

# TRANSITION CHECKLIST

(Provided by RSCC and Adapted from State of Virginia Dept. of Education)

## YOUR “TO DO” LIST

### PRE-HIGH SCHOOL TASKS

- Take challenging courses in English, math, science, history, geography, foreign language, and fine/practical art.
- Develop study skills and strategies that you know work for you.
- Investigate which high school classes will best prepare you for the colleges you are interested in attending.
- Investigate your options among schools and programs of study and choose ones that will promote your academic and career interests.
- Investigate how to save money for college and options for financial aid.
- Your IEP should include the course of study needed for you to transition smoothly to higher education.
- Improve basic skills deficits in reading, math, written and oral language.
- Plan to graduate with a standard high school diploma and plan your course of study accordingly.
- Plan to take and pass any state required tests for graduation.
- Optional: Begin creating a transition portfolio of important documents and work samples that may be helpful in college planning.

### FRESHMAN YEAR TASKS

- Learn the specific nature of your disability and learn how to explain it so others will understand your needs.
- Learn how to participate actively in your IEP, especially in your transition plan, which is your plan to help you achieve your goal of attending college.
- Learn how to advocate for yourself in developing your transition plan with your IEP team.
- Prepare academically by carefully planning your academic course of study.
- Work with your guidance counselor to be sure you will have the standard and verified credits you need to obtain the desired diploma.
- Prepare for and pass all end-of-course tests.
- Develop academic independence by learning how to use the academic adjustments, auxiliary aids and services, and learning strategies that you will need in college. In other words, learn how to learn.
- Ask your guidance counselor to teach you about the college resources available to your school and in your area.
- Explore career options with your counselor and visit your school’s career center if available.
- Become involved in school and community-based activities that interest you and that might lead to career experience.
- Talk to people in various professions and find out what they like and dislike.
- Continue improving basic skills in math, writing, & reading.

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## **FRESHMAN YEAR TASKS (continued)**

- Learn strategies to help you access the same course work as your peers.
- Continue adding to your transition portfolio.

## **SOPHOMORE YEAR TASKS**

- Continue to actively participate in your IEP Transition planning with your IEP team.
- Continue taking courses to prepare you for college.
- Continue to improve basic skills deficits in writing, math, and reading.
- Continue adding to your transition portfolio.
- Add to your understanding and use of learning strategies to help you access the same coursework as your peers.
- Participate in extracurricular activities, hobbies, and work experiences.
- Identify interests, aptitudes, values, and opportunities related to occupations in which you are interested.
- Meet with your guidance counselor to discuss colleges and their requirements.
- Register and take the PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test) in the fall and consider your need (if any) for testing adjustments or auxiliary aids.
- Speak with college representatives that visit your high school and at college fairs.
- Visit college campuses and talk to other college students.
- Continue saving and investigating college funding sources.

## **JUNIOR YEAR TASKS**

- Continue participating in your Transition IEP planning with your IEP team.
- Continue involvement in school and community activities.
- Focus on matching your interests and needs to appropriate college choices.
- Look for college campuses that have majors in which you might be interested and the kind of campus community in which you would like to live.
- Identify the appropriate accommodations or adjustments and auxiliary aids and services you might need (if any) while you are in college.
- Keep a current list of any academic adjustments, accommodations, or assistive technology you have used during high school. (These may or may not be available in college).
- Consider taking a course to help prepare for the ACT Assessment or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).
- Take the ACT or SAT in the spring. Consider taking them more than once. Try to score above 18 on math, reading, and writing subtests but it is ok if you do not.
- Establish a possible career goal. You can always change your mind.
- Determine a college major consistent with that goal.
- Learn time management, assertiveness, stress management, test taking, and study skills.
- Advocate for yourself! Not everyone will understand your disability or be sensitive about your needs.
- Gather information about college disability services.

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## **JUNIOR YEAR TASKS (continued)**

- Continue speaking with college representatives.
- Visit campuses and take tours, visit college websites and read about the disability services available.
- Consider people to ask for recommendations (teachers, counselors, employers, coaches etc.).
- Investigate the availability of financial aid from Federal, State, local, and private sources.
- Investigate the availability of various scholarships provided by organizations, corporations, professional associations, religious organizations, and credit unions.
- Continue to save money for college and make funding plans.
- Contact your state VR or Vocational Rehabilitation Service to determine your eligibility for services.
- Make sure that the documentation of your disability and all testing is current. Colleges will want current testing, usually less than three years old when you enroll.

