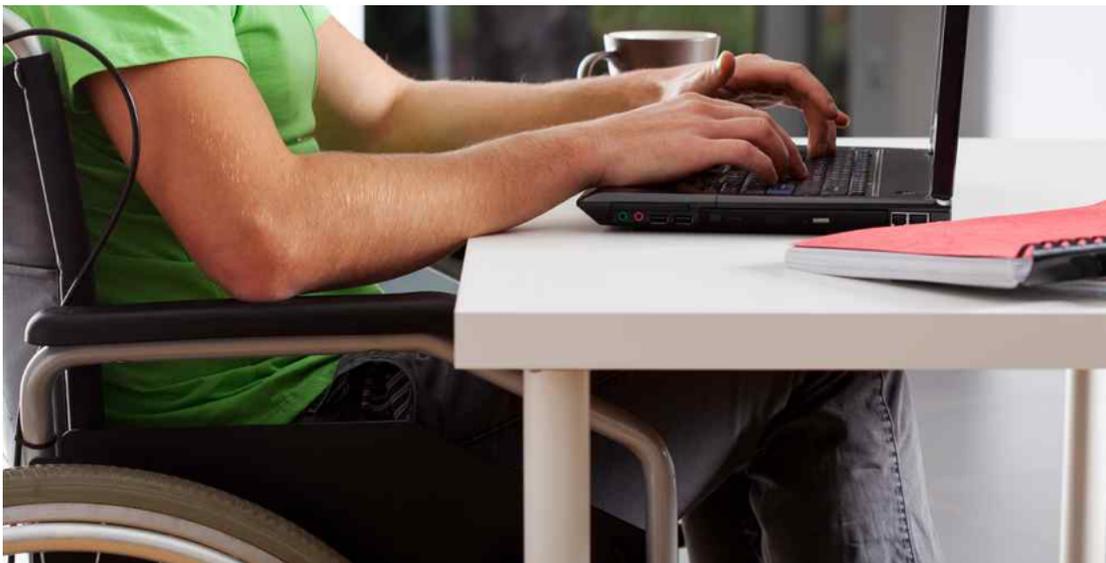


## OVERVIEW OF COLLEGE RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Prospective college students with disabilities will find that many campuses are equipped with offices and services that address accessibility, accommodation, and assistive technology for a diverse range of needs. Student services offices and disability coordinators at many colleges work to make campuses inclusive environments through specialized advocacy, support, and academic services.

**OF 2,563,000 UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE U.S., APPROXIMATELY 11.1% OF ALL UNDERGRADUATES ENROLLED, HAD A DISABILITY IN THE 2011-2012 SCHOOL YEAR.**

The increased visibility of these resources makes college a very compelling option for people with disabilities. In 2013, the [National Center for Education Statistics](#) reported that roughly 2,563,000 undergraduate students in the U.S., approximately 11.1% of all undergraduates enrolled, had a disability in the 2011-2012 school year. In addition to campus-based resources, students with disabilities are also protected by state, federal, and local laws prohibiting discrimination and requiring equal levels of access to academic services, environments, and resources. This guide explains your legal rights as a student with disabilities, both physical and learning disabilities, and the campus resources that can provide you with assistive services and tools. Additionally, we list a number of sites, apps, and software resources designed to aid students with specific types of disabilities, whether physical impairments or learning disabilities.



### Your Legal Rights

## SECTION 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is one of the earliest federal pieces of disability rights legislation, and its roots can be traced back to civil rights demonstrations by the [American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities \(ACCD\)](#). Through public sit-ins, lobbying, and activist demonstrations, ACCD was able to sway Jimmy Carter’s administration to ensure Section 504 compliance, which paved the way for subsequent amendments.

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR), a part of the [U.S. Department of Education](#), oversees the implementation of Section 504. Organizations that receive federal funding, such as academic institutions and employers, are legally obligated to provide disabled students with equal benefits, services, and opportunities. Students attending college must be provided with equal access to classrooms, and they may be deemed eligible for accommodations.

### WHO SECTION 504 COVERS

At first glance, it can be difficult to tell if you’re covered by the protections granted in Section 504. According to the legal text, the law applies to a “qualified individual with a disability.” So how does the OCR determine whether you apply? The provisions define qualified individuals as those with a physical or mental condition that substantially restricts one or more major life activities. The [Department of Education \(ED\)](#) provides some examples of these types of impairments. However, please keep in mind that this is not a comprehensive list:

Neurological conditions	Sense organ impairments	Musculoskeletal impairments
Emotional or mental illnesses	Respiratory conditions	Digestive ailments
Learning disabilities	Organic brain syndromes	

### RECEIVING ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENTS

Disclosing your disability status to your college is completely optional, however you will need to disclose this information if you wish to receive academic adjustments. This gives your college administration the information and time they need to arrange for assistive aids and services for your classes. Here are some examples of the academic adjustments colleges provide:

#### PAGE NAVIGATION



Note-taking services

Priority class registration

Sign language interpretation

Course substitutions

If you plan to apply for academic adjustments, it’s important to learn about your college’s disability procedures in advance so you can receive assistive services and tools in time for your courses. In order to receive these adjustments, the ED suggests you examine [disability procedures](#) through admissions advisors, college counselors, college websites, student handbooks and course catalogs.

## SECTION 504 LIMITATIONS

Some postsecondary academic institutions do not receive federal funding, making them exempt from complying with Section 504; the most common reasons a school would not receive funding are because it has declined funding or had it revoked. Some private colleges choose to decline federal funding for a variety of political, religious, or ethical reasons. Others may lose funding if they fail to comply with recent federal standards regarding gainful employment and loan amounts. Even if a college is exempt from Section 504 requirements, the students at this academic institution are likely covered by other disability rights legislation, such as Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), described below.

