



# Opening Doors

to Postsecondary Education and Training

## Planning for Life After High School

### A Handbook for:

- ▶ Students
- ▶ Parents
- ▶ Teachers
- ▶ School Counselors
- ▶ Transition Coordinators

## Message from State Superintendent Tony Evers



Every child must graduate from high school feeling hopeful about their future and ready for further educational opportunities and the workforce. It is our mission to prepare Wisconsin's students to become contributing members of their communities and the world by connecting youth to the resources necessary for a successful transition. For students with disabilities, this can be accomplished with comprehensive advance planning for life after high school. The purpose of this handbook, "Opening Doors to Postsecondary Education and Training," is to assist youth and their families to navigate through this planning process.

This handbook has been created to assist you, your parents, school counselors, and others on your Individualized Education Program (IEP) team in planning for postsecondary education and training opportunities. Included is information to help you understand your strengths and preferences and to identify the supports and resources you will need to be successful at the postsecondary level. In addition, this handbook will help you develop advocacy skills so you can take advantage of the time you are in high school to plan your transition to postsecondary education and training.

Remember, you have many people who will support you in your planning, but, in the end, you will make the decisions. Being well informed and well prepared will help ensure you have a happy and successful life after high school.

Good luck as you continue to plan your future!

Tony Evers, PhD  
State Superintendent

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## Overview of Transition To Postsecondary Education

This handbook is designed as a guide to help students take another step in preparing for “life after high school.” While high school is an exciting time, what you do after high school can be just as exciting if you have done some careful and thoughtful planning. Transition planning includes:

- thinking about your strengths as an individual,
- knowing what interests you, and
- considering different types of work and jobs.

In addition, students must identify what knowledge and skills are needed for work and figure out how to get that knowledge and those skills. The end result is to find fulfilling and rewarding work.

Students transition and go in many different directions after high school. Some choose to go right into the workforce. Some go into the military or national service like AmeriCorps. Still others go on to postsecondary education. Regardless of disability all students have the right to consider the entire range of options.

Some students with more complex disabilities may continue to receive school special education services through ages 18-21, but that does not preclude planning for and participating in postsecondary education. As an education system in Wisconsin we recognize that opportunities are expanding rapidly for students with intellectual disabilities to attend postsecondary institutions to prepare for lifelong careers of their choosing. As such, transition planning must include exploration of all opportunities.

This handbook deals with one of these options, postsecondary education. Postsecondary education includes many kinds of education and training programs, technical college degree and certification programs, apprenticeships, two- and four-year public and private colleges and universities, trade schools, on-the-job training, and more.

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### TIMELINE FOR PLANNING

Thinking about how you want to live your life – explore options

- |                          |  |             |
|--------------------------|--|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Exploring Lifework* Options                  | Grades 7-9  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Exploring Postsecondary Options              | Grades 8-10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Exploring Student Choices                    | Grades 8-10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Exploring Work Options through Job Shadowing | Grades 7-10 |

Planning and preparing for postsecondary education

- |                          |                                      |             |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Planning and Preparing – Academics   | Grades 8-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Planning for a Career                | Grades 9-10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Planning for Personal-Social Choices | Grades 8-12 |

Exploring Postsecondary Choices

Grades 9-10

- |                          |                                       |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Apprenticeship                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Technical College                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2-year College                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4-year Independent College/University |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4-year State College/University       |

Selecting a Postsecondary Institution

Grades 10-11

Applying to a Postsecondary Institution

Grades 11-12

*This recommended timeline should be adjusted for students attending more than four years of high school.*

*\*Exploring lifework options includes discovering your interests, talents, and abilities. Then you can start to plan for developing skills and knowledge that will lead to a job that will be a good fit for you.*



## Deciding to Attend a Postsecondary Institution

Although 8th, 9th and 10th grades are early in your school career, they are important times to begin thinking about and planning for those things you will be looking forward to after graduation. You may want to continue your education or enter an apprenticeship program. Both of these options require career exploration and research. Most schools offer classes on career education. Make sure you are included.



*“Start asking now. Don’t let pride get in your way – ask for help while you can.”*

— Liz, college graduate with a learning disability

Once you have narrowed your career choices, it is important to find out the required training and education for your choice(s). If further education is required, you need to find schools that offer a major or certification program in your career choice area. Your school counselor, librarian, teachers, and/or transition coordinator can help you with this research. There may be special requirements for specific programs.

## After high school, the rules change.

The following charts describe general differences in various areas between public high school and postsecondary education.

### L A W S   A N D   R E S P O N S I B I L I T I E S

#### HIGH SCHOOL

1. Students receive special education and related services to address needs based on an identified disability.
2. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).
3. Public Schools serve ages 3-21 or until regular high school diploma requirements are met.
4. School attendance is mandatory.
5. Districts are required to evaluate and identify students with disabilities.
6. Services include individually designed instruction, modifications, and accommodations based on the IEP.
7. Individual student’s needs based on the IEP may be addressed by program support for school personnel.
8. Progress toward IEP goals is monitored and communicated to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or the student.

#### POSTSECONDARY

1. Formal special education services are not available.
2. Any college/university that accepts federal funds must adhere to Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in providing equal access. Section 504, ADA, and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (2009) (ADAA) provide reasonable accommodations and auxiliary aids (i.e. sign language interpreters) for accessibility and reasonable accommodations.
3. Colleges/universities serve students with disabilities regardless of age; schools may not discriminate in recruitment, during admission, or after admission, solely on the basis of a disability.
4. Students decide to attend and pay tuition per class.
5. Students are responsible for disclosing their disability and providing current documentation of a disability for each accommodation being requested. They must be self-advocates. Accommodations are not made without the student revealing his/her disability and planning with the appropriate postsecondary staff.
6. Reasonable accommodations may be made to provide equal access and participation.
7. No formal program support for school personnel is provided. Colleges and universities do not provide personal care or support personnel. Most colleges and universities have a contact person or center regarding disability services.
8. Students are required to monitor their own progress and communicate their needs to instructors.

## L A W S A N D R E S P O N S I B I L I T I E S (cont'd.)

### HIGH SCHOOL

9. Transition planning and progress toward measurable postsecondary goals is monitored and communicated to parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or the student.
10. Schools assist in connecting the student with community support agencies if so identified as a transition need according to the IEP.
11. Teachers are responsible for informing students about changes and updates to the class content or schedule.

### POSTSECONDARY

9. If determined appropriate by an IEP team, a high school special education student can dually enroll at a postsecondary institution. If taking a college class, the student and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) will receive grades from the college and progress updates from the school district.
10. Students are responsible for making or maintaining their own connections with community support agencies.
11. Students are responsible for checking email or online course content system for changes and updates from instructors.

## C L A S S E S

### HIGH SCHOOL

1. Students usually follow a school-directed schedule and proceed from one class to another.
2. Classes are dictated by state graduation requirements and district policies.
3. Typically, a school year is 36 weeks long.
4. Class attendance is usually mandatory and monitored carefully.
5. Classes generally have no more than 30-35 students.
6. Textbooks are typically provided at little or no expense.
7. Guidance is provided for students so they will be aware of graduation requirements.
8. Modifications that change course outcomes may be offered based on the IEP.
9. Important dates are typically provided on your school calendar.

### POSTSECONDARY

1. Individual students must manage their own time and schedules.
2. Students are responsible to register for classes each semester. Classes are based on field of study; requirements may vary.
3. Typically, the academic year is divided into two separate 15-week semesters plus a week for final exams. Hint: some institutions are on quarter, or trimester schedules. Courses are offered during fall and spring semesters and, at some institutions, during shorter summer and winter terms.
4. Attendance policies may vary with each instructor. Hint: lack of attendance will negatively impact performance and grades.
5. Classes may have 100 or more students.
6. Students must purchase or rent textbooks. Some textbooks can be expensive. Hint: an anticipated range for a full-time student is \$250-\$500 per semester. However, you can find inexpensive textbooks (new and used) to rent or buy online.
7. Graduation requirements are complex and vary for different fields of study. Hint: you are responsible for monitoring your progress and seeking advice.
8. Modifications that change course outcomes will not be offered. Hint: modified high school courses may not be accepted in the admission process.
9. Students are responsible for knowing important dates such as deadlines for: dropping classes, paying bills, and others.

