

QUESTIONS FOR TRANSITIONING STUDENTS

CRITICAL QUESTIONS THAT SHOULD BE ANSWERED *BEFORE* GRADUATION

1. Where is the student going?
 - a. Vocationally?
 - b. Further training or Education?
 - c. A specific job?
2. Where will the student live and what kind of supports, if any, will be needed?
3. What will be the major form of transportation the student will use?
4. How will the student maintain and increase his/her social life?
5. What leisure time activities will the student be involved in?
6. How will the student meet his/her medical needs?
7. What agencies will help? How will they be contacted and by whom?
8. What roles do parents play in transition process?

ADULT SERVICES

When you leave school, your school district no longer has a legal responsibility to provide services. However, there are many sources of assistance available for you as a graduate. When you start to look for an agency or service provider to assist you after you leave school, it is important to get some answers to key questions. Shop around and ask questions so that you can select the services, which will best accommodate your needs.

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN SELECTING ADULT SERVICES

1. What is the agency's philosophy? What do you think is important and what are their goals?
2. What types of disabilities do they serve and how do they determine eligibility?
3. Are services designated so that they meet your individual needs and interests?
4. What are the costs? Can financial assistance be obtained and if so, whom do you contact?
5. Are services provided for as long a period as necessary to ensure that you will succeed?
6. Will the agency provide you with names of other consumers/families to ask about their services?
7. Do the people in the agency treat you as an adult & value your thoughts about decisions that affect your life?
8. Is there a waiting list for the program? If so, how long?
9. Who is the contact person?

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN SELECTING A FACILITY

1. How many people live here?
2. What support and other services are provided other than room and board?
3. What kinds of skills/jobs do other people who live here?
4. What community based leisure activities are available?
5. What is the maximum length of stay?
6. What in-house leisure activities are available? How often are these available?
7. Is there a waiting list? How long is the waiting list?
8. What community resources are available in the immediate neighborhood?
9. What are the requirements to be considered?
10. What assurances are there to guarantee individuals' rights?
11. What is the monthly cost for service?
12. What is the policy for home visits?
13. Do you accept Medicare or Medicaid payments?
14. How can parents/guardians give input on facility or family & friend rights to your programs?
15. What is the staff/resident ratio per shift?
16. Do you provide transportation for personal and social needs, to and from a job, or therapeutic appointments at no additional cost?
17. What specific living arrangements are provided?
18. Can an individual who lives here actively search for or maintain employment?

19. What are each individual's responsibilities in upkeep of the home?
20. Can an individual who lives here have full responsibility for his/her financial affairs?

POST HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

College Considerations:

When considering college ask yourself the following questions:

- What are my goals?
- What are my career ambitions?
- Does the college offer a variety of majors if I change my mind?
- Do you need college for the career you are pursuing?
- What learning opportunities do I need?
- Will the college provide accommodations?
- Is there a separate admissions policy for students with disabilities?

Making a College Choice

The following considerations should be addressed depending on your special needs:

- Students should be able to discuss their disabilities and needed accommodations.
- Make sure psychological testing is up to date. (This is a requirement for many support services at the college level).
- Consider how their disability may affect their social interactions or judgments with peers or employers.
- Make contact with the local Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) before graduation.
- DRS offers a variety of services to eligible students such as vocational assessment, job placement, and financial assistance.
- Obtain all special testing records before high school graduation.
- Make sure student has good study skills. Consider special study skill classes at the high school, community college or tutoring.
- Consider how much support or help the student is receiving, the overall amount of support is significantly less at the college level.
- Consider a vocational assessment as a way to amplify present and future goals.
- Help students increase independent living skills. (Manage their own checking account, do their own laundry, some cooking, cleaning).
- Encourage part time jobs or volunteer positions to improve socialization skills as well as to give a better understanding of work situations and expectations and responsibility.
- Students should be aware of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which indicates the types of accommodations that must be provided at a postsecondary institution. This is different than the mandated services at the high school level.
- Get information on special exam arrangements for SAT and/or ACT. Options include extended time, readers or cassettes.
- **MAKE SURE IT IS THE STUDENT'S CHOICE TO ATTEND COLLEGE.** It will require high motivation and a good understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. It may be harder and take more time to manage college level work. No one will be checking for completed homework, attendance, or how he or she is doing.
- Try to visit colleges before making a definite choice. Look also at the communities in which they are located.

