



# POSTSECONDARY RESOURCE GUIDE

## SUCCESSFULLY PREPARING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FOR THE POSTSECONDARY ENVIRONMENT



Minnesota  
STATE COLLEGES  
& UNIVERSITIES

IMAGE REDUCED VERSION

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## THE POSTSECONDARY CHOICE

The transition from high school to life after high school can be an exciting time in the life of a young person. It can also be a time of tremendous challenge, especially for students with disabilities. The new phase of postsecondary education is filled with dramatic and significant changes. Preparation done in advance will help students have a better understanding of what lies ahead so that they can ultimately achieve their goals and dreams.

Students choose to continue their education after high school for multiple reasons. For many, the ultimate goal of pursuing higher education is to achieve a fulfilling career. Jobs and careers are important, but education beyond high school provides many other benefits. Higher education changes a person. It gives individuals an opportunity to experience greater independence, meet new people, explore interests, learn more about themselves and increase their understanding of the world. It also gives students the opportunity to improve computer literacy, research and communication skills, critical thinking, and the ability to work in teams. These are all highly valued skills to employers and will improve the chance for success in the workplace.

If you are a parent, teacher, counselor or friend, your role will change after your student graduates from high school. You will no longer be involved in each decision that affects him or her. The best thing you can do now is to give good advice and put your student on the right path. This guide, along with your mentorship, will help you prepare your student for their next educational steps.

We hope the information in this guide will be a helpful resource to all those involved in the transition journey to better understand how students can enter and thrive in the world of postsecondary education and eventually in the world of work.

## PLANNING FOR COLLEGE WHILE STILL IN SCHOOL

### COLLEGE ENROLLMENT TIMELINE/CHECKLIST FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

The transition from high school to postsecondary education can be a smooth one with less anxiety and fewer surprises if you as a special education student and your family plan strategically and consistently throughout your high school experience. A tool that can assist with this process is a series of checklists that should be followed and reflected on from the freshman to senior years so that you are mentally, academically and socially ready for the changes you will experience in the postsecondary setting. If you are starting this in a later year of high school, review the checklists from previous years and implement as many of the preparations as possible. Thinking ahead, no matter what year you are in high school, will ultimately help you reap huge benefits in the transition process.

#### FRESHMEN YEAR

- Start a graduation file to organize information related to work, school activities, and future plans so that necessary records and notes are in a centralized location, such as Google Docs, where you won't lose the paper copy.
- Learn about and accept your disability.
- Practice explaining to others the educational needs that stem from your disability.
- Review and adjust your future goals in all of your Individualized Education Program (IEP) transition areas.

- Participate in your IEP meetings.
- Discuss your graduation plans, graduation status and transition goals.
- Understand your strengths and weaknesses.
- Utilize your strengths and develop strategies to compensate for your areas of weakness.
- Learn what your accommodations are, and use them when needed to discover what helps you be academically successful.
- Enroll in high school classes that meet your postsecondary goals. These may include more rigorous classes that are considered college prep courses, or they could be special education classes that teach learning strategies which can lead to more academic independence.
- Learn and use organizational and time management strategies.
- Begin career exploration that may include career aptitude and interest inventories.

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### SOPHOMORE YEAR

- Review freshman year checklist.
- Continue to build your graduation file. Contents may include high school activities such as awards or recognitions, a list of hobbies or leisure activities, and immunization records.
- Actively plan your IEP Meetings with your case manager, and plan to speak on your own behalf.
- Set academic goals that are achievable.
- Practice requesting your own accommodations rather than relying on your case manager.
- Use the GPS tool at <http://gpslifeplan.org> to set goals and design future plans.
- Investigate other service providers with your case manager who can offer assistance after graduation such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Social Security, mental health counselors or a school or county social worker.
- Begin to explore colleges, programs/degrees and entrance requirements.
- Discuss with your counselor college options, career choices and preparation for college entrance exams.
- Begin career exploration activities such as skill inventories, career aptitude and career investigation.
- Build your resume through school activities and volunteer experiences, as most scholarship and entrance applications place importance on student involvement.

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### JUNIOR YEAR

- Review freshman and sophomore year checklists.
- Continue to build your graduation file. New items may include college applications, scholarship applications and letters; support service and other agency contacts and letters, ACT, SAT or Accuplacer scores; recommendation letters with the names and addresses of those writing the letters; any new resume items including volunteer and other activities and job experiences.
- Assist your case manager in planning and running your IEP meeting and writing your IEP goals.
- Learn when, if and how to discuss the educational needs related to your disability with your instructors.

- Invite outside services providers to your IEP meetings such as Vocational Rehabilitation, social workers, Center for Independent Living, Social Security, mental health counselors, etc.
- Explore assistive technology that may be helpful now and at the postsecondary level.
- Practice self-advocacy skills (see self-advocacy chapter).
- Develop organization and time management skills so that you become as academically independent as possible. This may include using a planner, folders, a calendar or your phone so that you plan ahead for assignments due and activity involvements.
- Narrow your career choices and match them to postsecondary programs.
- Attend college fairs, open houses and/or weekend college retreats.
- Plan in-depth visits to several postsecondary institutions through the admissions or disability services offices.
- Discuss with postsecondary admissions departments about scholarships and financial aid programs. Find out from your parents if their workplace offers scholarships.
- Schedule assessment tests needed for college entrance requirements including the ACT, SAT or placement tests.
- Prepare for assessment tests that colleges require by attending preparatory classes, using purchased materials or online practice tests. Take the armed forces ASVAB test, if applicable.

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## SENIOR YEAR

- Continue to build your graduation file. New items may include college applications, FAFSA and financial aid information, high school transcripts, disability documentation such as your last IEP or 504 Plan, and most recent evaluation and/or additional items that build on prior file information.
- Lead your IEP meetings and lay out your written postsecondary plan.
- Make your senior year as close to the postsecondary experience as possible:
  - ✓ Use a planner to record assignments and appointments.
  - ✓ Utilize a systematic plan for organizing class materials.
  - ✓ Take challenging academic classes without modifications, if possible.
  - ✓ Request and use only the accommodations available at the postsecondary level.
  - ✓ Consider the options for assistive technology and learn how to use it.
  - ✓ Complete assignments on time.
  - ✓ Use your self-advocacy skills by speaking to the appropriate person when you need assistance rather than going immediately to your case manager.
- Understand the differences between high school and college. (See page 27)
- Complete college applications and submit with entrance fees. Most can be completed online. Earlier is better, but check college websites for deadlines.
- Discuss scholarship opportunities with your counselor and admissions staff. Search the web, but never pay for a scholarship search as this should be FREE.
- Have discussions with your family and counselor about financial aid and your college debt load.

- Apply for financial aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online before the priority deadline at the college you will be attending.
- Visit colleges before accepting admission. Plan to meet with admissions and disability services staff while on each campus. In the meeting with disability services, discuss documentation requirements and how the accommodations you need will be provided.
- If necessary, retake the ACT, SAT or Accuplacer exams.

14. Schoenbauer, Education Beyond High School, 2006.

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### ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Assistive technology (AT) is equipment or systems that help students with disabilities become more efficient and independent by performing functions that may otherwise be difficult or impossible. Colleges often offer a wide array of AT, so it is helpful for you to learn and use it while you are in high school. Types of AT include alternative textbooks, screen readers, speech-recognition programs and note-taking systems. Alternative input devices include alternative keyboards, electronic pointing trackballs and touch screens. Other AT products include screen enlargers or screen magnifiers, talking and large-print word processors and Braille embossers. Assistive technology can be demonstrated at locations such as the State Services for the Blind, PACER, the Courage Center and your local Centers for Independent Living.

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### PREPARING FOR COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS

Preparation for college entrance exams, whether it be the ACT, SAT or Accuplacer placement tests, is a very helpful practice. Preparatory information is available in high school counselor offices, on testing websites, or can be purchased; some students also choose to enroll in entrance exam preparatory classes. Any preparation that can be done before taking the exam can increase your test scores. ACT or SAT scores are usually a part of college admissions criteria. Lower scores may also result in students having to register for developmental/pre-college classes when entering the first year of college. Some helpful preparatory websites include: ACT Online Prep ([www.actstudent.org/onlineprep](http://www.actstudent.org/onlineprep)); SAT Practice ([sat.collegeboard.org/practice](http://sat.collegeboard.org/practice)); and Accuplacer Test Prep ([testprepreview.com/accuplacer](http://testprepreview.com/accuplacer)).

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### MINNESOTA CAREER FIELDS AND PATHWAYS INFORMATION

Setting career goals can be difficult. Many students enter college without a defined major in mind and often change their major several times. This is normal! However, the more you are goal and career oriented both in high school and in college, the more likely you will be successful. The Minnesota Career Fields and pathways document is available in the Resources section to assist in the process of thinking through career paths that are available to you in Minnesota.

10. Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota Career Fields and Pathways Chart, 2010.

## SELF-ADVOCACY

An important skill necessary for postsecondary success is the ability to self-advocate. Self-advocacy involves being able to speak and act on your own behalf, asking for help when it is needed, making informed decisions, and taking responsibility for these decisions. Being a self-advocate involves understanding yourself and your own disability, knowing your individual strengths and weaknesses, and being aware of your educational and personal needs. It also involves being able to express this information to others when necessary.

While in high school, many of your life decisions were made by parents, teachers, counselors and other professionals. Having support is also important in higher education, but you will be the one to determine when assistance is needed, provide the relevant information, and make the final decision of what is best. Your strongest advocate is you!

## UNDERSTAND WHY YOU HAVE RECEIVED SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Do you know your own disability and why you received additional assistance while in high school? Can you explain without assistance from others your educational needs and the accommodations you have used successfully? While in high school, review your Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan and your three-year evaluation or medical documentation with your case manager or counselor so you understand this aspect of yourself. Ask for a more active role in discussions about your educational goals and choices so you have a better understanding of your own disability and educational needs.

## UNDERSTAND YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Develop a realistic understanding of your strengths, weaknesses, needs and preferences. Determine the skills you do well right now. What skills do you need to improve?

Most educational counseling offices can administer various interest and a career inventories to help you learn more about yourself. The results from these assessments can verify strengths and weaknesses that may assist you in choosing a career or field of study, especially when career paths are revealed that you never knew existed that match your strengths and interests.

## LEARN FROM OTHER COLLEGE STUDENTS

If you have the opportunity, discuss with successful college students about the transition to college. They will be a good source of information as they answer your questions from a student's perspective. They can also ease your fears about the changes you will face at the postsecondary level.

## LEARN HOW TO DISCUSS EDUCATIONAL NEEDS WITH INSTRUCTORS

In college, you will need to discuss your disability and educational needs with the disability services staff if you want to receive accommodations. Later, you may also need to discuss the implementation of some accommodations with your instructors. It is helpful to talk to your instructors about your accommodations while you are in high school so you will be comfortable with these conversations when you enter college. This will also help you learn when it is appropriate to discuss your educational needs, how much information to share, and the purpose of sharing information.

Some students are nervous about discussing the implementation of accommodations with college instructors. Realize you are not the first person to have this conversation. It may be difficult at first, but you will build confidence over time. Most conversations with college instructors about accommodations will be positive and helpful. However, if there are difficulties, you may find it necessary to include others, such as a professional from the disability services office, to assist in the request. Advocating is a reminder to others about the importance of providing an accessible campus for all students, both now and in the future.

12. Pocock, Lambros, Karvonen, Test, Algozzin, Wood and Martin, *Successful Strategies for Promoting Self-Advocacy Among Students with LD*, 1013.

## WISE STUDENT ADVICE: LEARN SELF-ADVOCACY

Advice from a special education major:

“I received special education services all through high school. I discussed with my case manager during IEP meetings that I wanted to attend a community college after graduation and pursue my goal of becoming a special education teacher. My case manager realized that I needed to learn self-advocacy skills and how to take care of my needs independently if I was going to be successful in college. We determined that I would discuss with my high school instructors on my own the accommodations that I may need for each of my classes. I learned that I didn’t need all of the accommodations for every class, but when I did need them, I had the conversation with my instructor. My case manager also drilled home that I needed to be organized with my homework, so I kept track of my assignments and made sure I got them completed on time because I knew that would be an expectation for college. I thought I would struggle more in my senior year with this added level of pressure on me, but I didn’t! I also knew I had the support of my case manager to discuss any needs or if I had risks of failure.”



## PRACTICAL LEARNING STRATEGIES

College courses can provide academic challenges to students, especially students unprepared for the academic rigor experienced at the postsecondary level. Students who have learned practical strategies while they are in high school will have a smoother transition to college because the skills that have been learned can be implemented. In addition, these strategies will help students become more independent and active learners, which is especially needed in the postsecondary environment. Consider the following as you refine your study skills in preparation for college courses.

## LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Do you know how you learn best? Consider taking a learning assessment to discover your preferred mode of learning. Instructors may not provide information to you in your preferred mode, but if you understand yourself and how you learn, you, the student, can adapt classroom material to a method that will help you more readily absorb and retain information.

- Auditory learners find strategies such as recording lectures, listening to audio textbooks and studying aloud very helpful in the learning process.
- Visual learners should review notes and PowerPoints, highlight, color code and rewrite notes into visual forms, such as flashcards, charts, diagrams or mind maps.
- Kinesthetic learners learn by “doing,” so adding physical movement to study time is essential. This could include pacing or taking a walk while studying from index cards, reading textbook while pedaling a stationary bike, listening to music, keeping one’s hands busy with a stress ball, studying with others by verbally reciting and discussing the content, and taking a five-minute break for each 30 minutes of study.

## MEMORIZATION TECHNIQUES

Memorization techniques are very important skills to have while in college, as the amount of information to be memorized increases in the postsecondary environment. New vocabulary, complex processes and the fast pace of learning new material are just some of the reasons memorization skills are crucial for college students.

- Stay interested. Keep your attention and focus on the material you need to learn.
- Time. Make a determined effort to carve out quality study time that is free of distractions.
- Memorization order. Memorize the information from general to specific.
- Organize. Sort or arrange the information you need to remember in groups, such as how they are similar or different.
- Visualize. Use a visualization technique, such as a mind map or picture.

- **Relate.** Form associations between new ideas you wish to remember and things you already know.
- **Repeat.** Rephrase information in your own words and use multiple senses to help you encode information. See it, say it, and write it.

## STUDY SKILLS

How you approach your studies in college will have a direct effect on your academic success. Remain positive, remind yourself of the goals you have set, and use effective study methods such as these listed below.

- Study in one-to-three hour shifts, taking a break every 30 minutes to stretch or drink a beverage.
- Study when you feel well rested and relaxed, making sure to study during the time of day when you are most productive and alert.
- Study the more difficult information first when you are the freshest, saving for last the homework and projects you most enjoy or are not as strenuous.
- Stay nourished with healthy foods so you have energy and your brain can function well.
- Study before and after class. A good strategy is to read the text assignment before class and review your class notes while they are fresh in your mind.
- Study two or three hours for each hour of class you attend.
- Meet with instructors during their office hours if you are having difficulty learning new material.
- See a tutor from the college tutoring center, join a study group or use an online tutoring service that may be available for the course.

## TEST TAKING STRATEGIES

To do well on tests, you need to know the material and be mentally prepared to show your knowledge of the subject. Try the following strategies for taking tests in college.

### BEFORE A TEST:

- Review over time the material presented in class before the date of an exam. The more prepared you are, the more confident you will be; cramming is not an efficient learning method.
- Learn the exam format before the test if possible so you know if the test questions are multiple choice, short answer, true/false or essay.
- If you are anxious, try some stress-reduction techniques: take a walk, listen to music, or write down your anxieties 10 minutes before taking a test. (Harms, W. *Writing About Worries Eases Anxiety*, 2011.)

- Arrange for testing accommodations before an exam if it is an effective accommodation for your disability. Testing accommodations may include extra time, a quiet place, audio and enlarged print.

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#### DURING A TEST:

- Think positively! Remind yourself that you studied hard and prepared for the test. If allowed, use scratch paper to write down what you think you will need to remember, such as formulas, facts or names.
- While taking the test, read the directions carefully, look over the sections of the test and budget your time for each section.
- Do the section of the test that you know the best first.
- Concentrate on your own test, not what others are doing.
- Read each question carefully before answering so you are sure to understand the question completely.
- When stuck on a question, cross off the answers you know are wrong. If you are not sure of the answer, move on to the next test question.
- Before you hand in your test, look it over to be sure you did not miss anything.

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#### AFTER A TEST:

- After your test is graded, carefully read any comments from your instructor so you understand any mistakes you may have made.
- Ask your instructor for clarification for anything you still don't understand.
- Look back at your book and notes, and jot down information you learned from the test.

15. Study Guides and Strategies, Ten Tips for Terrific Test Taking.

5. Harms, Writing About Worries Eases Anxiety, Improves Test Performance, 2011.

#### NOTE TAKING

Note taking is an essential skill in college that can only be refined through practice. Because tests usually cover material that was presented in class, it is important to study from a good set of notes. There are many methods and systems for taking notes, so experiment and find a system that works for you.

