



# Making the Transition to College Easier!

The University of Akron

Office of Accessibility

## Welcome!

The Office of Accessibility would like to welcome you to our office and to The University of Akron. We strive to provide students with disabilities equal access to opportunities and programs to aid with academic goals at UA. We have developed this handbook to introduce you to the many transition topics to consider when planning to attend college. If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Accessibility for further information.



## Services are different than they were in high school

Students and parents familiar with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990, or IDEA, often are surprised to find that this law does not apply to postsecondary education. The University of Akron is governed by two different federal statutes that prohibit discrimination against individuals on the basis of disability and requires reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals.

- \* Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is the law that provided the underpinning of the ADA but is limited only to recipients of Section 504.
- \* The Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended of 2008 (ADAAA) provides that no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefit of services, programs or activities of a public entity or place of public accommodation. College students with disabilities are covered in Title II of the

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## Consider these issues for successful transition from High School to College:

- **Students must meet both academic and technical standards** for admission to college. Colleges are not required to fundamentally alter academic or technical standards.
- **Students must identify themselves** to the Office of Accessibility in order to receive services. Colleges are not required to identify students with disabilities. In addition, **students must provide the Office of Accessibility with documentation** of disability. The cost of obtaining documentation is the responsibility of students. Some colleges may require more evidence than was required in high school. We recommend that parents and students work with their school districts and/or treating professional to plan in advance for college and make sure that documentation is current by the student's last year of high school.
- Colleges are required to provide reasonable accommodations only to **known limitations of an otherwise qualified individual and supported by documentation. Colleges determine the reasonable accommodation(s)** that will be provided, on an individualized basis. Colleges are not required to provide "unreasonable modifications" that may present an undue hardship, pose a risk to self or others, or fundamentally alter a program or course.
- **Unlike K-12, institutions of Higher Education do not use Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).** Instead, colleges rely on documentation provided by students from a diagnosing professional. Professors are then provided with letters which outline accommodation recommendations for specific students.
- **Federal and state laws do not require team meetings or progress reports.** Students with disabilities typically meet each semester with a Disability Specialist in the Office of Accessibility to arrange for accommodations. All students have access to a wide array of student services available on campus to enhance academic success. It is the responsibility of each student to take advantage of these services and seek additional assistance if needed.
- **Colleges do not provide Personal Care Assistants.** However, students are entitled to equal access to the services that are provided for all students.

*"Two roads diverged  
in a wood, and I —  
I took the one less  
traveled by, And  
that has made all  
the difference."*

*-Robert Frost*



### Additional Resources:

"Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities"

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html>

## Transition to College Tips

The staff at the Office of Accessibility has identified several areas in which students with disabilities, in particular, should focus as they transition to college.



\* **Develop Self Awareness:** Understand your needs as well as the nature and impact of your disability. Be able to understand and communicate the impact of your specific disability, including your strengths and weaknesses.

\* **Develop Self-Advocacy Skills:** Actively participate in meetings with the Office of Accessibility. Be appropriate and assertive in asking for help, meeting with instructors, and understanding your rights and responsibilities as a student at The University of Akron. Become aware of your need for accommodations/services across unique or different situations. Practice effective assertiveness and problem-solving skills.

\* **Study Skill Development:** Make sure you are self-aware of your strengths and weaknesses in study skills. For reading: look at how well you can scan a book or other materials, how well you outline notes, summarize information you have read, monitor your reading comprehension and synthesize the information you read. For general study skills, consider how well you take notes in class, the quality of your memorization strategies and your test preparation/test-taking skills.

\* **Organization and Time Management:** How are you with budgeting your time? Using an efficient organization system? Accessing study materials? Determining an appropriate and effective amount of dedicated study time? Locating an effective place to study? Identifying the relevant information to study? These are important skills to develop and implement before beginning a college course of study.

*“One important key to success is self-confidence. An important key to self-confidence is preparation.”*

*-Arthur Ashe*





## Helpful strategies for students with disabilities

The University of Akron campus offers students incredible opportunities, as well as some significant challenges. Students who have thoughtfully prepared for life at UA are those most likely to succeed. Students with disabilities may benefit from additional planning.

If you are a student with a disability, consider using these strategies to help you reach your goals:

### **Prepare early for the start of or return to college**

Apply early for financial aid. Be sure you are not in default on any previous loans. Resolving funding questions such as these early in the process will help your transition go smoothly. Contact the Office of Student Financial Aid: 330-972-7032 or [finaid@uakron.edu](mailto:finaid@uakron.edu)

Consider what academic barriers you encountered in previous school experiences. These may give you an idea of what types of academic accommodations you may need.

### **Build a support system**

Register with the Office of Accessibility (OA). The OA's role is to ensure equal access to University programs and services for all students with disabilities who attend the University. Your Disability Specialist at the OA can assist you in identifying and obtaining the accommodations to which you may be entitled. Your Disability Specialist will provide you with information on policies and procedures and give you referrals to both on- and off-campus resources. Maintain communication with your Disability Specialist so he/she can assist in arranging academic accommodations when needed.

Register with appropriate agencies and services that are relevant to your situation. For example, students who are blind may want to become involved with the Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired (BSVI) if not already registered with them.

Learn who your key University contacts are. For example, where can you access academic advising, financial aid, tutoring or information about campus events?