Questions to Ask on Your College Visit

Disability Services / Program

1. What is the philosophy of the program?
2. Provide an overview of the special programs and services offered.
3. What are the credentials and/or training of staff?
4. Does a full-time professional staff monitor the program?
5. Has the program been evaluated, and if so, by whom?
6. What are the criteria for a student to receive special services?
7. What are the criteria for a student to be accepted into the program for individuals with special needs?
8. Has the program ever had a 504 complaint filed by a student?
9. Are there any concerns for the program's future?
10. Who counsels students with learning disabilities during registration, orientation, and course selection?

11. What type of student has your program been most successful in assisting in obtaining a degree?
12. Is there priority registration?
13. How many special programs does the university offer?
14. How many students are accepted annually into the program for individuals with special needs?
15. If a student desires to resolve a grievance with a professor how would he/she go about the process?

About Disclosure and Accommodations

1. If a student had an IEP (or 504) all through high school, what documents from the individual do you require in order for the student to receive services and accommodations at your college? (E.g. IEP, 504 Plan, Medical records)
2. Do you require recent academic or psychological testing? How recent?
3. Does the testing need to be through IDEA or ADA or is that not an issue*?
4. How many hours are tutors available? Is there a limit to the number of hours per week per student for tutoring?
5. Is my advisor trained to work with students with disabilities?
6. Does the university/college prepare attendants to address the needs of individuals with physical challenges?
7. Will my advisor help me pre-register?
8. Can I take tests orally, by computer, have extended time, with a reader or any other aid needed such as a scribe, calculator, speech checker, tape recording and so on?
9. Are there distraction-free environments?
10. Are there additional costs for the support and services and accommodations I need?
11. What type of assistive technology is available?
12. Will my professors be notified of my disability and does the student or the program Director do the notification?
13. Is any other assistive technology or human professional help available that I have not already asked you about?
14. How much self-determination is required of the student when interacting with professors?
15. What supports can one receive once registered with the Office for Special Needs Services (OSNS)
16. What type of support is available for students with learning disabilities?
17. How does the school propose to help with the specific disability?
18. Which courses provide tutoring on a regular basis?
19. What kind of tutoring is available, and who does it--peers or staff?
20. Is tutoring automatic, or must the student request assistance?
21. How well do faculty members accept students with disabilities in their classes?
22. Who can parents contact if they have concerns during the academic year?
23. Must a release of information be signed for professors or advisors to communicate with parents?
24. Is there a disability liaison on campus that can help a student qualify for special accommodations, such as changes in?
seating special equipment for access to computer?

Are the following accommodations or services available?

1. Early registration
2. Orientation to using disability services
3. Assistance with strategic class scheduling to enhance academic success
4. Semester planning for accommodations and services
5. Memos to faculty about disability needs
6. Advocacy relating to disability access issues
7. Information and guidance on academic, social, career, and personal issues
8. Orientation to and use of the Assistive Technology Lab
9. Referral to other university departments and community agencies
10. Liaison with State and Federal rehabilitation agencies
11. Information about specific opportunities for students with disabilities
12. Personal care assistance
13. Personal study assistance
14. Preferential classroom seating
15. Permission to audio record lectures
16. Kurzweil reading machines

17. Books on CD or E-text
18. Access to Dragon Naturally Speaking voice recognition software
19. Access to large screen monitors and screen enlargement
20. Access to Inspiration-software that organizes or outlines by visual mapping to prepare to write papers or essays
21. Loaner equipment
22. CD Players for use with RFB+D audio books
23. Digital recorders
24. Note-taker service
25. Assistance with developing study strategies for specific courses
26. Assistance with organization and time management skills
27. Weekly meetings with professional staff to monitor progress
28. Coaching to deal with AD/HD symptoms
29. Tutor referral
30. Test Accommodations
31. Extended time
32. Low stimulus environment
33. Computer with Spell checker
34. Calculator
35. Screen reader
36. Alternative to scantron or computerized answer sheet