- Take notes that are clear and concise, which is more effective than long, complicated notes.
- Organize your notes for each class session by writing the name of the class, topic and date that the notes were taken.
- Leave space on the page to add key words or other information. You can try taking notes on the right side of the paper and leave a wide margin on the left side.
- Audio record the lecture so that you can listen to the material again using a digital recorder or smartpen.

- Review your notes soon after class and rewrite sections that are unclear. Add missing information. Highlight the most important information for later study. This will also help you know if you need to check the book, the recording of the lecture, or with your instructor for further content clarification.

11. Pauk and Owens, *How to Study in College*, 2007.

## TIME MANAGEMENT

Learning how to manage your time effectively is absolutely essential to success in college. An effective time management plan includes prioritizing tasks, implementing due dates, breaking down assignments, and scheduling times to be in class, study, work, do errands and attend appointments.

- Choose a time management system. This could be a planner, assignment log or a calendar in paper format, phone application or computer application. Choose one that will work for you, and use it daily.
- Prioritize your tasks and handle the top priorities first.
- Set realistic goals. It is common to underestimate how long an assignment will take to complete, so it is best to start assignments well before the due date.
- Use your planner to break down assignments. Determine all of the steps needed in order to complete an assignment and include those steps in your planner.
- Overcome stumbling blocks and procrastination. Evaluate the time spent on leisure activities such as video games, movies or texting with friends since it may have a negative effect on your study time. Be proactive in scheduling your leisure activities so they don't take over the time you have allowed for study.
- Check your planner daily. Update what you have completed, and track your progress so you can make adjustments as needed. Don't forget to reward yourself for working hard and completing your projects.

## READING STRATEGIES

In college, you will be responsible for reading assigned textbooks, supplemental materials and online resources, so it is important to use effective reading strategies for comprehension. Common reading tips may include the following:

- Read in a quiet, well-lit area with comfortable seating.
- Take breaks to rest your eyes and your mind.
- Read aloud or use audio books to improve concentration.
- Take notes from the reading assignment and highlight important concepts.
- Take note of unfamiliar vocabulary and generate a list for study.

## Read with a Purpose, Using the SQ3R Strategy

- **Survey.** Preview the assignment/material to be studied by scanning the text quickly to discover the central concept. From your preview, formulate an overall picture and purpose of what you are going to study.
- **Question.** Question what you need to learn in terms of what, why, how, who, and where to support the central concept. Write these questions in the margins of your textbook or at the top of your study notes.
- **Read.** Read specifically to answer the question. Most paragraphs contain one or more main ideas in support of a concept. Locate and highlight them with a marker, make notes in the margins, and pay attention to bolded or italicized type, graphs and illustrations.
- **Recall.** Pause periodically to recall in your own words the important ideas you have read.
- **Review.** See if you answered all of your questions and understood the new material. Go back and re-read difficult parts you may have missed in the recall. If there are review questions in the material, make sure you can answer them all.

13. Robinson, *Study Guides and Strategies: SQ3R Method*, 1970.

## CHOOSING AND PAYING FOR COLLEGE

Students who are considering the option of attending a college should first have an idea of a career pathway and postsecondary training needed to obtain that career. Once this is determined, the next important step is to choose the college or training program that is right for you. A variety of colleges and training options are available, so you will want to research college websites and visit campuses to select the one that meets your educational and personal needs.

When researching your selection, keep in mind the level of education your career goal requires, such as a certificate, associate degree, bachelor's degree or master's degree, and then match this to a reputable program that awards the certification you will need for your chosen career. There are also short-term training options available such as workshops and noncredit-based courses for technical skills required in jobs such as welders, forklift operators and boilermakers. To narrow your search of choices, decide what you are looking for in a school and determine whether you prefer a small college, large university or online option. Other considerations include distance from home, size of the community, availability of dormitories or other housing options, and ease of transportation. For further information, check out the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities' website at [www.mnscu.edu](http://www.mnscu.edu) and the "GOMN" guide.

## OPTION 1

### MNSCU COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES – PUBLIC

- Offer specific career and technical programs and also offer courses that fulfill the first two years of a four-year degree or “generals.”
- Considered “Open Enrollment” – Admission requirements are minimal such as having a high school diploma or GED.
- Students can earn certificates and associate degrees.
- Offer many services including advising and counseling, tutoring and disability services.
- All are regionally accredited.
- Many have matriculation agreements so students can begin a course of study and complete the degree at a four-year institution.
- May have articulation agreements for students to receive college credit for training received during high school.
- Are public colleges and are the most affordable option.
- Usually do not have dormitories.

## OPTION 2

### MNSCU FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITIES AND THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA – PUBLIC

- Students are usually required to complete general education requirements that include science and math and sometimes a foreign language.
- Usually have more stringent admission requirements than a community or technical college.
- Grant associate, bachelor’s and master’s degrees and higher.
- Offer services including advising, tutoring and disability services as well as more extensive services including health clinics, exercise facilities, counseling and career placement offices.
- All are regionally accredited.
- Tend to be more expensive than two-year colleges.
- Public colleges are the most affordable universities.
- Usually provide dormitories and food service.

## OPTION 3

### PRIVATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

- Students are sometimes required to complete general education requirements that include science and math and sometimes a foreign language.
- Some may have more stringent admissions requirements than community or technical colleges.

- Grant certificates, bachelor's and master's degrees and higher, depending on the college.
- Some offer specialized training and certificates in various careers.
- Services usually available such as advising, tutoring, and disability services. Some may also offer more extensive services including health clinics, exercise facilities, counseling and career placement offices.
- Some may not be regionally accredited, so many credits may not transfer.
- Are more expensive than public colleges and universities.
- Includes for-profit and not-for-profit private institutions.
- Dorms and food services are usually available at non-for-profit institutions; dorms usually not available at for-profit colleges.

8. McNair and Solomon, *A Practical Guide for People with Disabilities Who Want to Go to College*, 2010.

## COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

In order to gain admission to a particular college or university, your high school and exam achievements must match the entrance requirements of the college or training school. These requirements apply to all students, including students with disabilities. A college admissions department will be able to identify the specific standards required for their institution, which may include some or all of the following admission criteria:

- A minimum high school GPA and/or class rank.
- High school diploma or GED.
- Transcript that meets requirements of core courses, such as a foreign language, mathematics, science and English.
- Score level on an application essay.
- Score level on standardized tests such as the ACT or SAT.

Course placement tests may also be a part of the college's admission requirements and can include these items:

- Accuplacer test of reading, writing and math/algebra
- Foreign language testing
- Math testing
- Music performance tests

## PAYING FOR COLLEGE

### FINANCIAL AID

Many students will need financial assistance to pay for college expenses. These expenses may include tuition, fees and possibly housing and food costs. College financial aid assistance is available for most students and is based on family income, which is

determined through the online submission of the **Free** Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which is available at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). The FAFSA and other required documents should be submitted to your college financial aid office as early as possible before your freshman year of college. Make sure you check with your school for any priority application deadlines. Once your FAFSA has been reviewed and you have been admitted, you will receive a financial aid award from the college. Your award letter will describe the types of financial aid you qualify for, including loans, grants, scholarships and work-study options.

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#### TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID

- **Scholarships** – Monetary awards in the form of scholarships can be awarded from colleges, both public and private, as well as organizations. Scholarship money never has to be repaid. Usually you will need to apply for scholarships, but not always. Check your college's websites and other sources for scholarship options. Remember: You should never pay for information on scholarships.
- **Grants** – Grants are like scholarships, except they usually come from the government or organizations and are based on financial need. Grants usually need to be applied for, which may involve completing the FAFSA and submitting your request to a specific college for financial aid assistance. The Pell Grant is a common federal grant – information about meeting the eligibility requirements is available at [www.2.ed.gov/programs/fpg/eligibility.html](http://www.2.ed.gov/programs/fpg/eligibility.html).
- **Loans** – Money loaned to students while they are in college is money they will have to repay once they have stopped attending a postsecondary school at least half-time. Federal Direct Loans come from the government with a low interest rate. A credit check or cosigner is not required, but the amount funded can be limited. Private and Alternative Loan programs usually require a credit check process as well as a cosigner. These loans may also have higher interest rates. Caution: All monies received through the forms of loans must be repaid once students have graduated or stopped attending college. Students need to fully understand the level of debt that they will experience and strive to keep the amount of loans to a minimum.
- **Work-Study** – Students who apply for financial aid at a college or university may be awarded the option to be employed on a campus and receive work-study funds. These funds are underwritten by the government so that students will have additional money for college expenses. Students earning work-study money are receiving a paycheck for the work they provide through a campus job. These monies do not have to be repaid.