Consider getting involved in one of the many campus clubs and organizations, sports, and student union activities. Good sources of information on activities and student organizations are: The Student Organization Resource Center (SOuRCe; [www.uakron.edu/studentlife/involvement/source](http://www.uakron.edu/studentlife/involvement/source)); and The Student Recreation and Wellness Center (<http://www.uakron.edu/srws/>).

*"The will to win is nothing without the will to prepare."*

*-Juma Ikingaa*



### **Become familiar with the UA campus and transportation options**

- \* Investigate and arrange for transportation to and from campus before the semester starts as you are determining your class schedule. Plan realistically for transportation and parking time and schedule your classes accordingly.
- \* If you plan to drive and park a car on campus, you will need to apply for a parking permit before the start of each semester. Students who wish to park in accessible parking spaces on campus are required to submit their State Placard or Plate Registration to the Parking and Transportation Services office. Additionally, the Roo Express Shuttle Service is available to provide transportation to University buildings downtown, nearby neighborhoods and parking lots on the North side of campus. See Parking and Transportation Services for more information (<http://www.uakron.edu/parking/>).
- \* Map out the best route to your classes and do a trial run before the semester begins. Locate accessible entrances and elevators, as needed. Remember to schedule enough time to travel from class to class, and keep in mind how winter and inclement weather may impact your travel.
- \* Travel light on campus. For example, repack your backpack each day so you only carry items you will need that day.



*“The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today”*

*-H. Jackson Brown, Jr.*

### **Plan how you will disclose your disability**

- \* Your instructor may not be aware that accommodations are needed unless you send them your Letter of Accommodation. This letter outlines for professors what their responsibility is in providing necessary accommodations, without disclosing diagnostic information. It is important to meet with your Disability Specialist to discuss accommodations early in the semester as accommodations are not retro-active. This also allows you time to communicate with your professors about the accommodations you will need, as well as how and where you will take exams. You may find the process of requesting accommodations stressful, but preparation is key. Maintain communication with your Disability Specialist throughout the semester so he/she can assist in arranging academic accommodations when needed and address any questions or concerns you may have.



**Enhance your repertoire for coping by developing life skills.**

Keep your diet, exercise, and sleep patterns in balance. What is your stamina like? Are you planning ahead and have time allocated to get the rest you need? If you are taking medication, consider the possible side effects and what time of day you function best. What is the likelihood of needing to change medications during a semester?

Many college students are surprised by the demands on their time. To meet all that is required of you, consider using these strategies for managing your time and coursework.

- Keep materials for each class organized and in one place.
- Keep one calendar of due dates and exams.
- Keep a consistent and realistic schedule.
- Keep a record of grades for all assignments, quizzes, and exams.
- Develop daily study routines.
- Prepare in advance for each class and make sure you have all necessary materials.
- Schedule periodic reviews to help prepare for exams.
- Meet with professors, tutors, or others to discuss assignments, lectures, and exams.

Take advantage of The University of Akron's many student support resources ([http://www.uakron.edu/audiences/ua\\_parents/student\\_support\\_resources.dot](http://www.uakron.edu/audiences/ua_parents/student_support_resources.dot)). Ask your Disability Specialist for additional ideas and resources to help you in developing these life skills.

Visit The University of Akron's tutoring website to take full advantage of tutoring opportunities offered at UA! (<http://www.uakron.edu/tutoring/>)



*“What lies behind us  
and what lies before us  
are tiny matters  
compared to what lies  
within us.”*

*-Ralph Waldo Emerson*



## Mission Statement

The mission of the Office of Accessibility is to provide students with full access to and the opportunity for full participation in the academic environment.

We are advocates of social justice for students with disabilities and work to end oppression by examining the social, cultural and institutional barriers to inclusion of all students.

We embrace the diversity of our student body and celebrate a culturally sensitive and accessible campus through outreach, partnership, and advocacy with many university departments.



## How to Register with the Office of Accessibility

### Getting Started

Students are encouraged to contact the Office of Admissions to apply for admission to the university prior to registering for services at the Office of Accessibility.

Students are encouraged to register with the Office of Accessibility 3 months prior to enrollment at The University of Akron.

### Step One

Complete the New Student Application to register with the Office of Accessibility. The new student application is a brief online questionnaire designed for students to describe the impacts of a disability. **STARS** is the online system that allows students to quickly and easily request and notify faculty of approved accommodations.

*"We must become  
the change we seek  
in the world."*

*-Gandhi*

### Step Two

After completing the new student application, students should upload current, disability-related documentation of a disability(ies) completed by a **qualified professional**. The Office of Accessibility has specific guidelines available on our website or in Simmons Hall 105. The Office of Accessibility will not accept disability-related documentation from treatment professionals who are related, in any way, to the student requesting services.

### Step Three

Once a new student application has been reviewed, including complete documentation, an Office of Accessibility staff member will follow-up to schedule an intake appointment. If any information in the application is incomplete, a staff member will contact the student to address what is needed.

The intake appointment is designed to discuss:

- Services a student is eligible to receive based upon the documentation submitted
- Disability-related needs
- Preparations for attending college
- Introduction to the online accommodation request system

Students are welcome to bring a support person (parent, guardian, spouse, case manager) to the intake appointment, which will be scheduled with a professional staff member of the Office of Accessibility.



\*\*Visit our website: <http://uakron.edu/access/>