



**Utah
Parent
Center**

**Special needs,
extraordinary potential**

College and University Programs For Students with Disabilities

Lifelong learning is new frontier for students with disabilities, especially those with moderate or significant disabilities, but the opportunities are there for all. There are several ways for students with disabilities to access college and university programs.

Non-Credit College Classes

Perhaps your student wants to take a class at your local college but is not quite ready to take classes for credit. Most college courses can be taken for no credit which means grades do not count and fees may be reduced. Universities and colleges often refer to this as “auditing” a class. This is a great option if the student isn’t working on a degree but wants to learn about a particular topic.

Tips to consider:

- Some students with disabilities take a course first for non-credit, and if they do well, they continue learning more by taking the course again for credit.
- To get started, contact your desired college and ask to speak to admissions or an academic advisor. Each college has different rules and requirements, so it never hurts to talk to a few colleges to find the right fit.
- Each college or university has a disability resource office or center that may assist you and your student as you look at options.

Resources:

An overview of auditing classes: https://learn.org/articles/How_Do_I_Audit_College_Classes.html

Certificate Courses

Certificates are the fastest growing college credential and a certificate can have a big wage payoff. Certificate programs take less time than a traditional degree—typically only months or a year.

Common areas where certificates can be earned include building trades, electrical, automotive, computer systems, cosmetology, culinary arts, dental assisting, healthcare, manufacturing, and transportation.

Some Utah colleges that have certificate programs include:

- The Utah Colleges of Applied Technology or UCATs. At a UCAT you can start and end at any time.
- Community colleges
- Some 2 or 4 year universities
- Private programs

Resources:

List of Utah Applied Technology Schools: <http://www.utech.edu/>

Salt Lake Community College School of Applied Technology: <http://www.slcc.edu/satts/index.aspx>

Disability Specific College Opportunities

There are now programs at colleges and universities that are designed for students with specific kinds of disabilities including intellectual disabilities and autism. Students take classes and participate in the college or university community. Inclusive postsecondary education means that all students with disabilities can take classes, access recreational and social opportunities and be included in the community college, four year college and university experience. More and more colleges and universities in Utah and across the country are realizing this vision, and creating customized programs that allow individuals with disabilities to have a college experience.

Here are a few important facts about these programs:

- They are for individuals who need more supports than the college or university disability resource centers offer.
- Each program has its own criteria for entrance into the program. Students who are interested need to check with the program to find out how the

program works and how to apply.

- The programs allow students learning opportunities leading to independence, employment and career development.
- A student may not have to graduate with a high school diploma to access these programs. The student may also access these programs after completing the post school program and aging out of school services at age 22.
- Generally, SAT or ACT scores are not required.

New programs are being added, so we recommend you call the Utah Parent Center up to date information on programs available in your area.

Resources:

List of current disability specific college opportunities in Utah: <http://www.utahparentcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/College-Programs-for-Students-with-Disabilities.pdf>

Think College has a list by state of inclusive college programs willing and able to include those with intellectual and other disabilities as well as a lot of other information: <https://thinkcollege.net/>

Regular College Classes With or Without Support

Many students with disabilities are capable of taking classes at a regular college or university. Some students may only need supports available to all students like the tutoring lab, while other students may need more support. Every Public University and College including Applied Technology Colleges is required to have a disability service office or center to help students with equal access and provide accommodations. Some private universities such as BYU and Westminster also have disability service offices. These offices vary in size and how they operate, and they may have different names. The centers can provide a variety of individualized accommodations and resources including help with applying for admission, classroom related accommodations, and campus event accommodations.

A student with any kind of a disability who is accepted into a college or university can contact the disability service offices. Tips to consider:

- Contact the office early when doing research about the school or when first making plans to attend. The requirements and documentation needed for obtaining support may vary. A student's junior year of high school is an ideal time to make contact.

- The disability services office does not seek out the student or automatically take care of the process. The student must make the contact and explain the accommodations that are needed. The student should have an understanding of what is needed and be able to explain it. The disability services staff can then help the student identify the instructors that will be helpful and work with him or her.
- Once students leave high school, they no longer have an IEP. The student must be able to do the course work with only accommodations. It is simply a matter of the college or university providing equal access.
- Accommodations should be at no cost to the student. Students are responsible for providing any personal services such as hearing aids, wheelchairs or modified transportation. Take questions about what qualifies as an accommodation to the disability services office. Some of this changes over time as regulations change.
- Disability services can provide assistance in many different ways Please see the Utah Parent Center website or call the Center for more in depth information on working with Disability Services offices at Universities and Colleges.

Resources:

Utah Parent Center list of Disability resource centers in Utah: <https://utahparentcenter.org/drcs/>

Utah Parent Center webinar discussing Disability Services in Higher Education: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43asVli8unk&feature=youtu.be>

Section 504 and Postsecondary Education: <http://www.utahparentcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/ADA-QA-Section-504-and-Postsecondary-Education.pdf>

Teach your young adult to request accommodations after high school: <http://www.utahparentcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Help-Your-Young-Adult-Learn-about-Accessing-Accommodations-after-High-School.pdf>

Online College Classes

Students with disabilities or special health care needs may want to explore the great variety of popular online classes and programs offered by colleges and universities. Tips to consider:

- Contact your local College or University to see what types of classes or degrees are available through online learning.
- Keep in mind your student's learning style when looking at online courses.

Online classes often require a student to be a somewhat independent learner.

- Online classes can be a wonderful option for those looking to work and take classes or those looking to get away from traditional classroom environments.

Resources:

Online Learning Keys to Success Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rnDyAc64JU4>

5 Fatal Mistakes to Avoid in Online Classes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3c5ZYy4qFU>