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#### VISIT COLLEGE CAMPUSES

After you have selected colleges that fit your needs, visit a campus before applying. This is your opportunity to determine if the college is a good fit for you. Does it meet your academic needs? Does it provide the services you require? Do you like it? You may also choose to use the college exploration worksheet located in the Resources section to



provide assistance as you compare colleges. In addition to the facts, this is your opportunity to see how you feel about the college and see if you can imagine yourself as part of the college community.

8. McNair and Solomon, *A Practical Guide for People with Disabilities Who Want to Go to College*, 2010.

## FAMILY ROLES IN POSTSECONDARY PLANNING

Families, caregivers and adult mentors play a key role in the success of their young adults. This is true for the high school years, and it continues to be the case as their children transition to the postsecondary environment.

The role of parents changes when their son or daughter transitions to the postsecondary setting. As a parent, you will no longer be involved in every decision concerning your child's education. In addition to developing valuable life skills, your young person will have an opportunity to experience greater independence, meet new people, explore their interests, and increase their understanding of the world. Sometimes, students must be given the opportunity to fail and learn from these failures. At other times, the student needs that opportunity to shine. Your continued support and encouragement will help your son or daughter find success in the midst of transition.

Many topics should be considered in family discussions to assist in the transition process and to determine skills that need to be developed before your child attends college. During high school, the tendency is to focus on academic requirements for college admission. However, it is just as important that college students are prepared emotionally and socially and have developed competent life skills in order to be a successful college student.

Family conversation topics are detailed in the next few pages to assist you in determining the needs of your son and daughter. You will find questions for your student followed by important things to consider. Make a note of the areas of need for your student.

## ORGANIZATION AND TIME MANAGEMENT

Do you wake up in the morning and get started on your own? Can you prioritize tasks that need to be accomplished? Do you have a method for organizing your work and keeping track of assignments and deadlines? Can you break large tasks/assignments into smaller, more manageable components? Do you procrastinate on your school work to the point that assignments are not done well or at all?

College students are responsible for being at class each day, meeting deadlines, and organizing and prioritizing tasks. Classes are frequently spaced throughout the day and different days have different schedules. Postsecondary students need to have a method for

organizing their life activities, which includes attending class, studying, working, sleeping, doing laundry, grocery shopping, keeping medical appointments, having fun and more! Many organizational tools can be utilized, but they need to be looked at daily. It is essential that students begin working on assignments early without being reminded so that coursework will not be late, as many college instructors will not accept late work. Time management is essential for college students, too. This includes managing a schedule and a workload with multiple priorities. The worksheets in the Resource section include tools for time management and organization.

## MONEY MANAGEMENT

Do you have skills in handling money? Do you understand how credit cards work? Do you have a checking and/or savings account? Are you able to stick with a budget?

Independently managing your own money is an important and necessary life skill. Meals, activity fees, insurance, school logo clothing and a host of other non-educational cost can be overwhelming to students, so sticking to a determined budget along with wise shopping skills is essential to live within your means.

## FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Have you talked to your high school counselor about possible scholarship opportunities? Have you discussed with college admissions staff about financial aid packages or work programs? Have you submitted your FAFSA if you are attending college in the fall?

College can be very expensive, but there is often help available through college financial aid and scholarships. Financial aid needs should be discussed early, and an application for financial assistance should be submitted to the campus four to six months before courses begin. Loans, grants and other assistance are available, and students should understand the differences and the ultimate cost for their education. Large amounts of debt accrued while in college can be difficult or overwhelming to repay later.

## DATA PRIVACY

Do you understand that you are in charge of your private information once you enter college? Are you prepared to enter into academic conversations with professors without assistance from others?

Students who attend college are adults and are given many rights including a right to privacy. Postsecondary institutions must comply with federal state privacy laws, including the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA). Because of these laws, private information is only available to a postsecondary student and not to others who may have an interest in the student,

unless the student has signed a release of information. Although a student can sign a release so that a parent or someone else has access to their private information, most faculty prefer speaking with the student directly about course and grade concerns rather than to parents. All college staff are accountable for compliance with privacy laws and realize the student needs to understand the conversation and take ownership of his or her own education.

#### VRS, SSI OR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Have you had discussions about postsecondary education support services with your case manager? Do you know if you qualify for Social Security (SSI) or Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS)? If you use the services of a mental health counselor or therapist, do you know how these services will be provided at the new location if you go away to college?

Social Security benefits and Vocational Rehabilitation Services are available to students with disabilities and will require application to the program. Some universities provide clinical therapy services but if this is not a campus service, your doctor or therapist can suggest professionals in a new location if you are going away to college.

#### MEDICAL NEEDS

If on medication, can you self-administer? Can you self-advocate for special dietary or environmental concerns? Do you know who to contact for medical or dental emergencies? Can you complete insurance forms without assistance?

Many campuses have health clinics on site, while others have arrangements with clinics within the community. Some assume health and dental care are solely a student's responsibility. Pre-arrangement plans can be made between a family and the college, but ultimately the student will need to initiate assistance should the need arise; it is the student's responsibility to self-administer medication.

#### PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS OR PARAPROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE

Are you accustomed to being accompanied to some or all of your high school classes by a paraprofessional? Do you have medical needs that require dorm or classroom assistance?

Colleges do not provide paraprofessional assistance, even when students received this service in high school. All students, even those with behavioral issues, will be held to the college's code of conduct, which sets a high standard for campus behavior. Students with medical concerns may hire a personal care attendant (PCA) or nurse to assist them in class or in the dorm. This should be discussed with your college disability services provider so that the role of the PCA is understood by all involved.

## EATING AND EXERCISE

Do you have an understanding of nutritional foods and the need for regular exercise? If you live in an apartment on your own, do you know how to plan meals on a tight budget or how to prepare some simple, healthy meals? Do you exercise on a regular basis?

It is common for college students to gain 15 to 25 pounds during the freshman year, largely due to poor eating habits. Junk food and quick meals often replace healthy and nutritious ones. Poor eating habits and lack of exercise can cause a student to be less energetic and nonproductive and can lead to overall poor health.

## CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Have you thought about the involvement you would like to have at the postsecondary level? Have you researched what options are available at the college you would like to attend? Are you willing to join groups when you know few or none of the other members? Have you made contacts with any members from a club or organization during a campus visit?

The college experience can be greatly enhanced by successful social interaction among students. Colleges offer a wide variety of recreational and social activities including clubs and organizations, but it is up to the student to take the initiative and join. Involvement will not be forced, so students must accomplish this on their own.

## CLOTHING AND HYGIENE

Do you know how to separate clothing for washing? Do you understand washing and drying temperatures for various fabrics? Do you shower regularly and use deodorants and perfumes appropriately?

Too much odor can socially isolate a student more quickly than almost anything else. It is important that students take the initiative to wash themselves and their clothing regularly. To avoid ruining expensive or favorite clothing, the student should be well practiced in the use of a washing machine and dryer.

## HOME ALONE

If going away to college, have you ever spent extended time away from home? Can you manage all the tasks of daily living without parental assistance such as cleaning, grocery shopping and paying bills?

For students who leave home to attend college, homesickness and/or the need to care for oneself can be overwhelming. Living in a dorm or an apartment is far different and more demanding than living at home and doing a few chores. Students should be encouraged to

learn and use home living skills while in high school so that they can live successfully on their own.

#### TECHNICAL AND COMPUTER SKILLS

Do you feel comfortable using a computer for writing assignments or web searches? Are you able to perform technical functions on your own? Are you able to type 30-40 words per minute? Do you know where you can go on campus for technical assistance?

College students are expected to submit papers that are word processed. They also need technical skills to maneuver student platforms and online services. Being able to keyboard or use assistive technology at a sufficient speed will aid in timely assignment completion. Students who lack computer experience or skills should take a class in high school or use educational software to improve computer skills. They should know where to seek assistance on a college campus.

#### MAJOR OR CAREER GOAL

Have you thought about the major you will pursue at the postsecondary level? Do you know if the major you have in mind is available at the postsecondary institutions you have contacted or visited? Do your personal and academic strengths align with the major you are considering? Do others who know you best agree with your career goals? Do you understand the kind of coursework required for this major?

The more a student understands his or her career path and the desired major, the more likely a student will choose a college that matches that goal. Every major is not available at every postsecondary institution, but most of this information is readily available on college websites. Many pathways are also available to students to earn a degree, including the option to begin general education classes at a community or technical college and finish at a four-year university.

#### POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION OPTIONS INCLUDING ADULT BASIC EDUCATION (ABE)

Have you taken placement tests at your high school? Do you know what the resulting scores mean? Do you know about ABE options if your scores are low or if you feel you would benefit from more educational assistance?

Some students may not be academically prepared to attend a postsecondary institution right out of high school, which may become evident after taking a placement test. Adult basic education (ABE) classes are often available, free of charge, to assist students with building up their skills in reading, writing, math and computers.

