

# College Readiness for Students with Disabilities

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(NAME, TITLE, AND INSTITUTION OF PRESENTER)



# Attendee Learning Outcomes

- By the end of this presentation, attendees will be able to:
  - List the three primary laws followed by disability educators in post-secondary education
  - Explain the purpose of accommodations in post-secondary education
  - Describe the Interactive Process students use to access accommodations in college
  - List the knowledge/skills/and abilities necessary for students to be prepared for the rigor of higher education

# Disability Law in Higher Education

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973)
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (1990)
- The ADA Amendments Act (2008)

HIGHER EDUCATION DOES NOT FOLLOW K-12 LAW, SUCH AS INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA).

# Background Efforts to this Point

- Senate Bill 5180 - Improving access to higher education for students with disabilities. Passed 2013.
  - Washington State created a task force to “identify and recommend strategies for improving access to postsecondary education for students with disabilities”
- Governor’s Task Force formed and in operation from 2013-15
  - Comprised of 23 individuals representing a wide variety of interests and groups (K-12, Post-Secondary Education, Parents, Citizens, government and non-government organizations)

# Task Force Recommendations to the Legislation

- The state should restore funding for comprehensive support services and staffing levels to improve successful completion of postsecondary education by students with disabilities.
- The state should ensure that students with disabilities have access to the formal evaluations required by postsecondary institutions.
- The state should provide resources to increase professional development opportunities for K-12 and postsecondary educators on transitions for students with disabilities.
- The state should support expanded learning opportunities for students with disabilities. These opportunities should include work-based learning through internships and job shadowing as well as in-person and web-based leadership, peer-mentoring, and postsecondary support programs.
- Pre-service educator standards should include information specific to serving students with disabilities.

# Purpose of Accommodations in College

Accommodations are provided to mitigate institutional barriers – students are expected to manage their disability conditions independently.

So, what are institutional barriers? Can you name some?

- Tests/exams with a short, fixed time
- Videos without captions or audio description
- Lectures for hearing individuals only
- Curricular content that is not formatted correctly and inaccessible to assistive technology
- Fisher Price furniture in the classrooms (not designed for adult learners with ergonomic conditions)

# How Does a Student Access Accommodations?

- Students must self-identify to the college's disability resources office. This is typically done by filling out an online application.
- Student and staff meet to talk about the way the student's disability impacts them in an educational setting
- Many schools require information about the student's disability from their healthcare provider (physician, psychologist, psychiatrist).
- Disability services professional will determine reasonable accommodation considering the student's input
- Not all requested accommodations are approved

# The Interactive Process

The Interactive Process begins during the first meeting with disability services staff.

After an accommodation plan is established, the student has the responsibility to:

- *Renew their accommodations on a quarterly or semester basis*
- *Bring concerns regarding the provision of their accommodations to the disability services staff in a timely manner*
- *Initiate a meeting with disability services if additional barriers arise*

Disability Services professionals will refer students to appropriate resources as needed (academic advising, counseling, coaching, financial aid, tutoring, etc.)



# Nuggets to Remember

Accommodations are intended to level the academic playing field for adult learners with disabilities. Accommodations:

- Do not guarantee success, but instead provide access
- Do not provide specialized instruction, common under the IDEA;
- Do not modify college curriculum;
- Do not replace mastery of course and/or program outcomes, and;
- Are not retroactive

Although Section 504 protections apply to students in both K-12 and higher education, specialized education (IEP/504 Plans) does not transfer to post-secondary institutions.

# Skills Necessary for College - Academic Expectations

- College students must know the attendance policy for each class and adhere to that policy.
- Course requirements / curriculum are not modified based on a student's disability; all outcomes must be achieved.
- Self-direction is a basic requirement for attending college (i.e., effective study habits, accessing tutoring when necessary, meeting course expectations, time-management, organizational skills and other executive functioning tasks).

# Skills Necessary for College - Assistive Technology

- Students who are assistive technologies users must have a working knowledge of their equipment.
- NOTE: Many DS Offices do not have the staffing or expertise to deliver this service.

# Skills Necessary for College - Communication Skills

- Students are expected to communicate with faculty and staff in a timely and appropriate manner regarding accommodation and disability-related needs, concerns or questions.
- Students are expected to check their email regularly, both school and/or personal, depending on the college's official means of communication.
- Students are expected to read all communications sent by the college thoroughly; if unclear, the student should seek out a college staff member for clarification.
- Students are expected to follow through on all requests from the college.

# Skills Necessary for College - Digital Literacy

- The college experience is digitally-driven and managed.
- College students are expected to have a basic understanding of computers and be familiar with their usage.
- It is important that all adult learners have access to a computer - desktop or laptop - to complete their college work. (Computer labs are available on campus.)
  - *NOTE: Mobile devices are convenient, but most often do not have the robust capability of full computer set-ups.*
- Basic computer processes, such as composing an email, saving work, and attaching a document are expectations of beginning college students

# Skills Necessary for College - Self-Advocacy

- In college, it is up to the student to use accommodations - or not
- If a student chooses to use accommodations, they must initiate the interactive process with the DS Office by following each college/university's stated procedure for self-identification.
- Students are expected to renew their accommodations on a term-to-term basis - accommodations do not roll over term-to-term .
- If using Financial Aid, adult learners are expected to manage their funding sources, including timelines and knowing available resources for learning more about their funding.

# Skills Necessary for College - Self-Awareness

- College students should be aware of their strengths and challenges.
- Students should take intentional steps to decide their desired career path, utilizing Advising/Career Services through the college.
- Adult learners should be able to name their disability and discuss the barriers they may experience in the college setting.
- Adult learners need to recognize when their goals and their disabilities intersect and when additional conversation is needed with a DS professional.
- College students should be aware of the campus and community resources available that DS Offices do not provide (i.e. personal/crisis counseling, tutoring services, food and housing insecurity resources, and other social service agencies).

Questions? We're here for you!





# Contact Information

Name, phone, email of Presenter 1	Name, phone, email of Presenter 2
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