



Disability Disclosure in College

For students who want to continue their education

The Americans with Disabilities Act

- The **ADA**, or **Americans with Disabilities Act**, is a law that says that all schools must treat people with disabilities fairly and give students with disabilities reasonable accommodations.
- **Reasonable accommodations** are changes to an assignment or environment that helps a person with a disability.



Section 504:

- **Section 504** is a law that says public programs, like colleges, must treat people with disabilities fairly.
- Public programs also have to give students with disabilities **accommodations** if they are qualified individuals.
- A **qualified individual** is a person who meets the same admission requirements as students without disabilities.
- The person also must have a disability that limits one or more major life activities.



Disability Disclosure

- **Disclosing your disability** means telling someone you have a disability
- To get accommodations you will need to disclose your disability to the

Office of Disability Services.

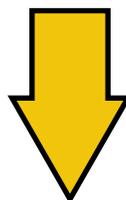
- You will need to show the Office of Disability Services documents that explain your disability.
- The documents might include information on your **diagnosis** and accommodations you've had that have helped you.
- The Office of Disability Services can help you tell your professors what accommodations you need.
- You do not have to tell your professor any details about your disability.
- You should **disclose your disability** as soon as possible so that you get your **accommodations** before classes begin.
- It is helpful to explain how your disability affects **your learning** and what supports you need to be successful.
- Colleges provide accommodations but are **not required** to give you the same accommodations that you had in high school.



Wrap Up

- The **ADA** and **Section 504** say that all schools must treat people with disabilities fairly.
- To get these **accommodations**, you need to **disclose your disability**.
- You can do this by contacting the **Office of Disability Services** at your school.
- It is a good idea to **disclose your disability** as soon as you know you need supports.
- Ask for **accommodations** that you know work for you.
- You must **know about your disability** and be able to speak up and **advocate** for accommodations.

KEEP READING FOR MORE DETAILS





What the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) says about Disability Disclosure:

- Under the ADA, both public and private colleges are required to protect students with disabilities from discrimination and give equal access to their programs
- Both public and private colleges must provide equal access to postsecondary education for students with disabilities. However, faculty and staff are not required to provide accommodations to students who have chosen not to disclose their disability
 - Example: Jaime needs extra time to take his exams. He will need to disclose his disability to the Office of Disability Services. If he does not disclose his disability, his professor doesn't have to give him extra time.

What Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act says about Disability Disclosure:

- Section 504 is a law that protects the rights of individuals with disabilities from discrimination in a public program that receives money from the government
- In college programs, Section 504 also allows for a “qualified individual” to receive accommodations and supports to make the program accessible
- A “qualified individual” is any student who meets the same admission requirements as students without disabilities and has a physical or mental impairment which significantly limits one or more major life activities
 - Example: Elisha earned a 3.0 GPA in high school and scored a 20 on her ACT. She meets the admission requirements for the college she wants to attend. Elisha has a disability that requires her to need extra time to complete assignments and tests, so she will need to disclose her disability in order to be approved to receive accommodations in college.
- A student with a disability is responsible for deciding what aspects of their disability they want to keep private



- The student may need to fully disclose their disability to the Office of Disability Services, but the student is not required to share all details about their disability with their professor

It is most helpful to provide information about:

- How the disability impacts your learning
- The environment, services, and supports you need in order to access and succeed in your classes

Main Ideas About Disability Disclosure in College

- Colleges are not required to give them same level of services as high school
- Colleges provide accommodations, but they are not required to provide you with the same services or accommodations as you had in high school
 - Example: In high school, Mason went to a small group for extra reading practice three times a week. When he got to college, Disability Services told him that he would qualify for extra time and a text-to-speech accommodation, but they do not provide small group instruction.
- Students must have knowledge about their disability and be able to advocate for accommodations that are needed
- If students choose to disclose their disability, they should contact their college's Disability Services Office
 - Different schools may use different names for this office, for example: Student Services, Student Access Services, etc.
- Students must disclose their disability to the Disability Services Office in order to obtain accommodations, but they do not have to disclose any details to their professors
- Students are financially responsible for providing current testing or up-to-date documentation that shows that the student has a disability
 - Example: Jessie had a report and medical diagnosis that explains that she has a learning disability. It is 5 years old, so her college requests updated information. This means that Jessie has to pay for the testing and in order to qualify for accommodations at her college.



- It is recommended to disclose your disability as soon as possible
- Waiting to disclose your disability until you realize you need accommodations could make it challenging to get them arranged and ready to access when needed