## I N S T R U C T O R S

### HIGH SCHOOL

1. Grade and check completed homework.
2. May remind students of incomplete assignments.
3. May know students' needs and approach students when they need assistance.
4. May be available before, during, or after class.
5. Have been trained in teaching methods.

### POSTSECONDARY

1. May assume homework is completed and students are able to perform on a test.
2. May not remind students of incomplete assignments. Hint: it's your responsibility to check with your instructor to see if requirements are being met.
3. Are usually open and helpful, but expect students to initiate contact when assistance is needed.
4. May require students to attend scheduled office hours.
5. Have content knowledge but not necessarily formal training in teaching methods.

## INSTRUCTORS (cont'd.)

### HIGH SCHOOL

6. Often provide students with information missed during absence.
7. Present material to help students understand what is in the textbook.
8. Often write information on the board or overhead to be copied for notes.
9. Teach knowledge and facts leading students through the thinking process.
10. Often take time to remind students of assignment and test dates.
11. Utilize additional available resources to support school staff with implementation of accommodations.
12. Expect students will follow classroom and school rules.

### POSTSECONDARY

6. Expect students to get information from classmates or meet during scheduled office hours when they miss a class.
7. May not follow the textbook; may supplement with lectures to enhance the topic area. Hint: you need to connect lectures and textbook.
8. May lecture nonstop. If they write on the board, it may be to support the lecture, not summarize it. Hint: good notes are a must. A recording device may be used. Accommodations based on disability may include the use of a smart pen or note taker.
9. Expect students to think independently and connect seemingly unrelated information.
10. Expect students to read, save, and refer back to the course syllabus. Hint: syllabi are your way of knowing exactly what is expected of you, when assignments are due, and how you will be graded. The syllabus may be available on the course website.
11. Instructors/professors are not necessarily trained to teach students with disabilities and may not be knowledgeable about the supports and accommodations often needed.
12. Expect students will follow college/university code of conduct.

## STUDYING

### HIGH SCHOOL

1. Study time outside of class may vary (may be as little as 1-3 hours per week).
2. Instructors may review class notes and text material regularly for classes.
3. Students are expected to read short assignments that are discussed and retaught.

### POSTSECONDARY

1. Students generally need to study at least 2-3 hours outside of class for each hour in class. Hint: you may need to work in specific computer labs or use other spaces besides your room to study.
2. Students should review class notes and text material regularly. Hint: use the time between classes carefully.
3. Substantial amounts of assigned reading and writing may not be directly addressed in class. Hint: it's up to you to read and understand assigned material or reference the syllabus. Your instructor will generally not remind you what to read. Disability accommodations may include books on tape, accessible media, or read out loud technologies – availability will vary by college/university.

## TESTING

### HIGH SCHOOL

1. Testing is frequent and small amounts of material are covered.
2. Make-up tests may be available.
3. Test dates can be arranged to avoid conflicts with other events.
4. Teachers frequently conduct review sessions emphasizing important concepts prior to tests.

### POSTSECONDARY

1. Testing is usually infrequent (2-3 times a semester). Tests may be cumulative and cover large amounts of material. Hint: you need to organize material to prepare for tests. Some classes may require only papers and/or projects instead of tests.
2. Make-up tests are seldom an option and may have to be requested.
3. Usually, scheduled tests are without regard to other demands.
4. Faculty rarely offer review sessions; if so, students are expected to be prepared and to be active participants, or find study groups.

## GRADES

### HIGH SCHOOL

1. Grades are given for most assigned work.
2. Good homework grades may assist in raising your overall grade when test grades are lower.
3. Extra credit options are often available.
4. Initial test grades, especially when low, may not have adverse effect on overall grade.
5. Graduation requirements may be met with a grade of D or higher.

### POSTSECONDARY

1. Grades may not be given for all assigned work.
2. Tests and major papers make up the majority of your grade.
3. Generally speaking, extra-credit options are not used to raise a grade.
4. First tests are often “wake up” calls to let you know what is expected. Hint: watch out! They may account for a substantial part of your final grade. Contact the instructor, academic advisor, or student accessibility personnel if you do poorly.
5. Requirements may be met only if the student’s average meets departmental standards. Hint: generally a 2.0 (C) or higher. Specific degrees may have higher minimum GPA requirements.

## OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER

### HIGH SCHOOL

1. State and/or district policies may determine eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities.
2. Parents typically manage finances for school-related activities.
3. Parents and teachers may provide support and guidance and assist with setting priorities.

### POSTSECONDARY

1. Postsecondary institution policies may determine eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities.
2. Students are responsible for money management for basic needs and extra spending money. Hint: outside jobs may be necessary and one more “activity” to consider for time management.
3. Students are responsible for setting their own priorities.

## Planning and Preparing

### *How and when do I develop a timeline for transition planning to postsecondary education?*

Students begin with themselves—asking, “What are my abilities and interests?” “What do I want and need from my everyday life as an adult?” “What do I like and dislike about school work, chores at home, jobs I’ve had to do, hobbies, and volunteer commitments?”

Start taking positive steps by staying involved in your transition process. The key to successful transition to postsecondary education is early planning. It is essential for you to maintain high academic standards and expectations throughout your elementary, middle, and high school years.

Skill development and practice (time management, independent living, mobility skills, self-advocacy skills, the ability to ask for specific help when you need it) are also important.

The following questionnaire will help in planning for your transition.



# Questions Students Should Ask Their IEP Team Members or Support Network

The following are questions, recommended skills, and steps needed in planning for postsecondary education. This section provides a general guide to the order you might follow for your transition planning but the timeline for steps may vary based on individual situations.

## How do I develop self-advocacy skills?

- \_\_\_ Find effective ways to explain your disability and how your disability impacts your learning.
- \_\_\_ Practice with a teacher or a counselor.
- \_\_\_ Communicate strengths and weaknesses (courses and types of assignments that were easier or more difficult).
- \_\_\_ Explain strategies and assistive technology that help you learn best.
- \_\_\_ Explain academic areas where you may need accommodations (extended test-taking time, note taker, lecture notes, books on tape, and so forth). Learn which accommodations are used at the postsecondary level and avoid using accommodations in high school that are not used at the postsecondary level.
- \_\_\_ Explain current services provided (accommodations, assistive technology or extra help that has been successful).
- \_\_\_ Approach instructors at the beginning of the course regarding what accommodations you need.
- \_\_\_ Understand and be able to explain your legal rights (IDEA, ADA, Section 504).
- \_\_\_ Understand and communicate what is a reasonable accommodation.
- \_\_\_ Actively participate in your IEP meetings by sharing your interests and postsecondary goals with the team. Make sure transition plans are documented in your IEP.

## How and when do I develop a timeline for transition planning to postsecondary education?

### Pre-High School

- \_\_\_ Develop measurable postsecondary goals at the age of 14 (or younger if determined by the IEP team) in the areas of education/training, employment and, if appropriate, independent living.
- \_\_\_ Plan out your high school classes (general education and/or college prep classes). Many colleges/universities have academic requirements for specific courses in English, math, sciences, social sciences, and foreign language.
- \_\_\_ Develop a list of postsecondary options of interest.
- \_\_\_ Create a free student account on [www.wicareerpathways.org](http://www.wicareerpathways.org) and explore the site.
- \_\_\_ Develop an understanding of disability and learning styles.
- \_\_\_ Develop study skills.

- \_\_\_ Start saving money.
- \_\_\_ Create a personal email account to facilitate correspondence with colleges/universities, potential employers, etc.
- \_\_\_ Identify transition needs and career planning goals through the IEP process.
- \_\_\_ Remediate and/or compensate for basic-skill deficits.
- \_\_\_ Learn how to use any assistive technology necessary for academic success. Continue to explore this technology throughout high school.

### Ninth Grade

- \_\_\_ Contact a guidance counselor and design a four-year class schedule.
- \_\_\_ Develop a clear understanding of the nature of your disability and how it affects your learning.
- \_\_\_ Take courses or participate in groups that promote skills in time management, studying, assertiveness training, stress management, and exam preparation.
- \_\_\_ Prepare for all classes.
- \_\_\_ Explore career options (interest inventories, career fairs, discussion with school personnel and parents).
- \_\_\_ Participate in job shadows of the different careers which interest you.
- \_\_\_ Develop skills for academic independence (time management, study skills, note taking, etc.).
- \_\_\_ Participate in extracurricular activities (athletic and nonathletic).
- \_\_\_ Continue to remediate and/or compensate for basic-skill deficits.
- \_\_\_ Determine what types of courses are necessary for admission to colleges/universities and technical colleges (keep in mind, modified and/or special education courses may not be acceptable for admission to some postsecondary institutions).
- \_\_\_ Investigate academic requirements for the career you are interested in and evaluate the need for changes in your courses.
- \_\_\_ Investigate assistive technology tools (communicative device, unique computer needs, TTY, and so forth). Learn to use as many kinds of software as you can (word processing, spreadsheets, web site design, powerpoint, etc.)

