

Tips for college success

1. Start Preparing Early

- Build skills now that will help you succeed in college.
- Practice self-advocacy by speaking up about what you need in classes.
- Strengthen your use of access technology such as screen readers or magnification tools.
- Build study habits like organizing assignments and managing time.
- Start practicing independent living tasks such as laundry, food preparation, or getting around independently.

2. Understand the Differences Between High School and College

- College works differently from K–12.
- You must request your own accommodations. The college will not identify you or reach out to you to offer accommodations.
- You are expected to manage your time, schedule, and workload independently.
- Professors usually want to help but may not understand accessibility. You may need to explain your needs clearly.

3. Connect Early with Disability or Accessibility Services

- This office will help ensure you have access to your courses.
- Contact them as soon as you are accepted to a college.
- Share documentation and ask what accommodations are commonly used on campus.
- Common supports include accessible textbooks, extended time, note-taking options, or priority registration.
- Build ongoing communication with staff. They can help solve problems quickly.

4. Use Technology to Stay Organized and Independent

- Technology is a key part of college success.
- Learn your primary tools before starting college. Examples include JAWS, NVDA, VoiceOver, ZoomText, or braille displays.
- Use apps to track assignments, organize files, and manage your calendar.
- Explore study tools such as text-to-speech, digital notebooks, or audio recording tools.
- Have a backup plan for technology issues or inaccessible materials.

5. Expect Some Accessibility Challenges

- Not everything will be accessible automatically.
- When something is inaccessible:
- Contact disability services.
- Notify your professor.
- Ask for alternative formats or solutions.
- Needing access is not a burden. It is your right.

6. Build Relationships with Professors and Classmates

- Communication helps everything go more smoothly.
- Introduce yourself to professors early. Share your accommodations in a simple, clear way.
- Ask for readings or assignments in advance when helpful.
- During group projects, explain how you can contribute and what tools you use.
- Do not hesitate to ask classmates for help with things like finding a seat or checking a visual diagram.

7. Get Involved in Campus Life

- College is also about community and experiences.
- Join clubs, organizations, volunteer opportunities, or campus jobs.
- Getting involved can help you build friendships and confidence.
- Living on campus can be a great way to practice independence.

8. Learn the Campus Environment

- Getting around independently takes time, but you will improve.
- Work with an Orientation and Mobility (O&M) instructor before college if possible.
- Explore your campus layout early. Practice routes to classrooms, dining areas, and dorms.
- Use tools such as tactile maps, GPS apps, or mobility aids.

9. Build a Support Network

- Your support network may include:
- Disability or Accessibility Services
- Academic advisors
- O&M instructors
- Blind or low-vision student groups
- Friends and roommates
- Professors and mentors
- Having people you can contact for help makes a big difference.

10. Confidence Comes with Experience

- You do not need to feel fully prepared on day one.
- Independence and confidence grow over time.
- Your skills, problem-solving ability, and adaptability are strengths.
- You belong in college and have every opportunity to succeed.

Final Messages from Current College Students

- Do not wait to ask for help when you need it.
- Use the resources available to you.
- You are capable and deserving of a college experience.
- Start building independence now.
- You can do this.