be able to accommodate that timeline. It can take up to one week (provide we have all the necessary documentation) to meet with the director or assistant director and begin receiving accommodations.
- If your son or daughter wants to try college without accommodations, we still recommend that he or she meet with us and provide us with all the documentation needed to receive accommodations. This way, if he or she wants accommodations later on in the semester, we already have everything we need to get started. If your son or daughter doesn't want to register with our office at all, try to be supportive and remain involved with him or her. You can stress to your son or daughter that receiving accommodations in college is much different than receiving accommodations in high school. Students are not singled out, they are not labeled, and no one follows them from class to class to check up on their progress.

Can I request accommodations for my son or daughter?

- All requests for accommodations must come from the student.

Is there a charge for receiving accommodations?

- There is no charge for receiving accommodations from the Office of Disability Resources.

"To request the information provided in this document in an alternate format contact the Accessibility Resources Office at 434-395-2391".