

Monthly tips and resources for young adults, their families, and supporters who are exploring options for life after high school in Indiana.

Disability Accommodations 101

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Imagine you have enrolled in postsecondary education at a college, university, or vocational school. You are excited to attend, but know you needed accommodations in high school. Can you get accommodations at your new place of higher education and how do you go about doing so?

As a student in higher education, you need to understand that the protections that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides end either when you receive a high school diploma or turn 22. Typically, institutions of higher education do not provide special education or services related to IDEA.

Instead, federally funded higher education institutions must follow the disability discrimination protections under [Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act](#). This act ensures reasonable accommodations and freedom from discrimination in education for students with a disability, with a history of a disability, or those regarded as having a disability. You do not need a formal written plan to be eligible for Section 504 protections.

How to get postsecondary accommodations

Here's how you can get postsecondary accommodations:

1. **Gather all needed evidence of disability paperwork.** This could include:
 - the most recent Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 plan,
 - the latest results from your last three-year reevaluation under IDEA,
 - your Summary of Performance under IDEA,
 - any other private provided testing reports, and
 - medical documentation from a physician about a health problem or disability.

Ensure that your IEP or Section 504 states the specific accommodations needed for success in general and special education classes at school.

2. **Locate the new disability services office.** Different higher education institutions may have varying names for their disability services office (e.g., at Indiana University, it is the [Disability Services for Students](#)). Smaller universities, colleges, and vocational or training schools may only have one person managing administrative tasks for disability services, so you will need to find that person.
3. **Set up an appointment with the office or person.** When scheduling your appointment, tell them what paperwork or evidence you have and ask if you need to bring any other information. Remember to keep your appointment.
4. **Learn the process for obtaining disability accommodations.** To request accommodations from your professors, you may need to bring a letter from the disability services office or have them send an email to your professors. Make sure to ask the disability services office about the process and follow it. Inquire about the steps to take if the school does not provide accommodations and follow the outlined process.

Note: Offices that provide services to students with disabilities in higher education prefer recent assessments. For evaluations that helped you get proper accommodations in high school, you may have to request an updated three-year reevaluation before you graduate.

Resources

- Best Colleges: ["How to Access College Disability Services and Accommodations"](#)
- Center On Community Living and Careers: [Postsecondary Education Opportunities for Students with Disabilities in Indiana](#)
- Arthritis Foundation: [504 and IEP Obligations at Private or Independent Schools](#)

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