## Tenth Grade

- \_\_\_\_\_ Continue academic preparation and remediation/compensation strategies, and identify any assistive technology needs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Identify interests, aptitudes, and accommodation needs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Continue career exploration and investigation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Continue or develop self-advocacy skills (asking for help, communicating needs to instructors, explaining disability and its impact, etc.).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Meet with a guidance counselor to discuss colleges/universities and technical colleges and their requirements. Review/update your high school course plan accordingly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Find out if the college/university or technical college you are interested in requires or recommends you take the ACT, SAT, or other placement exams. If they do, make preparations to take the appropriate exam.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend college, job/career, and transition fairs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Visit colleges/universities, technical colleges, and other postsecondary education training options. Visit and meet with the disability services staff.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gather information about college/university/technical college programs and about services offered for students with disabilities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Investigate eligibility requirements and services available through the WI Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and other adult service providers such as the Department of Human Services, Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC), Managed Care Organizations (MCO), Center for Independent Living (CIL) and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) partners.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Participate in volunteer and paid work experiences.



## Eleventh Grade

- \_\_\_\_\_ Continue academic preparation and remediation/compensation strategies, assistive technology needs, and self-advocacy skills.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Focus on matching interests/abilities and career goals to appropriate post-secondary education choice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Identify appropriate postsecondary choice (what college/university or technical college you want to attend).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take ACT, SAT, or other entrance exams with or without accommodations (must apply for accommodations ahead of time).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Share your postsecondary goals with your IEP team.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Identify people to write recommendations for you.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Invite DVR counselor and other appropriate adult agency representatives to your IEP meeting to discuss services and how they can help you reach your postsecondary goals. Complete DVR application to begin the eligibility and Order of Selection (OOS) process at least two years prior to graduation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tour college/university and technical college campuses, making sure to visit and meet with the disability services staff.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Investigate disability services offered by various postsecondary education providers to determine which meet your needs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Determine what information is required by the college/university or technical college you want to attend for disability documentation to access disability services. Begin to assemble this information with the assistance of your parent(s)/guardian(s) and IEP case manager.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Develop a draft Summary of Performance (SoP) with your case manager to share at time of application for services, for both adult services (DVR, etc.) and college/university/technical college disability services.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Obtain documentation of disability from current assessments within two years of graduation date (formal measures of intelligence, formal and informal measures of academic achievement and functional performance, medical records, nature and extent of disability).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Learn to use local public transportation options.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Obtain a picture identification card or driver's license.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare applications for appropriate adult services.

## Twelfth Grade

- \_\_\_\_\_ Strengthen self-advocacy skills.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Know your legal responsibilities after the age of 18.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare a transition to postsecondary packet for disability documentation that may include: evaluation reports, transcripts, test scores, current IEP, SoP (Summary of Performance), medical records, writing samples, and letters of recommendation. It is important to check with the individual college/university or technical college to determine required documentation of disability as these differ from institution to institution.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Role-play interviews.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Talk with students who are receiving disability services at colleges/universities, technical colleges, and other postsecondary education training settings about their experiences.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare and submit applications for college/university, technical college, or other postsecondary education training program.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete application for financial aid.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Investigate and apply for scholarships.
- \_\_\_\_\_ After acceptance to a college/university or technical college program, contact the disability services office to disclose disability and to schedule a meeting to learn how to access accommodations and prepare for the transition.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If determined eligible, jointly develop your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) with a DVR counselor, which identifies goals, services, and responsibilities. Develop service plans with other adult service agency providers as appropriate.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Purchase or explore funding options (DVR, Family Care/MCO, IRIS, other county agencies) to purchase any personal technology such as computers, Smart Pens, specialized software, or other assistive technology needs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Obtain finalized copy of your Summary of Performance (SoP). Schools are required to provide students with an SoP, which includes a review of academic achievement, functional performance, and recommendations, to assist the student in achieving his or her measurable postsecondary goals prior to school exit.

## 18-21 Year Old Transition Services\*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Move primarily into community settings,
- \_\_\_\_\_ Engage in individualized career planning with family and adult service providers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Align volunteer and paid work experiences with interests and strengths.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Explore and seek postsecondary education and training opportunities needed for career development.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Focus on gaining maximum independence in employment settings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Increase independence skill development (for example, transportation/buses, money management, social skills, meal planning, home and self-care).

\*The passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990 and the subsequent reauthorizations, including the latest in 2004, requires school districts to provide transition services for students with disabilities in order to improve post-school outcomes for these youth. To help meet the requirements for transition, many school districts have developed community-based transition options. These service options are designed to support students who need to continue to work on their transition goals and who have completed academic requirements/credits for graduation as outlined in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

Community-based transition services are alternative special education opportunities developed by public school systems in age-appropriate community settings, such as vocational-technical schools, houses, offices, or other community locations. They provide opportunities for students with disabilities aged 18-21 to gain independent living skills, vocational skills, social and functional skills, and self-advocacy skills in real-life settings and to participate in age-appropriate activities in their communities.

## How do I select a college/university or technical college?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Talk to people who have graduated from your high school and have gone on to postsecondary study. Talk to counselors, teachers, parents, and family friends about programs and schools that match your interests.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Explore programs at several potential locations to determine if they match your career interests and goals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Investigate the climate.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Investigate the setting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Investigate the admission requirements.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Investigate available disability services and history of providing accommodations.

### **How do I match my interests and needs with course offerings of the college?**

- \_\_\_ Determine field of study, interest, or possible major.
- \_\_\_ Identify/match college/university or technical college with interest/field of study.
- \_\_\_ Participate in job-shadowing experiences and write down what skills and knowledge are needed for that career. Look for courses and college experiences that build that knowledge and those skills.
- \_\_\_ Inquire about class sizes.
- \_\_\_ Inquire about support classes (time management, study skills, writing labs, etc.).
- \_\_\_ Inquire about academic requirements for the field of study you are interested in and make sure you meet those requirements.

### **How do I match my needs to the programs and services offered at the college?**

- \_\_\_ Inquire about learning support programs and services available.
- \_\_\_ Inquire about counseling support programs and services available.
- \_\_\_ Inquire about mentoring and/or tutoring programs.
- \_\_\_ Inquire about special assistance for the application process.
- \_\_\_ Inquire about possible requirement waivers for admission.
- \_\_\_ Inquire about alternative admission options.

### **What are the financial considerations?**

- \_\_\_ Determine tuition, books, transportation, and housing costs.
- \_\_\_ Determine tutoring fees.
- \_\_\_ Investigate availability of scholarships.
- \_\_\_ Investigate availability of financial aid and the number of credits you must take to be eligible.
- \_\_\_ Investigate availability of work-study opportunities.
- \_\_\_ Investigate employment opportunities (on and off campus).
- \_\_\_ Determine with family members the amount of financial support they can offer.

### **What housing accommodations are available?**

- \_\_\_ Determine whether to live on/near campus or at home.
- \_\_\_ Investigate on-campus housing (rules, computer availability, study rooms, etc.).
- \_\_\_ Investigate off-campus housing.
- \_\_\_ Inquire about support services (special floor considerations, assistance, etc.).
- \_\_\_ Obtain documentation if single room is a required accommodation.

### **What transportation provisions are available?**

- \_\_\_ Inquire about accessible public transportation.
- \_\_\_ Inquire about parking for students.
- \_\_\_ Will you have access to a car?
- \_\_\_ Will you have access to a carpool?

## Other Things to Keep in Mind

### *High School Transcripts*

High school graduation requirements are set by state and district standards. All postsecondary education institutions will require a copy of your high school transcripts noting the courses you took and your grades.

