

DRS and SBVI Services

VOCATIONAL
REHABILITATION
SERVICES



PS
EDUCATION



EMPLOYMENT

Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) & Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired (SBVI) provide individualized vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to assist eligible individuals with disabilities to reach their employment goals. For many individuals, employment goals are met following graduation from post-secondary education. However, students should apply for these services while in high school, as VR can start working with students at age 14.

There are a variety of services that DRS & SBVI VR counselors can offer to students who are planning to pursue post-secondary education. The services that may be provided include:

- ♦ Assistance with transition planning into adult world;
- ♦ Vocational counseling and guidance to help understand capabilities and develop career goals;
- ♦ Assistive technology devices needed for post-secondary education, training, or employment;
- ♦ Possible financial assistance for post-secondary education;
- ♦ Transportation, equipment and other services if needed for post-secondary education;
- ♦ Job placement services to include job development, job coaching, and follow-up following post-secondary education.

To learn more about DRS services go to www.dhs.sd.gov or call 605-773-3195.

To learn more about SBVI services go to www.dhs.sd.gov or call 605-773-4644.

5 Top Predictors of Post-Secondary Education Success

#1

- Understand disability and accommodations needed

#2

- Willing to ask for help

#3

- Make a personal connection with someone at college

#4

- Participate in activities and events

#5

- Carry a manageable course load

Final Thoughts . . .

- ✓ **Communication is essential** - the IEP team needs to begin the transition to post-secondary education discussion 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).
- ✓ Successful college students take primary responsibility for requesting accommodations and support, communicating with professors, and attending classes on a consistent basis.
- ✓ Assistance is available **IF** students ask for it!

Tips on Post-Secondary Education In the High School Transition Process

Did You Know...

The term 'post-secondary' refers to education beyond high school, such as college, technical college, university or career and technical education programs.

Every post-secondary institute has disability services staff who can assist students with disabilities to obtain the supports/accommodations they need to assure equal access to the program.

No faculty at a university or technical college can, or will, ask students if they have a disability or need assistance. Students with disabilities at the post-secondary level need to be able to request to meet with disability services staff, self-identify as having a disability and request accommodations on their own. Parents cannot do it for their child.

The skill of being able to explain one's disability and to speak up for what support is needed is **critical** to having a successful post-secondary experience!

Whether a young adult is considering enrolling at a university or technical college, it is important to know that students who have many different types of disability can and do attend post-secondary institutes. Many students with disabilities have successfully completed post-secondary programs and have fulfilling careers.

Planning ahead and being well informed of how to access services can help ensure the opportunity to experience success at the post-secondary level!

While in high school, students should

- ✓ Attend all classes and keep grade point average (GPA) up.
- ✓ Challenge themselves with rigorous general education courses and avoid modifications to course work.
- ✓ Set up a regular study schedule.
- ✓ Talk to general education teachers about their learning styles and needed accommodations.
- ✓ Complete at least three high school math courses (Algebra I is required, plus two additional math courses).
- ✓ Take ACT (American College Testing) or Accuplacer exams early in case it needs to be re-taken to raise the score. ACT may be required for university admissions; Accuplacer is typically required for technical college admissions. Some scholarships require ACT scores, so it could be an incentive for one planning to attend a technical college to take the ACT, rather than the Accuplacer.
- ✓ Tour and visit with disability services staff at post-secondary institutions of interest.
- ✓ Attend a Catch the College Wave event.
- ✓ Discuss with the IEP team benefits of assistive technology (AT) devices. There are various AT devices that could assist individuals who have difficulty with reading, writing, speech, and more.
- ✓ Apply for services through Division of Rehabilitation Services (also known as Vocational Rehabilitation or 'VR').



Developed by
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Visit us at www.tslp.org