Academics

1. What academic elements are considered in the admissions process, for example: courses, grades, test scores, rank in class, interests, institutional needs, essays, recommendations, and interviews? How important are each of these factors?
2. Is the college/university accredited?
3. How many students return after their freshman year?
4. What percentage of students graduate in four years or less?
5. Which academic programs on campus are the most popular?
6. Does this college offer the major that interests the applicant?
7. How easy is it to change majors?
8. Will your AP/previous college credits transfer?
9. What are the largest classes you could have as a freshman or sophomore?
10. How many large classes can you expect? (Teacher to student ratio)
11. Who teaches the freshman classes? Teaching Assistants? Graduate Assistants?
12. Will you get enough contact with and/or attention from them Teaching or Graduate Assistants?
13. How easy is it to get the courses you want at the times that are convenient for you?
14. Are course substitutions allowed?
15. Is there an Honor Code? How does it operate?
16. Is there an Honors Program for talented students? How does an individual qualify?
17. What percentage of students successfully apply to graduate school??
18. May students with learning disabilities take a lighter load?
19. May students with learning disabilities take more time to graduate?
20. Are courses in study skills or writing skills offered?
21. What computer access will you have? Do you need to bring your own computer?
22. Is there faculty at the school who are highly regarded on a national or international level?
23. Does your particular program have a reputation for graduating students who go on to be successful in their field of study?
24. During a course of study, will there be opportunities for students to work in internship programs or get actual hands-on experience?
25. How many students drop out during their first semester/year?
26. Do all the faculty teaching entry-level courses have a good command of English?
27. What is the typical class size for freshman-level courses?
28. What is the graduation rate?

29. What is the school's level of academic rigor and competitiveness?
30. Is a narrowly prescribed set of courses required for graduation, or do students have relative freedom to build their own program?
31. How accessible are teachers for informal meetings?
32. Is the school on a semester, quarter, or some other system?

About Student Life and Social/Recreational Opportunities

1. What percentage of the students are male/female?
2. How diverse is the campus?
3. What percentage of students are commuters?
4. What portion of the student body lives on campus?
5. What portion of the student body remains on campus for the weekends?
6. What activities do students participate in during their free time both on campus (school sponsored) and in the community?
7. Does the campus have a Greek system of fraternities and sororities? If so, what percent of the student body participates in Greek life? Are parties open? How do students who elect not to participate in the Greek system fit in?
8. What are the most popular extracurricular activities?
9. What student organizations are active on campus?
10. What intramural sports are on campus?
11. Where is the central gathering place for students?
12. What transportation options are available to and from campus, both for trips just outside campus and for treks to transportation centers for trips home?
13. Can freshmen have cars on campus? What is the fee for having a car on campus?
14. Is it easy to get around campus? Can you walk to and from classes?
15. Are there parent or sibling events so your family can be a part of your college experience?
16. Is there a club that provides peer support in classes or for mobility around campus?
17. What is the college's religious orientation?

About Auxiliary Services

1. Where do students go if they have a medical emergency?
2. Are the dorms wired for Internet/e-mail services?
3. What is the quality of the library and research facilities?
4. What laundry facilities are available and how accessible are they?
5. What are the safety issues on campus? How are they addressed? Ask for a crime report. Federal law requires schools to provide safety information to students.
6. Are there on-going construction projects around campus? (This is a good thing as it signals good facilities.)
7. Is there a work-study program for students?
8. What kind of career-planning and job placement services is offered?
9. What kinds of internships are available?
10. What does the school do to help graduates find jobs?
11. Does the school provide free job placement services?
12. What percentage of graduates finds jobs within a few months after graduating?
13. What percentage of graduates find jobs in the field they studied for?

About Housing/Food Services

1. Is campus housing guaranteed for all four years?
2. What percent of students live on campus all four years?
3. How much does housing cost?
4. Is it easy to get on-campus housing?
5. What housing options exist? (Honors? Themed? Single sex? Co-ed? Greek?)
6. How hard is it to find off-campus housing?
7. What meal plans are available? Are freshmen required to purchase a specific type of meal plan?
8. Do the meal plans provide menus for special diets (vegetarian, kosher, ethnic, etc.)?

9. What hours may students' access food services?
10. Is transportation available from housing to classes?
11. Cost of transportation?