An “Open Letter to Parents of Students with Disabilities About to Enter College” by Jane Jarrow is available at [www.arkahead.org/pdf/letterfromjane.pdf](http://www.arkahead.org/pdf/letterfromjane.pdf). This letter provides helpful

information to parents from the perspective of a parent who also works in the disability service field.

14. Schoenbauer, *Education Beyond High School*, 2006.

## DOCUMENTATION AND DISCLOSURE

### DISCLOSING A DISABILITY

Disclosure means to share personal information about your disability with others so you can receive accommodations. Disability information is disclosed at the postsecondary level when you meet with the disability services staff, preferably before the semester begins, so that accommodations are in place for you to use when needed. When to disclose is your choice, but sooner is better.

### IEPs AND 504 PLANS END WHEN STUDENTS GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL

When special education students were in elementary through high school, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) required that students were provided with appropriate services. An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan was developed each year and was implemented by teachers and other special education professionals addressing the educational needs stated in the evaluation. However, once students graduate from high school, the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan comes to an end. Because of this, it is up to a student to make the decision whether or not to disclose/reveal information about a disability at the postsecondary level.

### PRIVACY OF DISABILITY

Privacy is a concern for many students who may be hesitant to disclose a disability. However, the information from your disability service file does not appear on your college transcript and the contents of your file are kept securely. You should consider all of this information when and if you choose to disclose.

### REQUEST FOR DOCUMENTATION

Documentation is usually requested by college disability service providers when accommodations are requested. This documentation may include records from a professional, such as a medical doctor, psychologist or other qualified diagnostician. High school information, such as an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and last three-year evaluation or Section 504 plan, may help identify services that have been effective and may qualify as sufficient documentation. However, this is not always the case. If a new evaluation or further information from a medical doctor or psychologist is needed, the cost for this service is paid for by the student.

## ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF COLLEGE DISABILITY DOCUMENTATION

Most college disability services staff will want documentation to include this information:

- Signed, dated and typed letter on professional stationery from a certifying professional such as a medical doctor, psychologist or neurologist who has credentials for diagnosing a disability.
- Clearly stated diagnosis.
- Description of assessment and relevant history.
- Description of functional limitations or educational impact.
- Current enough documentation to determine present impact and validate the accommodation request.
- Recommendations for accommodations, including what has been helpful in the past.

This information, in addition to your input and the requirements of your course or program, are the basis for determining effective and appropriate postsecondary accommodations.

## WISE STUDENT ADVICE: KNOW WHAT WORKS BEST FOR YOU

Advice from a social work major:

“I am a student registered through disability services. I have a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and currently have a 3.85 GPA. I am very proud of this! As I’ve learned to deal with my TBI, I’ve realized how important it is to ask for help. I really needed to get over my pride and now that I have, this has helped me tremendously. Some of the strategies I’ve used to be successful here is to really understand my disability and how it affects me. I’ve learned I cannot take 8 a.m. classes, no back-to-back classes, and I even try to take classes every other day. Breaks are essential for me. I’ve also learned that taking a stress relief course or some kind of less intense class with my other more difficult classes help to even my class load. I’ve taken yoga and piano courses that have been relaxing for me. I’m okay with all of this, because I know it is essential to helping me be successful here at Central Lakes College. I couldn’t have done all this without the guidance and support from disability services.”

## ACCOMMODATIONS IN COLLEGE

Reasonable accommodations are available to postsecondary students who are willing to disclose a disability. An accommodation is a support that gives students an equal opportunity to participate and benefit from college, which has been authorized by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Accommodations are developed and approved through the college disability services (DS) office, but keep in mind that the names of the offices and the staffing models may be different from one campus to the next, depending

on the size and type of institution. Most of the information you will need to find about the DS office should be available on the college website.

If you choose to meet with a DS professional in order to receive accommodations, you will usually be required to provide documentation. This documentation gives the DS personnel information to support the accommodations you are requesting as well as give a history of accommodations you have used successfully in the past. Any specific questions should be directed to the DS office at your campus.

#### ACCOMMODATIONS GRANTED ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS. SOME EXAMPLES BELOW:

1. Changes to a classroom environment or task that can include the following examples:
  - Extended time or quiet place to take an exam
  - Assistance with lecture notes, such as a note-taker, web notes, permission to audio record lectures or use of a smartpen.
  - Materials and/or books in alternative formats such as audio, large print or digital format.
  - Use of a dictionary or spell checker.
2. Removal of architectural barriers, such as adapting a classroom or lab to meet the needs of a student who uses a wheelchair.
3. Exceptions to policies, practices or procedures with examples that include these accommodations:
  - Priority registration.
  - Accessing assignments early.
  - Early access to the course syllabus.
4. Provision of auxiliary aids and services that include the following examples:
  - Providing a sign language interpreter.
  - Closed circuit television (CCTV).
  - Screen-reading software.
  - Voice-activated software.

#### MEETING WITH DISABILITY SERVICES PERSONNEL

In order to receive accommodations, it is your responsibility to make an appointment to meet with the DS professional. At the meeting, which is sometimes called an intake or interview, be prepared to talk about yourself, your educational goals and your disability. You should also be ready to answer questions about your ability to access programs, activities and services of the college.



## REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION PROCESS

Your meeting with the DS professional is an interactive one with the objective of ensuring equal access, the removal of architectural barriers, and the provision of reasonable and appropriate auxiliary aids and services. What will be considered in the process?

- Disability: Do you have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity?
- Qualified: Do you meet the college course or program requirements?
- Known: Is there adequate documentation that is current and supports the requested accommodations? Was the documentation provided by a qualified assessor?
- Further considerations: Does the requested accommodation fundamentally alter a program or the academic standards of a course or program? Does the accommodation impose an undue financial or administrative burden on the institution? Are you a threat to yourself or others?
- Result: The result of the process is the availability of reasonable accommodations

## QUESTIONS FOR DISABILITY SERVICES PROFESSIONAL

When you meet for an intake interview, you should also have questions ready for the DS professional so that you can gain a better understanding of the particular program. Questions could include the following:

- How many students are registered to receive disability services on campus?
- Once an accommodation plan is implemented, how are the services provided?
- How are instructors notified of recommended accommodations?
- When do I need to meet with disability services? Do I need to request accommodations for each term I am registered?
- What technology is available for use by students with disabilities? Is the technology available for use in the classroom?
- What support is available for learning to use adaptive technology?
- What additional services are available on campus for student success, such as tutoring or help with time management?

## DIFFICULTIES WITH ACCOMMODATIONS

If you are having difficulties with the implementation of any of your accommodations, you should notify the DS staff as soon as possible. Communicate your needs and be flexible, as things do not always happen as expected or are not implemented in the same way as they were in high school. Successful accommodations come from open and timely collaboration between the college staff, faculty and you the student.

## ACCOMMODATIONS VS. MODIFICATIONS

Students with disabilities transitioning directly from high school to college might be used to services that will not translate well to the college environment. Course modifications that alter the fundamental requirements of a course will not be allowed. For example, for many courses regular attendance is required and may be a part of the course grade. Assignment due dates also will not be automatically extended as an accommodation, but will be handled on a case-by-case basis. While extra time on tests is a common accommodation in college, modification of tests will usually not be an option. For example, rephrasing questions or reducing the number of choices on a multiple choice test will not be allowed. If a student is accustomed to these types of course modifications in high school, the best approach is to start slowly and take fewer credits, at least initially.

## ACCOMMODATIONS NOT PROVIDED BY DISABILITY SERVICES

In accordance with the law, there are some modifications and services that colleges do not provide as a reasonable accommodation that may include the following services:

- Individually prescribed devices such as wheelchairs, hearing aids or glasses.
- Personal services, such as a private tutoring transportation or personal-care attendants (Note: Tutoring services may be available elsewhere on campus for all students.)
- Modifications that lower or change course standards or program standards and would change the essence of a program, such as allowing a student in an auto mechanics program to take a written test on repairing an engine, or allowing a student in a public speaking class to substitute a written paper for an oral presentation, and/or services which are unduly burdensome, administratively or financially.

## OTHERWISE QUALIFIED: MEETING ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS

Disability accommodations depend on whether you are considered “otherwise qualified.” A student with a disability is otherwise qualified when he or she can meet the same academic requirements and standards as non-disabled students. All students are required to meet an instructor’s expectation regarding class participation, work standards, attendance and ability to demonstrate knowledge. Students also need to adhere to general college policies, including the college code of conduct and satisfactory academic progress. When course accommodations are being developed, consideration is given to the necessary requirements and standards of the course.