Your disability cannot be disclosed on any documentation (besides IEP related paperwork). High school transcripts may denote modified grades or courses. Modified courses or grades often suggest learning outcomes have been significantly changed. Adaptations and/or accommodations for courses in which the learning outcomes remain the same for all students are not noted on the transcripts. Classes modified to the extent that they change the course outcomes may be acceptable according to the IEP goals and objectives but may not be accepted in the admissions process for postsecondary institutions. Therefore, it is important to be aware of the differences between modified courses and courses in which you require only adaptations or accommodations.

You may want to consider taking a lower grade in a general education class versus a higher grade in a self-contained special education class. It is your responsibility to check with your school counselor and special education teacher annually to ensure any modified courses you are taking allow you to obtain a regular high school diploma to meet the entrance requirements of postsecondary institutions.

Make sure that you request in writing that the school district keep your records for more than a year. Your school district likely has a form that you can sign to do this during your final IEP meeting.

### *Student Portfolio*

If you are planning to undertake a postsecondary education, it is helpful for you to plan early. A portfolio designed to demonstrate your accomplishments and competencies may assist the admissions recruiter at the postsecondary institution. Take your portfolio to your visit and interview on a campus or send a copy with your application. Alternatively, you may want to create an electronic portfolio at [www.livebinders.com](http://www.livebinders.com). Items you may want to include are:

## What Will Get Me In?

1. Appropriate course selection in high school.
2. High school grades that meet requirements.
3. Admission tests, placement, or ability tests.
4. References and interviews.
5. Specific skills or on-the-job training.
6. Good verbal and quantitative skills.
7. Extracurricular activities.
8. Prior job skills and leadership roles.
9. Determination, self-advocacy, and a positive attitude.

- Work samples (reports, models, or pictures of projects you have completed, papers you have written, evidence of your participation on teams or school activities, descriptions of volunteer work)
- Interest inventory results
- Letters of recommendation (teachers, school counselors, employers, administrators, coaches)
- State and/or district assessment results
- Summary of Performance (SoP)
- Age appropriate transition assessments
- Skills-based resume

After you are admitted to a postsecondary institution, it is your responsibility to request accommodations. You will be required to submit official documentation of your disability. Talk to the disability services office on campus to find out exactly what is required to document your disability (each institution is different). Work with your teachers and parents to compile that information. You may be required to submit the following to the disability services contact at the institution:

- Summary of Performance
- Copy of your last IEP
- Appropriate releases of information
- Accommodations you may need
- Current documentation/description of disability and the impact it has on your learning
- Description of your learning style

After submitting your disability documentation to the disability services center for review, call to schedule an appointment with a disability services specialist on campus.

For more detailed information please see the Wisconsin Disability Documentation Guide: <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/sped/pdf/tran-disab-docum-guide.pdf>



## Questions You Should Be Prepared to Answer

- Why do you want to go to college?
- What are your career goals?
- In what would you like to major?
- Why did you choose this college/university or technical college?
- What were your favorite high school courses?
- What extracurricular activities did you participate in?
- Do you plan to work while going to school?
- What are your strengths, preferences and interests?

### Staff from disability resource centers may ask these questions:

- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- How does your disability affect your academic performance?
- How do you compensate for your disability?
- What assistance, accommodations, or assistive technology did you receive in high school that were effective?
- What assistance, accommodations, or assistive technology do you think you will need to be successful at the postsecondary level?
- Do you plan to take a full load of courses?
- How much time do you study each day, and how do you plan your time?
- Are you willing to put in extra effort compared to other students to earn your degree?

### WHAT CLASSES MUST I TAKE?

Your high school will require you to complete specific courses for graduation. These courses will be valuable no matter what career choice you make. Whether you choose to go to a technical college, a two- or four-year college or university, the military, an adult apprenticeship, or into a career immediately after graduation, the areas of knowledge described in the chart will make it easier for you to choose from many career options. Each college/university and technical college has formal entrance requirements; ask your guidance counselor or check a school's internet site for more information.

Required Courses	Required Content Standards (Wisconsin's Common Core State Standards and other State Standards)	Years required to graduate from High School [as per WIs. 118.33(1)]	Years required to be admitted to Technical College	Years required to be admitted to 4-Year College
English Language Arts	Reading Informational Text, Reading Literature, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language	4	4	4
Social Studies	Geography, History, Political Science, Citizenship, Economics, and the Behavioral Sciences	3	3	3
Math	Numbers and Quantity, Algebra, Functions, Modeling, Geometry, Statistics and Probability, and Standards for Mathematical Practice	2	2	2
Science	Scientific and Engineering Practices, Cross-Cutting Concepts of Science and Engineering, Core Ideas of Physical Sciences, Life Sciences, Earth and Space Sciences, Engineering, and Technology and Application of Science*	2	2	2
Physical Education	Active Lifestyle, Physical Skill Development, Understanding Physical Activity and Well Being, Health-enhancing Fitness, Respectful Behavior, and Understanding Diversity	1.5		
Health	Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, Healthy Behaviors, Goal Setting and Decision Making, Information and Services, Culture, Media, Technology, Communication, and Advocacy	.5		
Electives	Career and Technical Education, Driver's Education, Music, Visual and Performing Arts, Family and Consumer Education		varies	varies
	<i>World Languages:</i> How To Communicate With Other Cultures: Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities			
	<i>Computer Science and Literacy:</i> Keyboarding, Computer Operations and Terminology, Problem-solving, Applying Computer Technology, Testing Software, and Social and Economic Impact of Computers			

\*\*Proposed Common Core State Standards Science Framework areas



# Postsecondary Education Exploration Worksheet

*Exploring Choices, Selecting, and Applying  
for Postsecondary Education*

Make and use a copy of these pages for each College/University or  
Technical College you are considering.

Name of College/University or Technical College: \_\_\_\_\_

Internet Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Services, Programs, & Characteristics	Comments/Questions
<b>CHARACTER AND SETTING</b>	
Highly competitive academically	
Moderately competitive	
Not competitive	
Average class rank of current freshman class	
High school grade point average of incoming freshman class	
Average SAT/ACT score	
Size of the campus	
Size of the city/town	
Sororities/fraternities on campus	
Clubs or organizations of interest	
Sports activities (participant or spectator)	
<b>GETTING THERE/GETTING AROUND</b>	
Miles from home	
Car pools available	
Public transportation options	
Parking	
Access to buildings	
Effect of weather, construction, and other factors on mobility access	
Cafeteria/food availability	
Access to support/disability services	
Access to fitness facilities	
Access to computer labs	
Other	

Services, Programs, and Characteristics	Comments/Questions
<b>ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS</b>	
Name of Entrance Exam required (ACT, SAT, etc.):	
Minimum score of:	
Acceptance of nonstandard administration of ACT/SAT	
Open admission/no admission requirements	
Waived ACT/SAT scores	
Class ranking based on high school grade point average	
Admissions interview	
Modified admission for students with disabilities	
Foreign language/math/other specific requirement	
Documentation of intelligence and achievement tests	
Recommendations from high school faculty	
<b>MAJOR FIELD OF STUDY</b>	
Availability of major in chosen career	
Full time years of study for a degree or certificate	
Part time years of study for a degree or certificate	
Requirements for admission into the program of study	
Requirements to remain in the program of study	
<b>CLASSES</b>	
Orientation classes	
Learning-strategies classes	
Study-skills classes	
Time-management classes	
Developmental-reading classes	
Basic English classes	
Basic mathematics classes	
Foreign language/math/other requirement waived	
Other	
<b>FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	
High tuition fees	
Moderate tuition fees	
Low tuition fees	
Scholarships available	
Financial aid available	
Work study jobs available	
Book or materials rental fees or costs to purchase	
Tutoring fees	
Room and board costs	
Costs for special services	

Services, Programs, and Characteristics	Comments/Questions
<b>SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES</b>	
Alternative test administration (computers, oral, other)	
Extended time for tests	
Flexible format for completing assignments	
Note-takers	
Readers	
Scribes/writers	
Taped textbooks and alternative formats for course materials	
Assistive technology available	
Computers available	
Study groups	
Subject matter tutoring	
Modified instruction	
Opportunities for counseling with support staff	
Peer support group	
Opportunities to receive diagnostic testing	
Development of educational plan	
Career placement services	
Interpreters	
Other	
<b>COUNSELING SERVICES</b>	
Student advisors	
Career counselors	
Financial advisors	
Personal counselors	
Health-care providers	
<b>HOUSING</b>	
Off-campus housing availability and affordability	
Residence halls and dining halls on campus	
Halls with no drinking or smoking	
Single-occupancy rooms	
Co-ed halls	
Male-/female-only halls	
Limited guest visitation	
Quiet floors for study	
Study rooms available	
Internet access in rooms	
Computers in residence hall	
Cooking facilities available	
Fitness/recreational equipment available	

Adapted from Weist-Webb, K. *Transition to Post-secondary Education: Strategies for Students With Disabilities*. Austin, TX: ProEd, 2000.

