

# My College Prep Checklist

## BEFORE HIGH SCHOOL



- Enroll in a well-balanced portfolio of challenging courses, including classes in English, math, science, technology, history, geography, foreign language, and fine arts.
- Review high school course offerings and pinpoint which classes will prepare you best for college.
- Make sure your plan of study is added to your IEP transition plan.
- Work to address any basic skills deficits in reading, math, writing, and oral language.
- Sharpen your skills with smartphones, computers, and the Internet.
- Develop a full toolbox of study skills and learning strategies you can use in high school and beyond.

## FRESHMAN YEAR



- Increase your knowledge of your disability and how it may affect academic performance.
- Practice explaining your own strengths and challenges to others.
- Work with your transition team and guidance counselor to register for courses and ensure you have the credits needed for your high school diploma.
- Start a transition portfolio of disability documentation, letters of support, verification of test accommodations used on statewide assessments, copies of past IEPs, and school records.
- Begin identifying adaptations and modifications you can use in college to support your learning.
- Be sure that at least one annual goal on your IEP addresses postsecondary or other vocational transition activities.
- Prepare for and pass all end-of-course exams.

## SOPHOMORE YEAR



- Conduct research on colleges. Talk to guidance counselors, go to college fairs, and chat with college representatives who visit high schools.
- Review college disability documentation guidelines.
- Work with parents to make sure your disability documentation records are current.
- Find out how to prepare disability documentation for college.
- Identify and apply for high-stakes test accommodations.
- Prepare for and take the PSAT to gauge how prepared you are for the SAT.
- Acquire and expand on specific study skills, such as using the library, reading with auxiliary aids and assistive technologies, and writing a term paper.
- Develop fluency with assistive technologies you can use in college.



## JUNIOR YEAR

- Consider possible career goals and college majors that support those goals.
- Identify a short list of potential colleges that are a good fit for your goals, interests, and abilities (and have the disability support services you need).
- Use college catalogs and websites to research information about admissions, prerequisites, tech requirements, housing, campus life, and disability services.
- If the website has a place to submit a question, send queries to admissions and disability services personnel in preparation for your campus visit.
- Plan campus tours, including a visit to the disability services office. Be prepared to talk to postsecondary disability service personnel about access to support services.
- Consider retaking high-stakes entrance exams, if necessary.
- Start working on college application essays (high school English teachers and guidance counselors can usually help you prepare for this).
- Request letters of recommendation from teachers and other staff.



## SENIOR YEAR

- Meet with your guidance counselor early in the year to review your transition portfolio and identify materials you need for your college application.
- Talk to the guidance counselor about receiving a Summary of Performance to include in your transition portfolio.
- Continue to develop self-advocacy skills and study skills for college.
- If your target colleges require an admissions interview, practice before the interview by role-playing with the transition coordinator or guidance counselor.
- Go on final campus tours. Bring a list of questions about academics, disability services, and more—admissions procedures, financial aid, housing, social activities, athletics, etc.
- Review how to complete college application forms online.
- Fill out college applications (most colleges require applications to be filed by December of senior year).
- Ask your guidance counselor to review completed applications 2-3 weeks before the deadline.
- Wait for a letter of acceptance—letters will probably begin to arrive in mid-March.
- If multiple acceptance letters arrive, congratulations! Consider second campus visits or follow-up phone calls to ease your final decision.
- Write a short acceptance letter and mail it early along with any deposits and housing requests.
- CELEBRATE your awesome achievement!

Adapted from *Preparing Students with Disabilities for College Success*,  
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