## POSTSECONDARY TECHNICAL STANDARDS

The term “technical standard” refers to nonacademic criteria that are essential to participation in a college course or program. Examples of technical standards may include

the ability to manipulate materials in a laboratory, the ability to recognize colors or patterns, or even behavioral requirements. If technical standards are necessary for demonstration of mastery, and if reasonable accommodations are provided as appropriate, programs may establish standards of eligibility criteria even if physical tasks and/or levels of achievement will likely be impossible for some persons with a disability.

#### POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS

Students with disabilities concurrently enrolled in high school and college under Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) must meet the requirements of the college. Reasonable accommodations are determined by the college, but the school district may provide auxiliary services, such as additional tutoring outside of the classroom. For more information on PSEO or concurrent enrollment, students should meet with a PSEO admissions representative or with disability services prior to enrollment.

17. United States. *The Americans with Disabilities Act Handbook*. 1990, 2008.

16. United States. *Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973*.

#### WISE STUDENT ADVICE: PARTNER WITH DISABILITY SERVICES STAFF

Advice from a nursing major

“Working with disability services is one of the most important things that I have found to be very helpful to me in my college experience. I would like to share some advice for those who are wondering how disability services can help them in their college experience.

The first suggestion is to see what services are offered at the college of your choice. There are more options that are offered at college than there are at high school. For example, I have an accommodation for note-taking and to help me with this I use a smartpen that records audio and notes I write on a special type of notebook. When I am done with class, I can upload the information to my computer at home and all my lectures and notes are available for me to listen to as many times as I need. When taking tests, I use a private room and have access to a program that reads the tests to me at my preferred speed level. This is very helpful for someone who may be an auditory learner. What I like about the private rooms is that they are quieter than when I was in high school and I am able to concentrate better.

My final suggestion is to get to know the staff. It is important to know the staff because they will get to know you and your learning style. As you get to know the staff, you will know who to approach and feel comfortable bringing up any concerns. I had an experience with a concern where a new teacher was starting and I explained to this teacher that I had accommodations and that with test-taking I would prefer to take the test in the private room in the Academic Support Center. This teacher did not understand and did not follow my accommodations. I brought this concern up with one of the staff members at the Academic

Support Center and this staff member emailed this instructor to explain more about what their services were and what my accommodations were. When talking with this instructor again, everything was clearer for both of us and my accommodations were followed. This is a great example of how staff members are always willing to help with anything.”

## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

If you thought going from elementary school to high school was a big change, get ready! The difference between high school and college can be overwhelming, yet exciting. In college, you have the freedom to make more of your own decisions and are in charge of what you do. You also need to be responsible and accountable; understanding the differences between high school and college will assist you to be prepared for these changes.

The following is a comparison between high school and college, based on information compiled by the Minnesota Association for Developmental Education. Not every possible area or scenario has been covered, but there is enough information so you can get a strong sense of how colleges operate.

### FOLLOWING THE RULES IN HIGH SCHOOL

- Attending high school is mandatory and usually free.
- Your time is structured by others.
- You need permission to participate in co-curricular activities.
- Adults will remind you of responsibilities and help you set priorities.
- You are not responsible for knowing what it takes to graduate.
- You are usually corrected if your behavior is out of line.

### BEING RESPONSIBLE IN COLLEGE

- Attending college is voluntary and is expensive.
- You manage your own time.
- You must decide whether to participate in co-curricular activities.
- You balance your own classes with the help of an advisor.
- Graduation requirements may change, and you are responsible for knowing what applies to you.
- You are expected to take responsibility for your actions as well the consequences for your decisions.

### HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES

- You have limited class choices and the school creates your schedule.
- Generally classes have no more than 35 students.
- You proceed from one class directly to the next.

- You usually spend six hours a day in classes.
- Attendance is taken.
- Textbooks are provided a little or no expense.
- Required classes are the same for all students.
- Modifications that change course rigor, volume or outcomes may be offered based on an IEP.
- You will do most of your studying in class.

#### COLLEGE CLASSES

- You choose your classes and set your schedule.
- Classes may have more than 100 students.
- You often have several hours between classes which may be scheduled throughout the day and evening.
- You attend 2-4 classes per day, usually 12-16 hours per week.
- Attendance may or may not be taken, but professors know who misses.
- Textbooks are expensive. The cost is your responsibility.
- Classes are based on a field of study and requirements vary.
- Modifications that change rigor, volume or outcomes will not be offered.
- You will do most of your studying outside of class, at least 2-3 hours outside of class for each hour in class.

#### HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

- Teachers remind students of incomplete work.
- Teachers approach students if they feel they need help.
- Teachers are often available for conversation before, during or after class.
- Teachers have been trained in teaching methods to assist in imparting knowledge to students.
- Teachers provide you with information you may have missed if you were absent.
- Teachers present material to help you understand what is in the textbook.
- Teachers often write information on the board to be copied in your notes.
- Teachers impart knowledge and facts, sometimes drawing direct connections and leading you through the thinking process.
- Teachers often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates.
- Teachers bear much of the responsibility for your learning.

#### COLLEGE PROFESSORS

- Professors may not remind students of incomplete work.
- Professors are usually open and helpful but most will expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance.
- Professors expect and want you to attend scheduled office hours.
- Professors have been trained as experts in their particular areas of research.

- Professors expect you to get from classmates any information you may have missed when absent.
- Professors may not follow textbooks. You are expected to read on your own. Lectures enhance information from the book.
- Professors may lecture non-stop, expecting you to identify the important point in your notes. When professors write on the board, it may be to amplify the lecture, not to summarize it. Good notes are a must.
- Professors expect you to think independently and make the connection between topics.
- Professors expect you to read, save and refer to the course syllabus to keep track of due dates and assignments.
- You bear the responsibility for your learning while professors serve as guides, mentors and resources.

### STUDYING IN HIGH SCHOOL

- You may study as little as 0-2 hour per week and this may be to get ready for a test.
- You often need to hear or read material only once to learn all you need about a topic.
- You read short assignments that are then discussed in class and often retaught in class.
- You are frequently told what you need to learn from assigned readings.

### STUDYING IN COLLEGE

- You may need to study at least 2-3 hours for each hour of class.
- You will need to continually review class notes and text information to learn course materials.
- You may be assigned large amounts of reading and writing that may not be discussed in class.
- It is up to you to understand what must be learned from reading assignments. Lectures and assignments proceed from the assumption that you have already read the material.

### TESTS IN HIGH SCHOOL

- Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material.
- Makeup tests are often available.
- Teachers may rearrange test dates to avoid conflict with school event times.
- Teachers frequently conduct review sessions.
- Mastery is usually seen as the ability to reproduce what you were taught in the form in which it was presented to you.

### TESTS IN COLLEGE

- Tests may be infrequent and cover large amounts of material and could be cumulative. You, not the professor, organize the material to prepare for a test.
- Makeup tests are often not available.
- Professors in different courses usually schedule tests without regard to the demands of other courses or outside activities.

- Professors usually do not offer review sessions, and when they do, they expect the student to come with questions and be an active participant.
- Mastery is often seen as the ability to apply what you have learned to new situations or to solve new kinds of problems.

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADES

- Grades are given for most assigned work.
- Good homework grades may help to raise poor test scores.
- Extra credit options are usually available to raise your grade.
- Initial tests are usually not counted, especially if they are low.
- You may graduate as long as you have passed all required courses with a grade of D or better.

### COLLEGE GRADES

- Assigned work may or may not be graded.
- Tests and major papers provided the majority of the grade, but a grade may be lowered if homework is not done.
- Extra credit options are usually not available to raise a course grade.
- First tests reveal expectations of the instructor and are usually part of the final grade.
- You may graduate only if your average in classes meets the departmental standard, typically a 2.0 (C) or better.

### SPECIAL EDUCATION IN HIGH SCHOOL

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) applies to high schools.
- Students receive special education and related services based upon identified needs.
- Behavior can be viewed as a manifestation of the disability, and different behavior standards are allowed.
- Accommodations and modifications are communicated to the teachers by the case manager.
- Modifications that change course rigor, volume or outcomes may be offered based on an IEP.
- Services are delivered to the student.
- The school informs the parents of your progress.
- The case manager and/or parent act as your advocate.
- Schools are required to identify students with disabilities through free assessments.
- Services may include individually designed instruction, curriculum modifications and accommodations based on an IEP.
- There are regular meetings to discuss your progress.
- Assessment, physical therapy and personal care are provided by the high school.
- School personnel seek you out and decide what services and support you can receive.
- You receive service in a special education classroom or from a related service provider.

- Documentation is coordinated by a school psychologist or appointed staff person. The high school staff develops an IEP from documentation, and testing is provided and paid for by the school.
- IDEA provides the mandate and funding to schools for in-school special education services as well as transportation/buses to school, physical, occupational, speech therapy, and tutoring.