## Sources of Information

- The internet
- School counselor, teachers, and parents
- Wisconsin University and Technical College websites
- [www.wicareerpathways.org](http://www.wicareerpathways.org)
- Career exploration programs
- Career information in the library
- Graduates and current students
- Employers



*“College is a challenge. However, students must remember that there is pure exhilaration in starting the race, but the payoff is in the completion!”*

— Tiffany, college student with a disability

## Success in Postsecondary Education

Students with disabilities should consider the challenges they will encounter in postsecondary education. You can compensate for the challenges by demonstrating the characteristics of other successful students.

CATEGORY	SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS	UNSUCCESSFUL STUDENTS
<b>Motivation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Goal-oriented</li> <li>Determination, perseverance</li> <li>Self-discipline</li> <li>Willingness to work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of goals or career ideas</li> <li>Immature</li> <li>Procrastinates</li> </ul>
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic background</li> <li>Knowledge of study and compensatory techniques</li> <li>Knowledge of learning style</li> <li>Time-management skills</li> <li>Knowledge of assistive technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of academic preparation</li> <li>Sheltered in high school</li> <li>Learned helplessness</li> <li>Lack of study and time management</li> <li>Disorganized</li> </ul>
<b>Self-Advocacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-awareness</li> <li>Self-acceptance</li> <li>Knowledge of laws, policies, and resources</li> <li>Assertiveness skills</li> <li>Problem-solving skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unrealistic expectations</li> <li>Denial of disability, embarrassment</li> <li>Lack of knowledge of legal rights</li> <li>Lack of self-esteem and self-confidence</li> <li>Lack of effective communication techniques</li> <li>Lack of problem-solving skills</li> </ul>

(Hecks-Coolick and Kurtz, 1997)

## Final Thoughts

Life is a giant buffet of choices. You are the one who makes the decisions about what you want, where you go, and how successful you will be. Many students with disabilities have successfully completed postsecondary experiences and have wonderful careers. You are the key to your own success. You have the support of your parents, teachers, counselors, and other students, but the adventure is yours. If you plan ahead, develop goals, and are willing to explore your interests and communicate what you need, who knows all that you will be able to accomplish. Begin planning. “It’s your future now.”



# Definition of Terms Used in this Handbook

**Academically Competitive** – Describes schools that accept only students who can prove high academic ability and in which many students value learning, achievement, and good grades; also describes students who score well on standardized and non-standardized tests and who get high grades in school.

**Accommodation** – A change in the usual way of doing things so someone’s needs can be met.

**ACT and SAT** – Standardized tests which attempt to measure students’ potential to do well in college; Wisconsin colleges/universities that require standardized test scores request the ACT, which is designed to assess high school students’ general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work. It covers four areas: English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning.

**ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)** – A federal law that prohibits discrimination against individuals who are disabled. A postsecondary school may not discriminate on the basis of disability. See Section 504 for more information.

**Advocacy** – Speaking up for a cause, person, or idea.

**Apprenticeship** – A time during which a person learns a trade or occupation, sometimes as part of a trade union program.

**Aptitude** – A person’s ability to learn; talent or quickness in learning, and understanding in particular areas.

**Assertive** – Describing someone who declares or states something positively, sometimes with no support or attempt to provide proof.

**Assistive Technology** – Equipment, hardware, inventions, tools, or other aids which help people with disabilities do the tasks of daily life.

**Career Fairs** – Events in high schools, colleges, or communities that offer the opportunity to talk with people who work in a variety of jobs and who will answer questions about their companies and about the preparation it takes to enter their fields.

**Career Placement Service** – A person, or group of people, at a school or college who help students and graduates learn about and apply for jobs. The amount and kinds of services vary, but some services help arrange interviews, provide information on specific companies, and work with students to identify which jobs will be a good fit.

**DVR (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation):** Wisconsin DVR provides employment and training services if you have a disability that makes it hard for you to find or keep a job. The services you get from DVR will depend on your job goal and what you need to reach that goal. See Vocational Rehabilitation.

**Education** – A program of instruction or a series of experiences, planned to help learners grow in knowledge and/or skill. Education contributes to personal growth. It also can lead to specific outcomes such as diplomas or certifications, driver education, or a college education.

**Extracurricular Activities** – Doing things that are not part of academic requirements or homework at school. Volunteering at the humane society, working on or acting in plays, participating in sports, and belonging to scouts, 4H, or FFA are a few examples of extracurricular activities.

**IEP (Individualized Education Program)** – The IEP is a written document which ensures that a child with a disability receives a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment. IEPs are developed through discussion at team meetings that include parent(s)/guardian(s) and professionals involved in that child’s education. The IEP describes the educational process planned for the student and serves as a communication tool among parent(s)/guardian(s), schools, and others involved in the education and training of the individual. It can serve as a method for joint planning, problem solving, and decision making.

**Independent Living Skills** – The motivation, knowledge, and ability to live daily life in as self-reliant a way as possible, with the least amount of control by others. Independent living skills can include:

- self-advocacy,
- job seeking and retention,
- budgeting and paycheck management,
- food planning, selection, buying and preparation,
- recreational activity awareness, planning and participation,
- selection and care of clothing,
- awareness and use of resources including clinics, physicians, adult service agencies, counselors, neighbors, and others,
- dating, co-worker and interpersonal skills, and
- community participation.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** - IDEA is the federal law that addresses special education services for children with disabilities from the time they are born until they graduate from high school. The law was reauthorized by Congress in 2004, prompting a series of changes in the way special education services are implemented. It is important to keep up to date with these changes because they affect the delivery of special education and related services in our state.

The law itself is detailed and complex, but several key components are at the foundation of the 2004 changes. On October 13, 2006, the U.S. Department of Education released the final version of the federal regulations governing the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education law as reauthorized in 2004. The final regulations are closely aligned with the federal IDEA law. The following summary highlights a few key provisions that impact how schools identify students with learning disabilities, develop and implement the Individualized Education Program (IEP), and plan for transition from high school to college.

The reauthorization of IDEA 2004 (Section 601[d]) states that some purposes of the law are to:

- ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living;
- ensure that the rights of children with disabilities and parents of such children are protected; and
- assist states, localities, educational service agencies, and federal agencies in providing for the education of all children with disabilities.

**Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)** – Your IPE is the DVR plan to reach your work goals. It is the road map to your vocational rehabilitation. The IPE describes:

- Your work goal
- Steps you will need to take to reach your goal
- Services you will need to reach your goal
- Who will provide those services
- The cost of those services and who will pay for them
- Your responsibilities
- DVR's responsibilities

**Individualized Transition Plan (ITP)** – All students with an IEP in Wisconsin, ages 14-21, have a transition plan. Students with intellectual and developmental disabilities with complex needs have a transition plan that can guide programming through age 21 if determined appropriate by the IEP team.

**Intellectual Disability** – A student with an intellectual disability (also known as cognitive disability) is a student: A) with a cognitive impairment, characterized by significant limitations in--(i) intellectual and cognitive functioning; and (ii) adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills; and B) who is currently, or was formerly, eligible for a free appropriate public education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

**Interest Inventories** – Verbal, written, or computer exercises that help a person identify what jobs might be a good fit for them based on things they like to do and activities they like to participate in.

**Internet Classes (or Web Classes)** – Courses students can take via the Internet, on a personal computer with a modem or other Internet connection. Many colleges and universities, including the University of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Colleges, and Technical Colleges offer classes that can be taken entirely by computer. Some entire degree programs can be earned via Internet classes. There is always tuition for these classes. Assignments can be submitted over the Internet. Quizzes and tests are given on a computer. Students have to be motivated to take a class on their own computer. Sometimes the classes meet at a certain time, so students have to schedule their class participation. Other courses are available any time.

**Job Shadowing** – Finding out about different occupations and kinds of work environments by following and watching people actually do the jobs.