About Paying For It

1. What is the yearly cost of attendance, including books, tuition, fees, housing and meal plans? In other words, what is the all-inclusive cost?
2. Does your ability to pay the full cost of attendance have any impact on the college's decision to admit you?
3. Which financial aid forms are required? (The most common two are the FAFSA and the CSS PROFILE, but some schools have institutional or school-specific forms and some states have special forms.)
4. What percent of entering freshmen receive financial aid?
5. What was the average freshman financial aid package?
6. Is there a way financial aid is packaged, loans first for example?
7. If you are unhappy with your financial aid package, is it negotiable?
8. If you demonstrate need, will the school be able to prepare a financial aid package that will meet 100% of your need?
9. Will outside scholarships affect the amount of aid the school will offer you?
10. What types of payment plans exist for paying the Estimated Family Contribution?
11. How easy is it to find a job on campus? Are there work-study programs available?
12. What kind of refund can you get if you have to suddenly drop out or cancel some of your courses?

Additional Questions to Ask on a Tour

1. Is there a job board on campus or job service office to view part time jobs?
2. Is there a carpooling system available to get home during breaks?
3. Where do students workout/exercise on campus? Is there a pool available?
4. Can I get a student mentor to help me through my first year?
5. What are the library's hours?
6. What are area sites to see including camping, hiking, visiting, and site seeing?
7. What is the campus crime rate, and what on- and off-campus security is available?

Observations to Consider on a Tour

1. How happy do the students look?
2. Is the university like a community?
3. Do the students seem friendly?
4. Does the campus make you feel energized, serious, bored, fast paced, etc.?
5. Is there a lot of socialization among the students or lack of it?
6. Do the students look the same? Preppies, Grunge, Alternative, Mix?
7. "Can I see myself thriving in this environment?"

Questions for students

1. How well did the school meet your expectations?
2. What was the biggest surprise or most significant disappointment about campus life?
3. What do you like or dislike most about the school?
4. What would you most like to change?
5. How do they spend a typical weekend evening -- hitting the books or the party scene?
6. Ask a random student for directions and observe how they react to your question?

Factors To Consider When Choosing A Technical or Vocational School/Program...

1. What are the specific programs offered by this school? How will this school provide the specific support services or accommodations you need? Can you transfer from one program to another within the school? Can you transfer credits from this school to another?
2. Are you certain you want to go into this vocational field? How will your special needs affect your performance in this career?
3. Does the school provide a testing program to help you find out if you qualify?

4. What kinds of jobs do people obtain when they complete the program? Does the school provide placement services? What is their placement rate? Are these placements audited?
5. Is there a current demand for people in this field in your home area?
6. How can you judge if the school is good or not good?
 - a. Talk to people who have attended the school and to those who are currently enrolled. Seek out those who received support services.
 - b. Visit the school yourself. You can observe such things as composition and age of student body, equipment, and facilities.
 - c. Check with the Illinois State Board of Education-Vocational Schools Certification Division, a professional accrediting agency and with the Better Business Bureau.
 - d. Ask for the names of employers of former students, and check with these employers to see how they regard the school.
7. Be certain to read all papers carefully especially those involving costs. Some schools use contracts that obligate you to pay for the whole course even if you don't complete it. Schools with that type of contract may not have much to offer in their program.
8. Do not sign any contract or agreement without having thoroughly investigated the school and its credentials or without comparing the program with that of the community college as well as other vocational schools.

EMPLOYMENT

Types of Employment

1. Competitive Employment:

- a. Full-time or Part-time
- b. Above minimum wages
- c. A person with a disability has no more outside assistance beyond reasonable accommodations than a co-worker without a disability

2. Supported Employment:

- a. Full-time or Part-time
- b. Above minimum wages in an integrated setting for a person with a disability
- c. Person with a disability receives outside assistance and support, such as a job coach

3. Community Rehabilitation Programs/Affirmative Industries (previously known as Sheltered Employment):

- a. Structured work place with help to learn and practice work skills
- b. All workers have disabilities
- c. Three Types of Programs:
 1. Community Rehabilitation Programs: Subcontracted work, such as sorting, packaging & is paid on a piece-rate
 2. Work Activity Center - Training in pre-employment, social and vocational skills
 3. Adult Day Facility: Training in daily living skills, social skills, recreational & prevocational skills

4. Ways to Gain Work Experience

- a. Volunteer for community work or school project
- b. Work around home or for neighbors/friends
- c. Ask to watch others at work (job shadowing) or participate in the "Take Your Child To Work Day" program in the Spring
- d. Work a part-time job for experience and to build your resume and gain a good work record
- e. Work jobs during the school year within the community under supervision from a teacher or staff member

5. Reasonable Accommodations:

- a. Making the workplace physically accessible
- b. Purchasing assistive technology or modifying existing equipment

- c. Restructuring the job, modifying work schedules
- d. Making training materials and policies available in accessible format
- e. Providing qualified readers or interpreters

Questions Students Should Ask Their IEP Team Members or Support Network

The following are questions, recommended skills, and steps needed in planning for employment after high school.