## Additional Legislation

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** Students who attend public colleges are protected against disability discrimination by Title II, which applies to state and local government entities. Title III protections apply to the services, activities, and programs provided by public academic institutions. Private and for-profit colleges must adhere to Title III, which prohibits discrimination by “private entities that offer certain examinations and courses related to educational and occupational certification.” Additionally, these colleges are required by Title III to provide academic services in an accessible environment. Unlike Section 504, Titles II and III are enforced by the U.S. Department of Justice.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** Most of the IDEA regulations cover primary and secondary students between the ages of 3 to 21, however, the transition services included in the act are very relevant to future college applicants. Under IDEA, high schools are expected to provide students with certain services to “facilitate the child’s movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education.” These might include advising sessions where postsecondary goals are discussed. Such sessions are referred to as Individualized Education Program meetings.

**Assistive Technology Act:** State-run organizations are eligible to receive grant funding for assistive technology programs in a number of environments, including college campuses. These grants help fund the purchase of assistive technologies (AT), such as voice amplifiers, special software, computing hardware, and wheelchairs. You can learn more about AT-funded institutions in your state by visiting the Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs (ATAP) database.

## FILING GRIEVANCES

If you believe your academic institution is not in compliance with the legislation described above, you have the option of contacting agencies that oversee these laws with your concerns. It is important to thoroughly review the policies and suggestions of each agency before submitting a complaint. These are the federal agencies that oversee the laws listed above, along with links to their complaint processes:

- Section 504: [Office for Civil Rights](#)
- ADA: [U.S. Department of Justice](#)
- IDEA: [U.S. Department of Education](#)

As a student with disabilities, it is important to thoroughly understand your federal, state, and local rights.

Exploring the resources available to you on campus can make the transition to college much easier. If you qualify for academic adjustments, speak to an admissions adviser early on so you can receive services and/or assistive technology when classes begin. Many colleges employ ADA or disability rights coordinators and disability services staff who can serve as on-campus resources for your needs.

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## ni University

*city's Oxford campus. In his 30th year of service to the University, Andrew has been involved with Miami's efforts towards enhancing inclusion and accessibility in Diversity and Inclusion, University Senate, and manages an amazing team of professional staff in SDS who serve almost 9% of Miami's student body. affiliate group OH-AHEAD, and Chairs Miami's Annual Kate Welling Disability Awareness Lecture committee.*

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abilities should consider when selecting a university experience and why?

>

message delivered and supported by the upper level administration and supported in university policies?

services and accommodations in academics, student employment, the residential experience, and campus access?

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ities when deciding on a college?

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ities/ mental health services?

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ilities on a college campus?

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student is feeling unsure?

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ge?

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' get to college?

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es during this time of transition?

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## Campus Life



Profile Colleges

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Make sure you are applying to colleges that are a good fit for your personal and academic interests and needs. Consider campus resources, tuition rates, housing options, population sizes, majors, faculty, student retention, graduation rates, and job placement rates before applying.



Schedule a Visit

+



Student Services

+



Housing Services

+



Online Courses

+

## Before Class Enrollment

**Send in Documentation:** In order for colleges to provide accessible accommodations and academic adjustments, you need to provide the administration with medical documentation of your disability. According to the [U.S. Department of Education](#), this documentation can include current disability diagnoses, paperwork that covers your doctor's credentials, or medical and academic reports on the impact your disability has on your academic life.

**Check in with Student Services:** It is important to work together with your college's student services office during the course enrollment process; you might be eligible for adjustments such as priority class registration. Some additional services colleges provide include:

- Testing accommodations
- Sign language interpreters
- Braille transcriptions
- Audio recordings of lectures
- Note-taking
- Seating accommodations

## Resources

While colleges and universities work towards making their campuses and classrooms more accessible for students with disabilities, there may be additional needs to address. We have compiled a list of resources, including apps, websites, and software designed to help those with disabilities in the classroom, with their homework, and in the social situations students find on campus.

### Deaf and Hard of Hearing

#### Apps

- **Dragon Dictation:** This automated transcription app can be used to record speech during class and convert it into written text. It is available across multiple mobile platforms.
- **ASL Dictionary:** Communicate effectively with other ASL speakers by consulting this catalogue of over 5,200 signs. Each sign is demonstrated with a short video clip.
- **Skype:** Sign with friends and family via Skype's free video chat service. It is supported across PC, Mac, Android, and iOS platforms.
- **Z5 Mobile:** This app allows those who use ASL as their primary language to make phone calls via their video phones and video relay services.

#### Websites

- **Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP):** The U.S. Department of Education funds the DCMP, which has created a media library of over 4,000 free captioned titles for educational use.
- **National Deaf Center:** Post-secondary students who are deaf or hard of hearing can use this educational network to access a range of professional coaching, note taking, and study

strategy guides.

#### Software

- **Purple:** This software company offers a wide range of communication and interpretation services, including desktop video relay systems, text relays, and video remote interpretation.
- **Dragon Naturally Speaking:** Nuance is one of the leading companies in consumer and professional grade dictation software, which can quickly and accurately transcribe speech into text.

Visual Impairment

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Physical Disabilities

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Autism

+

Learning Disabilities

+

Dyslexia

+

ADHD

+

#### PREVIOUS ARTICLE

[College Guide for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students](#)

#### NEXT ARTICLE

[College Guide for Students With Learning Disabilities](#)

#### FEATURED RANKINGS

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OF 2018

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ONLINE COLLEGES THAT OFFER  
LAPTOPS AND IPADS

CAMPUS LIFE

AMERICA'S BEST  
MILITARY FRIENDLY  
ONLINE SCHOOLS

STUDENT BODY

THE BEST ONLINE  
MASTER'S IN SOCIAL WORK  
PROGRAMS

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

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