**Learning Styles** – Different people learn in many different ways. Some learn best through hearing, others through reading, others through watching, others through many times of practicing doing something; most of us learn best using some combination of reading, hearing, seeing, doing, or repeating. The activities that help us learn most quickly and thoroughly form our learning style.

**Measurable Postsecondary Goals** – A statement that articulates what a student (beginning at age 14 or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team) would like to achieve in the following areas: training/education, employment and (where appropriate) independent living. The measurable postsecondary goals are based on age appropriate transition assessment and the student's strengths, preferences, and interests.

**Mentoring Programs** – A mentor is a trusted person, a counselor, teacher, or other person who helps someone do new things or cope with new surroundings. Mentors usually work with other people in a one-to-one relationship.

**Mobility Skills** – The word "mobility" refers to the ability of people with vision or other disabilities to move with ease, speed, and safety through the environment. Mobility is distinguished from "orientation" which adds the element of spatial awareness. The maximum ability of a person to get around in their living and working space is a combination of good mobility skills and good orientation skills.

**On-the-Job Training** – Knowledge and skills that a person acquires while they are in the workplace, already doing some activities related to an existing position description.

**Order of Selection (OOS)** – At any time DVR resources are not sufficient to serve all eligible consumers, an order of selection (waitlist) for services will be implemented giving first priority to consumers with the most significant disabilities. Second priority shall be given to consumers with significant disabilities and third priority to other eligible consumers. Eligible consumers will be served as resources allow.

**Person-Centered Planning** – A set of approaches designed to assist individuals as they plan their life, goals, and needed supports.

**Portfolio** – A collection of evidence, usually including papers, pictures, descriptions, and recommendations about what a person is able to do. A writer’s portfolio would include publications. An artist’s portfolio would include samples or pictures of his or her paintings/photographs/drawings. A carpenter’s portfolio would include a description of the tools he or she has used, pictures of objects built, descriptions of special talents or abilities written by teachers, supervisors, or mentors.

**Postsecondary** – This term refers to activities occurring after high school and can include employment, education, living, national service, military, etc.

**Private College or University** – Postsecondary school run and supported by private individuals or a corporation rather than by a government or public agency. Some private colleges are connected with churches or religious orders; others are independent. Private schools generally charge higher tuition than public colleges and technical schools. Some have smaller enrollments and lower student/teacher ratios than public colleges.

**Proprietary School, College, or University** – A postsecondary school which is run as a business, to make a profit. Some types of education and training such as pet grooming, broadcasting, bartending, and massage therapy are often provided by proprietary schools.

**Public College or University** – In the United States, postsecondary school is supported by public funds and provides reduced tuition for education for citizens of the state which supports it. Public colleges and universities are often accountable in some way to the state legislature and other public input.

**Remediation/compensation strategies** – Ways of addressing, overcoming, or correcting limitations or barriers caused by a disability so a person can participate as fully as possible in daily life activities such as work, education, and training.

**Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973** – Section 504 applies to K-12 public schools as well as postsecondary institutions. Section 504 was enacted to “level the playing field”—in other words, to eliminate impediments to full participation by persons with disabilities. The statute was intended to prevent intentional or unintentional

discrimination against persons with disabilities, persons believed to have disabilities, or family members of persons with disabilities. Section 504 protects qualified individuals with disabilities. A postsecondary school may not discriminate on the basis of disability. It must insure that the programs it offers, including extracurricular activities, are accessible to students with disabilities. Postsecondary schools can do this in a number of ways: by providing architectural access, providing aids and services necessary for effective communication, and by modifying policies, practices, and procedures. All programs and services must be provided in an integrated setting. In some instances, architectural access may be the only way to make a program accessible. Qualified interpreters, assistive listening systems, captioning, TTYs, qualified readers, audio recordings, taped texts, Braille materials, large print materials, materials on computer disk, and adapted computer terminals are examples of auxiliary aids and services that provide effective communication. Reasonable accommodations must be provided, unless doing so would result in a fundamental alteration of the program or would result in undue financial or administrative burdens. The most challenging aspect of modifying classroom policies or practices for students with disabilities is it requires thought and prior preparation. The difficulty lies in anticipating needs and preparing in advance. The actual modifications are rarely substantive or expensive. Some examples are:

- rescheduling classes to an accessible location;
- early enrollment options for students with disabilities to allow time to arrange accommodations;
- substitution of specific courses required for completion of degree requirements;
- allowing service animals in the classroom;
- providing students with disabilities with a syllabus prior to the beginning of class;
- clearly communicating course requirements, assignments, due dates, and grading criteria both orally and in written form;
- providing written outlines or summaries of class lectures, or integrating this information into comments at the beginning and end of class; and
- allowing students to use note takers or tape record lectures.

**Modifications** – will always vary based on the individual student’s needs. Modifications of policies and practices are not required when it would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.

**Self-advocacy Skills** – Self-advocacy is the art of speaking up for yourself and your needs and being able to explain a disability clearly and concisely. Once people understand the disability, they may need to know what kinds of actions or things can help overcome a disability. The combination of skills of being able to explain your disability and to speak in favor of the ways of overcoming the barriers brought on by that disability is called self-advocacy.



**Stress management** – Everyone is nervous and afraid in some situations. There are some specific behaviors, thoughts, and activities that can help people when they feel panic coming on. Different things work for different people, but what works for an individual is his or her stress management routine. That can include slow or regulated breathing, ways of sitting or standing, particular patterns of thought, or remembering and repeating certain words or phrases.

**Study Skills** – Techniques of scheduling time, finding a quiet place, sitting still, reading, remembering, reviewing, deciding what material is important, and taking helpful notes are all study skills. Study skills classes help individuals find out what particular study skills work best for them.

**Summary of Performance** – A summary of a student’s academic achievement, functional performance, and recommendations provided to the student during the last year of high school (prior to earning a diploma or aging out of eligibility for services provided through IDEA).

**Technical College** – In Wisconsin, a technical college is a school that offers work-related classes, lower division college classes, associate (two-year) degrees, and certificates relating to employment. Technical colleges are public schools with relatively affordable tuition and programs that help a person learn and practice job-related skills.

**Think College** - A national initiative, started by the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts-Boston, to increase college options for students with intellectual disabilities. This initiative provides technical assistance and training, conducts and supports research, and distributes information related to postsecondary opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities. Their website includes information for students, families, and professionals, including a national college search database for postsecondary education options for students with intellectual disabilities. [www.thinkcollege.net](http://www.thinkcollege.net)

**Time Management Skill** – The ability of a person to plan, control, or schedule how they use the time in their day-to-day schedule. The way a person uses time shows which of the things they do are important and which can be dropped. Through planning a person can increase the amount time in which they can work and do other things that interest them, can control the distractions that waste their time, and can increase their effectiveness and reduce stress.

**Trade School** – A secondary school that offers instruction in a skilled trade (a particular focus on work, such as welding, plumbing, bartending, hairdressing, etc.). Some high schools and trade schools combine classroom learning and work at a job site.

**Training** – “Education” is planned to help people learn, know, and remember information. “Training” is about doing: getting and practicing skills. Training improves performance; it brings about a change in ability and a difference in behaviors. A person who participates in training should be able to do something after the training they could not do before the training. Training usually includes learning, doing, and practice (repetition). The person being trained will know why they are doing something and see how their task fits in to the bigger picture at work (in manufacturing, or welding, or printing, for instance). A major part of training is learning what workers are supposed to do. Another key part is problem solving – figuring out what to do when things don’t go exactly as planned.

**Transcript** – An official record, kept by a school, of the courses taken, and the grades earned, by a particular student. Some employers require a copy of a transcript sent directly by the school; others will accept a copy of a student’s records and grades.

**Transition** – Preparing or moving ahead from high school to the adult world.

**Tutoring Programs** – An opportunity to work with someone who can help with class work or skill development, either one-on-one, or in small groups. Tutors are often volunteers who are willing to help other students who have questions or concerns about their work.

**Two-year College** – In Wisconsin, there is a two-year college system. These colleges offer classes in basic academic subjects (English, foreign language, communication, math, science, social science, and the arts) that lead to Associate degrees. After a person graduates from a two-year college, he or she may want to continue study at a college or university or get a job using what they have learned.