Self Advocacy Skills

Find ways to explain your disability. (How does your disability affect you at home, on the job, etc.)

- Communicate your strengths related to job skills.
- Explain the best way for you to learn new things. Communicate areas you need to improve in related to job skills.
- Explain what accommodations or extra help you need to be successful
- Explain your legal rights (IDEA, ADA, Section 504).
- Be involved in your IEP meetings and share your interests & ideas about employment goals.
- Make sure transition plans are documented in your IEP.

Planning:

Complete a career interest inventory with your Counselor.

- Identify what types of career areas (Career Clusters) you are interested in.
- Identify jobs/careers and create a list that would assist in leading you throughout your career exploration and focus on one area.
- You may have more than one career area of interest, and that is okay.
- Find information about each interest areas to determine the best career pathway for you!
- Find out how to get the knowledge or information regarding the skills needed for the career
- Find out what knowledge & skills are needed for your interests.

Questions to Ask Community or Supported Employment Providers

1. What are the eligibility requirements for services and how do I apply for services?
2. Are there ways your agency and local schools can work together to ensure a smooth transition to employment?
3. If I need job accommodations or assistive technology, do you provide these services?
4. How many staff work in your agency?
5. How many clients does each staff member have?
6. How long does it generally take to assist someone in getting a job?
7. Does your agency provide support before 9:00 a.m. and after 5:00 p.m.? On weekends?
8. How does your agency determine what a good job is for clients?
9. Does your agency look at advancement in jobs beyond entry-level work?
10. How do you obtain input & maintain communication with the client and family members? Is there literature, brochures, etc.?

Questions to Ask Community Rehabilitation Providers

1. How do I apply to participate?
2. What are the skill requirements (e.g., physical strength, speed of work, & ability to perform the job)?
3. What types of jobs do you provide?
4. Are there a variety of work tasks or duties?
5. Can clients make choices about work tasks or duties? How many hours a day do clients work?
6. What are wages based on (e.g., hourly rate, productivity, quality)? What is an average weekly or bi-weekly pay check?
7. Are there any benefits (e.g., vacation, sick time, etc.)?
8. Do you provide transportation? If yes, what is the transportation (e.g., bus, van)? Are there costs for transportation?
9. Are clients helped to move to community-based supported employment? If yes, how?
10. Can I talk with some individuals with disabilities who have used your services? Do you have literature? Brochure? Website?

VOCATIONAL SERVICES

There are many types of vocational services available from community agencies after graduation from high school. Many may be gin

providing services prior to a student's actual graduation date to aid in the transition process. Most agencies encourage early contact (a year or two before graduation) so that parents and students are informed about what type of employment assistance is available after high school.

Parents and students should consider the following prior to speaking with agencies offering vocational services:

1. What kind of employment situation does your child desire and what do you want for your child?
 - a. How much flexibility is available for a work schedule?
 - b. What kind of work environment?
 - c. What skills can be offered to an employer?
 - d. What rate of pay?
 - e. What benefits will be needed (example: insurance)?
2. What kind of support is needed to find and keep a job?
 - a. Help getting a job?
 - b. Help learning a job?
 - c. Help keeping a job?
 - d. Transportation training?
3. What kind of transportation can you provide for your child or what are the public options?
 - a. Self transport?
 - b. Ride from family/friend?
 - c. Taxi?
 - d. Public Transportation?
 - e. Other?
4. How are the services paid for?
5. How long do your services last?
6. What is the process to apply for services? Is there a waiting list?
7. How long can we expect to wait before services are provided?
8. What kind of Transportation Services are available? How are transportation services paid for?
9. Do you provide services other than employment (Ex: social groups, work groups, recreation, case manager)?
10. How are parents involved?
11. What happens if a job change is necessary?

Adapted from:

http://www.d214.org/assets/1/Documents/Transition%20Resource%20Directory%20-%20Update%209_2013.pdf