#### DISABILITY SERVICES IN COLLEGE

- State law, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) apply to colleges.
- Disability services are available.
- You must meet the college's behavioral conduct standard.
- Modifications are usually not available, and you must request and discuss accommodations yourself.
- Modifications that change rigor, volume or outcomes will not be offered.
- You must request services through the disability service office.
- The school cannot communicate with your parents without your permission.
- You need to be your own advocate.
- You are responsible for disclosing your disability, providing current documentation and paying for an assessment if needed.
- Reasonable accommodations for access are available. The 504 Plan IEP end upon high school graduation.
- You are responsible to monitor own progress.
- You are responsible for arranging and paying for personal services and medical care.
- You must request help; no one will come to find you.
- You receive access services from a designated person or office, and the services model may differ from college to college.
- You must provide information about your disability (documentation), and colleges can set their own guidelines for documentation. After high school, you may be requested to pay for a new evaluation if one is needed.
- Colleges are requested to offer reasonable accommodations and support services, not services of a personal nature. Tutoring is usually not offered through disability services, but it generally a service available to all students. It is your responsibility to arrange for the transportation and therapy you need.

9. Minnesota Association for Developmental Education. *College Readiness: Understanding the Differences between High School and College, 2004.*

#### WISE STUDENT ADVICE: USE COLLEGE SERVICES

Advice from a special education major:

"I transitioned to a community college the fall after I graduated from high school. I registered with the disability services office right away and easily understood how to request accommodations when they were needed in my college courses. I took classes at two different community colleges and two different four-year MnSCU colleges and



eventually earned my degree in special education. I am now a special education teacher and I have a lot of personal experiences to help my students. I would advise students who are starting college to take advantage of the help that is offered and listen to your teachers about the skills needed outside of high school. Follow through with your accommodations and use them. Stay focused on school and on what you need to get done so you can get your education completed more quickly and easily.”

## TRANSITION TO EMPLOYMENT

Just as there is a transition from high school to postsecondary education, there is also a transition from postsecondary training to beginning your chosen professional career.

Finding a job is your responsibility and sometimes can be difficult. Employment statistics state that by 2018, 70 percent of the jobs in MN will require some postsecondary training beyond high school. A person with advanced skills and qualifications for jobs will have more career options and the opportunity to choose among a variety of places to work and live. They are also more likely to receive important benefits such as medical or dental insurance, paid time off, bonuses, and retirement plans. Labor statistics show that earning potential is much higher and unemployment is much lower for those who attend postsecondary training or education than for those who only have a high school diploma or GED. Advanced training has other benefits. This may include better schedules, working environments, and advancement potential.

1. Carnevale, Smith, and Strohl, *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements through 2018*, 2010.

## POSTSECONDARY CAREER AND JOB PLACEMENT

Many students have entered a particular field of study based on the numbers of graduates from a program who are able to secure competitive employment after graduation. Most colleges and universities have job placement and career development offices that can assist students in securing a position in their field. College job placement offices usually offer individual and group assistance in career assessment and exploration, job search techniques, as well as resume writing and interviewing skills. Many of these offices have video and multimedia resources as well as one-on-one assistance. Employers also are aware of specific college programs and will post job openings on the college job placement website. Networking with other program graduates and college alumni who have connections to employers is a powerful way to get interviews and job offers in a competitive market. Minnesota has a comprehensive network of work force centers that can help job seekers find employment. These centers offer job search guides, workshops, training, as well as networking and job clubs. Centers are located throughout the state, and additional information is available at Minnesota’s Department of Employment and Economic Development website: [mn.gov/deed/job-seekers](http://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers).

## ONLINE PLACEMENT SERVICES

Minnesota has many other services and programs available to assist job seekers:

- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development: [mn.gov/deed](http://mn.gov/deed)
- Career One Stop: [www.careeronestop.org](http://www.careeronestop.org)

Other websites are also available for job searches, including individual company websites and temporary position sites. Additional supports are available during the job search such as Supported Employment Programs and Centers for Independent Living. Your local Vocational Rehabilitation office may also be able to provide assistance and will have information about support services available during the job search.

## ON-THE-JOB ACCOMMODATIONS

Once you have been offered a position of employment, accommodations can be requested if you need them. You will need to take the lead in requesting and arranging the accommodations. There are service providers who can assist with designing effective accommodations for the workplace, including a vocational counselor, a medical professional or the company human resources manager. The human resources manager is a resource for discussing effective accommodations you have accessed in prior jobs or at a postsecondary institution. Remember, however, that many of the accommodations used at the postsecondary level will not be applicable or appropriate for employment. The manager may ask you to provide current documentation, so having updated disability information is usually essential. It is important to remember that the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act are civil rights laws that state that employers cannot discriminate against persons due to a disability. However, these laws do not automatically entitle a person with a disability to a specific job since all potential employees have to meet the required qualifications and performance standards for the job.

## NOW IS THE TIME

It is your investment in postsecondary education that will lead you to that great job and a progressive career path. Time taken now to research your career options and develop an education and career plan will help you reach the goals you have established for your adult life.

18. United States Department of Labor: Office of Disability Employment. The Why, When, What, and How of Disclosure in an Academic Setting, After High School.

## RESOURCES

### MINNESOTA CAREER FIELDS, CLUSTERS & PATHWAYS CHART EXPLANATION

A link to the full image of the diagram is located at [tiny.cc/mg9dmx](http://tiny.cc/mg9dmx).



### MINNESOTA PROGRAM OF STUDY

The Minnesota Career Fields, Clusters & Pathways chart graphically depicts the organizing framework of the foundation knowledge and skills, career fields, career clusters, and career pathways that Minnesota will use for developing programs of study in career and technical education. Once developed, learners at various levels (high school, collegiate, or workforce training level) will then be able to choose from several individual programs within a program of study in order to attain the specific knowledge, skills and abilities needed to pursue a career of their choice.

**Programs of Study** are sets of aligned programs and curricula that begin at the high school level and continue through college and university certificate, diploma and degree programs. The following are some of the key elements that underlie the definition:

- Competency based curricula tied to industry expectations and skill standards;
- Sequential course offerings that provide strategic entry and exit points as needed throughout a lifetime – this leads to manageable “stepping stones” of skill building, high school graduation and postsecondary education completion;
- Flexible course and program formats convenient for learner segments;
- Course portability for seamless progression;
- Multiple entry and exit points to support continuing education, returning adults, and dislocated workers;
- Connections between high school and postsecondary education, skill progression, and career opportunities that align academic credentials with job advancement in high-skill, high-wage or high-demand occupations.

## FOUNDATION KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Foundation Knowledge and Skills represent the base from which to build work and college readiness.

### Academic and Technical Literacy Skills

Employability; ethics; systems; teamwork; career development; problem solving; critical thinking; Information Technology application; legal responsibilities; communication; safety, health, and environment; social studies; math; science; English; and personal finance make up the foundation knowledge and skills your educational experience will provide you to use on your job!

## CAREER FIELDS

Career fields are the organizing structure for the 16 career clusters and 81 pathways. The fields represent the broadest aggregation of careers. Students are normally exposed to career field exploration in middle school and early high school. Career fields have been identified as:

- Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources
- Arts, Communications, & Information Systems
- Engineering, Manufacturing, & Technology
- Health Science Technology
- Human Services
- Business, Management, & Administration

## CAREER CLUSTERS WITH CAREER PATHWAYS

Career clusters represent a grouping of occupations and broad industries into a national classification of 16 clusters that are based upon common knowledge and skills. Career clusters include hundreds of occupations that may be grouped into pathways around which educational programs of study can be built.

Career Pathways represent an organization of related occupational areas within a specific career cluster. Each of these pathways has identified knowledge and skills validated by industry from which programs and programs of study are developed.