**Vocational Rehabilitation** – The use of education, training, and vocational counseling to assist a person to learn and be able to do one or more jobs, to have a trade, and to earn a paycheck. See DVR (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation).

**Writing Lab** – A place at a school, college, or university where students can bring their writing assignments or projects and get help in expressing themselves, clearly, concisely, and effectively. Students may take drafts of assignments to writing labs and get help in spelling, grammar, or putting good sentences together.

**18-21 Year Old Program** – Designed for 18-21 year old students with disabilities who will be best served, per IEP team decision, to continue to receive transition services through age 21. These services are developed by local school districts and provide opportunities for students to gain independent living skills; transition skills; social, functional, and self-advocacy skills in real-life settings; and to participate in age-appropriate activities in their communities.

## OPENING DOORS TO

# Postsecondary Education & Training

WISCONSIN  
DEPARTMENT  
OF PUBLIC  
INSTRUCTION

TONY EVERS, PHD,  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

## THE CHALLENGE...

*All Wisconsin K-12 and postsecondary education institutions are committed to providing reasonable opportunity and equal challenges to all students, including students with disabilities.*

### What are your rights?

The term “disability” means different things in public schools and postsecondary institutions.

When serving students with disabilities, public K-12 schools must comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which requires them to identify, document, and provide services based on an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP serves as a monitoring and communication tool for parents, students, and school personnel and provides connections for community services (for example, employment opportunities or adult living). IDEA entitlements end when the student reaches age 21, or when the requirements for high school graduation are met, and the student receives a regular high school diploma.

Section 504 applies to K-12 public schools as well as postsecondary institutions. When serving students with disabilities, postsecondary institutions must comply with Section 504/Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which stipulates they:

- cannot discriminate in college recruitment, admission, or after admission solely based on a student’s disability;
- are required to make individualized, reasonable accommodations at no charge;
- must make modifications “as necessary” to ensure academic requirements are not discriminatory;

- inform students of available services, academic adjustments, and the name of the coordinator of support services; and
- must provide written information on how to access services or request accommodations.

It is important to start planning EARLY for postsecondary education!

### What are your responsibilities?

While in high school students need to:

- participate in transition planning by attending IEP meetings, beginning at age 14 or younger, if appropriate,
- talk to their IEP team to discuss interests and preferences, and address postsecondary education planning, and
- learn self-advocacy skills.
- Upon turning 18, students with disabilities are legally adults in charge of their own future (unless appointed a legal guardian). Although laws (504/ADA) also protect them, they have responsibilities as they enter postsecondary education.

Students should:

- understand their disability and provide current documentation verifying the disability,
- advocate on their own behalf,

- contact support/disability services personnel at the college/university or technical college,
- notify instructors regarding needed accommodations, and
- arrange for those support services not available in the postsecondary education setting.

### What are individual accommodations?

It is important to understand the distinction between accommodations (ensuring access to programs and services) and modifications (making *changes* to programs and services). Postsecondary educational institutions must provide needed accommodations, including but not limited to:

- special needs counseling
- assistive technology
- testing accommodations
- recorded textbooks
- note-takers, readers, and interpreters
- learning/study skills support together.



## Are special education services available in postsecondary institutions?

**Simply put—no!** Postsecondary institutions may provide academic adjustments if they do not change course outcomes or program requirements or place an undue burden on the institution. However, accommodations must be provided.

**Remember...** Accommodations are intended to ensure program access that allows students with disabilities to compete equally with their nondisabled peers. Not all accommodations are appropriate for every student.

**However...** Students with disabilities can succeed in the postsecondary environment by demonstrating the following characteristics of a successful student:

- Be *motivated* and goal-oriented
- Be *academically* prepared
- Demonstrate *self-advocacy* skills
- Demonstrate *organizational* skills
- Demonstrate *time-management* skills

Talk to your instructors and negotiate needed accommodations from the first day of class (or earlier, if possible). Don't wait until the end of the semester!

## What postsecondary opportunities exist in Wisconsin?

**University of Wisconsin System** — Wisconsin has 13 four-year institutions offering undergraduate and/or graduate programs as well as 13 two-year institutions.

**Independent Institutions** — Wisconsin has 21 private colleges and universities.

**Technical College System** — Wisconsin has 16 technical colleges offering one- and two-year associate degrees in fields ranging from accounting to web development. Some technical college credits transfer to four-year colleges or universities.

**Other Postsecondary Options** — See the State of Wisconsin Educational Approval Board website for a complete listing (<http://eab.state.wi.us>) of other postsecondary options.

Admission requirements vary among postsecondary institutions. Students should discuss the kinds of classes, grades, and entrance requirements needed with a school counselor and the IEP team.

## What postsecondary education opportunities exist for students with intellectual disabilities?

According to the Think College Initiative (see Definition of Terms section), as of 2010 there were over 250 postsecondary education programs for students with intellectual disabilities across the nation. The demand for such programs is growing as people recognize the value postsecondary education offers students with intellectual disabilities in strengthening self-determination and advocacy skills, improving independent living skills, and increasing students' employability and rate of pay, post college. Visit [www.waisman.wisc.edu/thinkcollege/](http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/thinkcollege/) for information about postsecondary education in Wisconsin.

## Resources/Contacts

Department of Public Instruction (DPI): [www.dpi.wi.gov](http://www.dpi.wi.gov)  
Transition Consultant 608-266-1146

Disability Rights Wisconsin (DRW): <http://www.disabilityrightswi.org/>

Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR): <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/>

Person-Centered Planning resources:  
<http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/pcp/index.html>  
<http://www.pacer.org/tatra/resources/personal.asp>  
<http://www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=1431>  
(as a tool for transition)

Rehabilitation for Wisconsin (RFW): <http://www.rfw.org/>

Think College: [www.thinkcollege.net](http://www.thinkcollege.net)

Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (WI-BPDD): <http://www.wi-bpdd.org/>

Wisconsin Statewide Transition Initiative: <http://www.wsti.org/>



# Information on Accommodations at Specific Campuses

## WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGES

Locations: [www.witechcolleges.org](http://www.witechcolleges.org)

Blackhawk Technical College

<http://www.blackhawk.edu/AcademicSupportDivision/ServicesforStudentswith-Disabilities.aspx>  
608-757-7676

Chippewa Valley Technical College

<http://www.cvtc.edu/Disability>  
715-833-6234

Fox Valley Technical College

<http://www.fvtc.edu/disabilityservices>  
920-735-2569

Gateway Technical College

<http://www.gtc.edu/specialneeds>  
262-564-2500

Lakeshore Technical College

<http://gotoltc.edu/student-services/ada.php>  
920-693-1000

Madison College

<http://matcmadison.edu/disability-resource-services-drs>  
608-246-6716 (Deaf/HOH use relay 711)

Mid-State Technical College

<http://www.mstc.edu/students/disabilityservices.htm>  
715-422-5452

Milwaukee Area Technical College

<http://www.matc.edu/student/resources/needs.html>  
414-297-6750

Moraine Park Technical College

<http://www.morainepark.edu/services/student-resources/disability-services/#student-resources-disability>  
920-887-4495

Nicolet Area Technical College

<http://www.nicoletcollege.edu/currentstudents/student-services/disabilities-support-services/index.html>  
1-800-544-3039, ext. 4448 or 715-365-4448

Northcentral Technical College

<http://www.ntc.edu/current-students/disability-services>  
715-675-3331 or 1.888-NTC-7144 or  
715-675-6341 TTY, Ext. 4085

Northeast Wisconsin Technical College

<http://www.nwtc.edu/services/advising-counseling/Special%20Needs/Pages/Home.aspx>  
920-498-6904

Southwest Wisconsin Technical College

<http://www.swtc.edu/gray.aspx?id=1294>  
608-822-2631 or 1-800-362-3322 Ext. 2631

University of Wisconsin System Disability Services:

<http://www.uwsa.edu/acss/disability/cssd>

Waukesha County Technical College

<http://www.wctc.edu/specialservices>  
262-691-5210

Western Technical College

<http://www.westerntc.edu/services/disability.asp>  
608-785-9875 or 608-785-9551

Western Technical College

[http://www.westerntc.edu/currentstudents/student\\_support.asp](http://www.westerntc.edu/currentstudents/student_support.asp)  
608-785-9875  
Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College  
<http://www.witc.edu/s-servic/ssc/disability.htm>  
1-800-243-9482 or  
TTY 715-468-7755

Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College

[www.witc.edu/academics/supportsvcs/disability.htm](http://www.witc.edu/academics/supportsvcs/disability.htm)  
1-800-243-9482 or  
TTY 715-468-7755

## NONPROFIT AND PRIVATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Nonprofit and private colleges and universities receive no direct funding from the state or federal governments. Individual private colleges/universities may have a distinct mission or emphasis such as engineering, art and design, elementary or secondary education, health care, international education, environmental studies, women's education, adult education or liberal arts. While some Wisconsin private colleges/universities are religiously affiliated, all enroll students regardless of creed. Because private colleges/universities receive no direct government funding, their tuition is higher than a public college/university or technical college. However, most private college students will qualify for financial aid that makes the out-of-pocket costs less than the full tuition price.