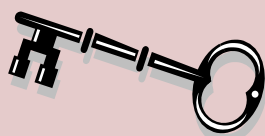


Helpful Tips



- Students can request accommodations for the ACT test or Accuplacer test. Students should talk with their special education teacher and/or school counselor to request testing accommodations.
- Students should continue with upper-level math courses during their senior year. That way they come to college with math 'fresh' in their mind.
- Students should have experience in using personal assistive technology devices before they start at college if possible. It would be ideal to start training and using assistive technology devices while in high school. To find more information on assistive technology, go to www.dakotalink.net.
- Disability Coordinators are available to assist students with needed services, but the student must take the initiative to meet with the Coordinator and request assistance. Students must provide documentation to the Disability Services office to determine whether they have a qualifying disability.
- Evaluations (including adult-normed psychological) from high school need to be current (within 3 years) for services at post-secondary institutions.
- Due to FERPA regulations, college faculty are unable to give out student information to parents, unless the student signs a release.
- While in high school, modifications should be replaced with accommodations as much as possible. Modifications alter the content of a course or what is learned or tested. Modifications are **not** provided at the post-secondary level.
- A student with a disability must meet the standards of the classes they take at a post-secondary institution. Colleges and universities must provide equal access to their programs. However, success in the program is not guaranteed. Standards are not lowered for students with disabilities.
- Self-identification and asking for assistance early at the post-secondary level can prevent failed grades, loss of financial aid and low self-esteem.
- Many of the programs offered through South Dakota's technical colleges have admissions and performance expectations very similar to those at four year universities. The coursework is very rigorous and regular attendance is expected due to the condensed timeframe.
- More and more students are taking longer to get their degrees. Smaller course loads are recommended for some students with disabilities. In colleges and universities, 12 credits is considered full-time for the purposes of federal financial aid.
- Students must manage their own time and schedules. Typically, it is recommended that students study at least 2-3 hours outside of class for each hour in class.
- Attendance policies may vary with each instructor. Instructors expect students to get the information from a fellow classmate when they miss a class.

Post-secondary educational institutions in South Dakota are committed to providing assistance and accommodations for qualified students with specific disabilities or needs. Universities and technical colleges receiving federal funds must designate a person to help students with disabilities to access accommodations. This person may be known as an ADA Coordinator, Disability Coordinator, or another similar title. The Disability Coordinator is a **KEY** player in helping students with disabilities be successful in pursuing their post-secondary education goal. You can find a list of disability coordinators in South Dakota along with a guide (Catch the College Wave Manual) to post-secondary education at: <https://tslp.org/post-secondary-education/>



The Power Is In Self-Advocacy

When a young adult turns 18 and goes to college, parents no longer have the ability to access their school records or grades without written consent as per the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). For more information go to: <https://www.collegeparentcentral.com/2009/06/what-ferpa-means-for-you-and-your-college-student/>

While it may be difficult to "let go" of this involvement, it can also be a chance for parents to empower their teen to be their own advocate – a skill that is crucial not only in college, but as they go through life. Assisting teenagers in developing good self-advocacy skills while in high school can alleviate parents' concerns about how they will deal with college and will lessen the stress for them. High school students who regularly advocate for themselves in school are more comfortable with the "self advocacy concept" when they go off to college.

Parents and teachers can foster these skills by encouraging students to attend and participate in their IEP meetings. Make sure they understand the nature of their disability and how it impacts their learning. When students can express their strengths and learning challenges, they can comfortably have a conversation with the college disability coordinator about their accommodation needs. Encourage them to communicate with high school teachers on a regular basis – this will make it easier for them to approach college instructors, since college students often have to initiate communication with post-secondary faculty.

By practicing these skills while in high school, students with disabilities will be better prepared to independently advocate for themselves as they transition to college life!

Catch the College Wave Events

Catch the College Wave (CTCW) is an event held on a post-secondary campus, designed specifically for high school students who have a disability and are considering post-secondary education. This event is beneficial to parents, school counselors, and teachers as well.

- Topics that are discussed include:
- Preparing for college life - know what will be expected at the college level and what students can do to increase their chances for success
- Accommodations vs modifications
- The importance of being a self-advocate
- Entrance and eligibility requirements and other tips for students
- Student panel will share their post-secondary experiences

Each transition liaison hosts a Catch the College Wave event annually. For more information go to www.tslp.org/events.



Important to Know

Students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) may receive classroom and/or testing accommodations or modifications in high school. Even though these terms are used interchangeably, it is important to know the difference.

- Modification – a change in content or **what** is learned or tested.
- Accommodation - a change in **how** content is learned or tested.

At the post-secondary level, accommodations are available, modifications are not. Depending on the disability, students may receive these typical accommodations at the college level:

- Alternate Testing - separate (quieter) location for exams, and/or extended time for test taking
- Notetaker in class
- Alternate Print – books in audio format or in pdf form to use with assistive technology readers.

RECOMMENDATION: Students should try to 'wean' away from modifications in high school to better prepare for the post-secondary level.