Below are the career fields and clusters listed with their associated career pathways:

- Career Field: Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
  - Career Cluster: Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
    - Animal Systems
    - Agribusiness Systems
    - Environmental Service Systems

- Food Products and Processing Systems
  - Natural Resources Systems
  - Plant Systems
  - Power, Structural, and Technical Systems
- Career Field: Engineering, Manufacturing, and Technology
  - Career Cluster: Architecture and Construction
    - Construction
    - Design and Pre-construction
    - Maintenance and Operations
  - Career Cluster: Manufacturing
    - Production
    - Manufacturing Production Process Development
    - Maintenance, Installation, and Repair
    - Quality Assurance
    - Logistics and Inventory Control
    - Health, Safety, and Environmental Assurance
  - Career Cluster: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
    - Engineering and Technology
    - Science and Math (investigative, informational and Educational)
  - Career Cluster: Transportation, Distribution, Logistics
    - Facility and Mobile Equipment Maintenance
    - Health, Safety, and Environmental Management
    - Logistics Planning and Management Services
    - Sales and Services
    - Transportation Operations
    - Transportation Systems and Infrastructure Planning, Management and Regulation
    - Warehousing and Distribution Operations
- Career Field: Arts, Communications, and Information Systems
  - Career Cluster: Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communications
    - Audio and Video Technology and Film
    - Journalism and Broadcasting
    - Performing Arts
    - Printing Technology
    - Telecommunications
    - Visual Arts
  - Career Cluster: Information Technology
    - Information Support and Services
    - Network Systems
    - Programming and Software Development
    - Web and Digital Communications
- Career Field: Business, Management, and Administration
  - Career Cluster: Marketing, Sales, and Service
    - Buying and Merchandising
    - Distribution and Logistics
    - E-Marketing

- Management and Entrepreneurship
  - Marketing Communications and Promotion
  - Marketing Information Management and Research
  - Professional Sales and Marketing
- Career Cluster: Hospitality and Tourism
  - Lodging
  - Recreation, Amusements and Attractions
  - Restaurants and Food/Beverage Services
  - Travel and Tourism
- Career Cluster: Business, Management, and Administration
  - Administrative and Information Support
  - Business Analysis
  - Business Financial Management and Accounting
  - Marketing
  - Human Resources
  - Management
- Career Cluster: Finance
  - Banking and Related Services
  - Business Financial Management
  - Financial and Investment Planning
  - Insurance Services
- Career Field: Human Services
  - Career Cluster: Education and Training
    - Administration and Administrative Support
    - Professional Support Services
    - Teaching and Training
  - Career Cluster: Government and Public Administration
    - Revenue and Taxation
    - Foreign Service
    - Governance
    - National Security
    - Planning
    - Public Management and Administration
    - Regulation
  - Career Cluster: Human Services
    - Consumer Services
    - Counseling and Mental Health Services
    - Early Childhood Development and Services
    - Family and Community Services
    - Personal Care Services
  - Career Cluster: Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security
    - Correction Services
    - Emergency and Fire Management Services
    - Law Enforcement Services
    - Legal Services
    - Security and Protective Services

- Career Field: Health Science Technology
  - Career Cluster: Health Science
    - Biotechnology Research and Development
    - Diagnostic Services
    - Support Services
    - Health Informatics
    - Therapeutic Services

## COLLEGE EXPLORATION QUESTIONS

In this next section, you will find information that will be important to know as you explore colleges. Use this as a reference list that you can gather the information asked in these sections and make a better determination of the college that best meets your needs.

### GENERAL COLLEGE INFORMATION

This is the list of general college information that you should keep track of to make your final decisions using:

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| ○ College name                   | ○ Size of the college                             |
| ○ Admissions contact person name | ○ Average ACT and SAT scores needed               |
| ○ Office number                  | ○ Size of the town or city the college is located |
| ○ Phone number and email         | ○ Average class size                              |
| ○ Website address                |   |

### GETTING THERE AND GETTING AROUND

These are the things to consider for getting to your prospective campus and getting around the area:

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| ○ Miles from home                                       | ○ Public transportation type  |
| ○ Access to building with underground or skyway tunnels | ○ Accessible parking          |
| ○ Campus Transportation                                 | ○ Urban or rural town or city |

### ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

This is a list of questions you should find out about admissions at your prospective college:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Is the college highly or moderately competitive or open enrollment? | 7. Does this require high school language?              |
| 2. What is the minimum ACT or SAT score accepted?                      | 8. Does this require letters from high school teachers? |
| 3. Is there an admissions interview?                                   | 9. Is there a placement test required?                  |
| 4. Is there a modified admissions for students with disabilities?      | 10. Does this require my high school class ranking?     |
| 5. Do they require an early application?                               | 11. Does this require high school math?                 |
| 6. Does this require high school science?                              | 12. Are there alternative courses available?            |

## DISABILITY SERVICES

This is a list of things you should collect about the disability services office at your prospective college so you don't have to collect the information after you have made your decision:

1. Disability Director's name
2. Office number
3. Phone and email information
4. How are accommodations provided?
5. What other services are provided through disability services? This bullet list is an example of things you may need to ask about depending upon your disability:
  - o Testing
  - o Note taking
  - o Audio books
  - o Assistive Technology
  - o Tutoring
  - o Special Advisors
  - o Diagnostic testing
  - o Special classes
  - o Support Groups
6. Other areas of concern (make notes about anything else you may need)
7. How are instructors notified that students in their course are receiving accommodations?
8. How many disability staff are available to assist students?

## HOUSING AND FOOD SERVICE

This is a list of things to you may need to find out about for housing and food services:

- o Is there an open campus food service?
- o What is the cost of the food service?
- o If this doesn't have on campus food service, does this have an off campus with approved special accommodations service?
- o Are there private dorm rooms?
- o What is the procedure if you have food service concerns for allergies?

## MAJOR AND DEGREE SERVICES

This is a list of the majors and degree services you may wish to know about, depending upon where you are looking to go to college:

- o Majors and minors
- o 2 year degree AA, or AS or AAS
- o Certificates
- o 4 year bachelor's degree BA or BS
- o Course transferability
- o Internships available
- o Job placement office

## SPECIALIZED COURSE INFORMATION AND OFFERINGS

- o Is there an introduction to the college course?
- o Are there college preparatory classes in reading, writing and or math?
- o Are there career courses and programs?
- o Are there study skills courses?
- o Are there technical courses and programs?
- o Are there certificates available in some programs?



## FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Are the fees high, moderate or low?
- Are there scholarships?
- Are there grants?
- Are there loans?
- Are there work study or campus jobs?

## SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

This is a list of the services and activities of interest that you may want to become aware of when you look at prospective colleges.

- Advising and counseling services
- Student Support services like TRIO programs
- Peer support groups
- Clubs or organizations of interest
- Clinical psychologist on campus
- Exercise facility
- On campus health services
- Face to face or online tutoring
- Job placement office
- Computer help desk
- Sport activities participant or spectator
- Supplemental instruction program

## DISABILITY SERVICES

- Who is the disability director?
  - Office number, phone number and website
- How are accommodations provided?
  - Testing
  - Note taking
  - Audio books
  - Assistive technology
  - Other of concern
- Are any other services available through disability services?
  - Tutoring
  - Special advisors
  - Diagnostic testing
  - Special classes
  - Support groups
- How are instructors notified that students in their courses are receiving accommodations?
- How many disability staff is available to assist students?

2. Daley, Grott, and Robillard, *Tools for Transition*, 2007.

## TRANSITION RESOURCES

The following items are other web-based resources to assist you in your transition to college.

### TRANSITION WEBINARS

Four captioned videos have been created for you or your family to watch. The titles of these videos are in the following list and one link is provided that will take you to the playlist of all four webinars: [tinyurl.com/transitionwebinars](http://tinyurl.com/transitionwebinars).

1. [Practical Learning Strategies Webinar](#)
2. [Planning for College While Still in High School](#)
3. [Family Roles in Postsecondary Planning](#)
4. [Differences Between High School and College](#)

### JOB AND CAREER INFORMATION

- Career Planning and Assessments [gpslifeplan.org/career](http://gpslifeplan.org/career)
- Job Skills Assessments, Careers, Job Profiler [ww1.onetonline.org](http://ww1.onetonline.org)
- iSEEK Resources for People with Disabilities [www.iseek.org/guide/disabilities](http://www.iseek.org/guide/disabilities)
- MN Workforce Center Career Counselors [www.PositivelyMinnesota.com/wfc](http://www.PositivelyMinnesota.com/wfc)

### COLLEGE INFORMATION AND FINANCIAL AID

- Educational Planning, Study Strategies for ADHD and Learning Disabilities, Learning Styles, and Selecting Courses [www.gpslifeplan.org/education](http://www.gpslifeplan.org/education)
- Financial Aid, Transfer, and Career Exploration [www.CareerOneStop.org](http://www.CareerOneStop.org)
- Preparing for College: An online Tutorial from DO-IT [www.washington.edu/doit](http://www.washington.edu/doit)
- Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education. Know your Rights and Responsibilities, US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. [www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html)

### GETTING HELP

- ADA Publications and Fact Sheets [adata.org/ada-national-publications](http://adata.org/ada-national-publications)
- Auxiliary Aids and Services for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities [www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/auxaids.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/auxaids.html)
- College Selection and Application [www.GetReadyForCollege.org/selecting](http://www.GetReadyForCollege.org/selecting)
- Free and Inexpensive Adaptive Technology Resources [www.adaptech.org/en/downloads](http://www.adaptech.org/en/downloads)
- MN State Agency Programs and Services [mndisability.gov](http://mndisability.gov)

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