Wisconsin Mentor (<http://www.wisconsinmentor.org/home.aspx>) is a website with information on the private colleges and universities in Wisconsin. This site offers information that students can use in comparing private colleges/universities, along with a link to the website of each. A feature on the Mentor page allows students to search for information on specific disabilities or other issues, with search results listing private college web pages with information relevant to students' search terms.

Alverno College  
Milwaukee, WI  
<http://www.alverno.edu/academics/resourcesforstudents/academicsupportservices/disabilityservices/>  
414-382-6026

Beloit College  
Beloit, WI  
<http://www.beloit.edu/dss/>  
608-363-2250

Cardinal Stritch University  
Milwaukee, WI  
[http://www.stritch.edu/Academics/Academic\\_Support\\_Center/Disabilities\\_Services.aspx](http://www.stritch.edu/Academics/Academic_Support_Center/Disabilities_Services.aspx)  
414-410-4166

Carroll University  
Waukesha, WI  
<http://www.carrollu.edu/campuslife/disabilitySer.asp>  
262-524-7335

Carthage College  
Kenosha, WI  
<http://www.carthage.edu/advising/learning>  
262-551-5802

Concordia University  
Mequon, WI  
<https://www.cuw.edu/Departments/lrc/dss.html>  
262-243-4535

Edgewood College  
Madison, WI  
<http://lss.edgewood.edu/DisabilityServices/default.htm>  
608-663-8347  
Cutting-Edge Program at Edgewood College  
<http://edgewood.edu/ProspectiveStudents/CuttingEdge.aspx>  
Program for students with significant disabilities (including intellectual disabilities)  
608-663-2340

Lakeland College  
Sheboygan, WI  
<http://www.lakeland.edu/StudentServices/arc/disabilities.asp>  
920-565-1412

Lawrence University  
Appleton, WI  
[http://www.lawrence.edu/dept/student\\_acad/disability\\_services/](http://www.lawrence.edu/dept/student_acad/disability_services/)  
920-832-6530

Marian University  
Fond du Lac, WI  
[http://www.marianuniversity.edu/disability\\_services/](http://www.marianuniversity.edu/disability_services/)  
920-923-8951

Marquette University  
Milwaukee, WI  
<http://www.marquette.edu/disability-services/>  
414-288-1645

Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design  
<http://www.miad.edu/academic-services/disability-services>  
414-847-3347

Milwaukee School of Engineering  
[http://www.msoe.edu/life\\_at\\_msoe/current\\_student\\_resources/academic\\_resources/lrc/university\\_disability\\_services.shtml](http://www.msoe.edu/life_at_msoe/current_student_resources/academic_resources/lrc/university_disability_services.shtml)  
414-277-2476

Mount Mary College  
Milwaukee, WI  
<http://www.mtmary.edu/disability.htm>  
414-443-3645 or 414-258-4810, ext. 645

Northland College  
Ashland, WI  
<http://www.northland.edu/student-life-support-disability.htm>  
715-682-1369  
Toll Free Student Services 1-866-781-0001

Ripon College  
Ripon, WI  
[http://www.ripon.edu/studentlife/student\\_support/index.html](http://www.ripon.edu/studentlife/student_support/index.html)  
920-748-8107

Silver Lake College  
Manitowoc, WI  
<https://www.sl.edu/traditional-program/academics/academic-resources-3/student-success-center/>  
920-686-6115

St. Norbert College  
De Pere, WI  
<http://www.snc.edu/academicsupport/disabilities.html>  
920-403-1321

Viterbo University  
LaCrosse, WI  
<http://www.viterbo.edu/learncenter.aspx?id=1100>  
608-796-3194

Wisconsin Lutheran College  
Milwaukee, WI  
<http://www.wlc.edu/supportservices/>  
414-443-8797

# Documentation of Disability is Necessary

## FOR EDUCATIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS AT POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

### What Kind of Documentation Do Postsecondary Schools Require?

Postsecondary schools require disability documentation establishing that a student has a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (*see page 5 and 21 of this guide*). Because these laws are different from the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which applies to students in K-12, new and/or additional documentation may be needed. The documentation should provide sufficient information so the accommodations that permit equal access to educational activities can be determined. Service eligibility is determined locally with each institution having its own standards and policies for disability documentation. Some schools may require documentation prepared by professionals, such as doctors, psychologists, or other qualified diagnosticians. Although an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan alone may help identify services that have been effective for a student in high school, it is generally not sufficient documentation for postsecondary accommodation eligibility.

### What Does the New Documentation Do?

- It establishes that a student *currently* has a substantial limitation to a major life activity.
- As a result of that substantial limitation, accommodations are needed for a student to *equally participate* in educational activities.
- It offers guidance regarding appropriate accommodations for a student in a postsecondary setting.

### In Preparation for a Postsecondary Setting, Students Should:

- Know what their disability is and what accommodations benefit them.
- Know how to describe their academic *and* personal strengths and weaknesses.
- Continue to develop self-advocacy skills regarding their accommodations.
- Gather all necessary documentation to establish eligibility for accommodations after high school.

- Investigate potential postsecondary schools and request information about services, accommodations, and documentation requirements from each postsecondary setting.
- Contact the postsecondary school during the application process (or sooner) so that accommodations can be discussed and implemented before classes begin.

### High Schools are Encouraged to:

- Assist students with disabilities in developing a clear post school transition plan.
- Provide as a part of that transition plan: (i) a written educational history of the student's placement in special education / 504 services, (ii) all relevant test scores and educational data including those used to establish and maintain eligibility for special services, (iii) evidence of current functional limitations, and (iv) all accommodations and services that were recommended and used by the student in high school. This can be done via the Summary of Performance (SoP).
- Help students develop self-awareness about their disability as well as effective self-advocacy skills that promote student independence and self-reliance.

### Final Thoughts

- Communication is essential – begin the transition to postsecondary education early!
- College students with disabilities must be given an equal opportunity to benefit from the program (an opportunity comparable to that afforded non-disabled students), however;
- The law ensures equal access; it doesn't ensure success.
- Successful college students take primary responsibility for accommodations, communication, and services.
- Assistance is available if students ask for it.

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The Document *Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities* is available from the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Washington, D.C. 20202 and is online at: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html>.

*A Wisconsin Disability Documentation Guide: Helping People with Disabilities Prepare for Post-secondary Education and Training*, January 2011 can be found on the Web at: [dpi.wi.gov/sped/pdf/tran-disab-docum-guide.pdf](http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/pdf/tran-disab-docum-guide.pdf).







# Publications

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Opening Doors to Employment was created to provide input and direction to students as they set and work toward their employment goals. It offers career exploration strategies, job preparation advice, and job search strategies. It addresses questions such as:

- What kind of work would be best for me?
- How do I know I can do certain kinds of jobs?
- How can I get a job and keep a job?
- If I get a certain kind of job, could I live on my income?

### Opening Doors to Postsecondary Education and Training: Planning for Life after High School

This Opening Doors booklet leads the reader through a process of planning for life after high school that includes making decisions, planning, and taking actions. Specifically, this publication is a tool for students with disabilities to use as they begin to plan for a successful future. Each student can consider his or her strengths and weaknesses, plan a high school experience that will achieve specific goals, explore possibilities for work and a career, and identify the next steps for life after high school.

### Opening Doors A Guide to Adult Services

*Opening Doors a Guide to Adult Services* will help students, their families, and educators understand the adult service system as well as services available in the community. Preparing for graduation and thinking about the future beyond high school is a very exciting time in anyone's life. The possibilities are endless. This guide will help students prepare for this new journey to adulthood.



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