## **SENIOR YEAR TASKS (Congratulations you are getting close!)**

- Meet with your guidance counselor early in the year to discuss your plans.
- Continue to develop your advocacy skills and polish your study skills.
- Plan to visit campuses early in the year.
- Learn how to be interviewed.
- Role-play college interviews with counselors, family, and teachers.

- Finalize your transition portfolio. It should contain the following:
  - copies of psychological testing and educational evaluations
  - your transcripts
  - ACT or SAT scores
  - your current or latest IEP
  - Medical records (as appropriate)
  - Writing samples or other work samples
  - letters of recommendation from teachers, employers, etc.
  - current list of academic accommodations, aids, or service
- Contact colleges and request official visits.
- Be prepared to talk about your experiences.
- Take any necessary placement tests for college programs.
- Get information from College Admissions about admissions procedures and financial aid opportunities.
- Take your transition portfolio with you to share with Disability Services. They may want to make copies of your psychological and educational testing etc.
- Evaluate the disability services staff and ask questions.
- If possible, talk with any other college students you know who receive disability services.
- Compare the various colleges and their environments.
- Apply to two or more of your preferred colleges
- Prepare all applications carefully and neatly paying close attention to all deadlines and instructions. Be accurate.
- Attend any new student orientations or activities.
- ARE YOU READY? If you've followed this, you should be!

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## **NOW, ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS!**

- Can I clearly explain my talents and abilities?
- Can I describe my disability so that others understand my strengths and abilities?
- Do I have copies of the evaluations that document my disability?
- Do I understand and can I discuss the content of the reports?
- Can I describe my history and explain my diagnosis?
- Can I explain how I learn and how I compensate in the areas where I have difficulty?
- Can I describe the types of academic adjustments and auxiliary aids used in my previous academic environment?
- Do I know where, how, and when to apply for disability services at college?
- Am I prepared for the academic and social challenges of college?
- Do I take regular college prep courses, modified courses or individualized courses?
- Do I do the same assignments, participate in the same exercises, participate in the same opportunities and learn the same material as my peers?
- Am I ready to live away from home, manage my own finances, take care of my health and manage my time?
- Do I seek assistance for academic and other problems when needed?
- Do I know how to advocate for myself?

- Do I accept that it might take longer to graduate than my friends?
- Do I understand that college is a challenge and that dealing with temporary frustrations is part of being an ordinary college student?
- Do I know my long-term goals?
- Am I beginning this life-changing process with career goals in mind?
- Do I have some idea about how I want to earn a living?

## **HOW COLLEGE DIFFERS FROM HIGH SCHOOL**

### **Changes in Academic Environment**

- Less structure
- Fewer class meetings
- Grades based on fewer scores (typically)
- More writing assignments, intense reading
- More long-range assignments distributed at the beginning of the semester with expectation of independent completion
- Accommodation rather than traditional modification
- More independent work outside of class
- Note taking and reading skills necessary
- Less time to ask questions
- Less personal attention
- Faster pace with increased work load
- Graded on mastery, not effort or improvement

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## **HOW COLLEGE DIFFERS FROM HIGH SCHOOL (continued)**

- A campus with several buildings to navigate
- More stressful and intense learning environment
- Increased expectation of technology proficiency
- No IEPs

### **Changes in Teacher Student Relationship**

- Instructors, not students set the class pace
- You seek assistance by setting up an appointment during his/her office hours
- Instructors may have less contact with you
- Teacher-to-student ratio increases (typically 1:20 to 1:500)
- Motivation comes from your interests and drive to success, not from praise and external rewards

### **Changes in Student Expectations**

- You need to monitor your own progress
- You have more free time and must learn to manage it wisely
- You must be able to advocate for yourself and your needs
- You will work independently to complete all assignments

## **UNDERSTAND POST-SECONDARY OPTIONS**

### **Career & Technical Education Centers**

- Prepare you for specific occupations and/or trades
- Integrate academic curriculum with real life applications
- Apprenticeships/internships

## **UNDERSTAND POST-SECONDARY OPTIONS (continued)**

### **Two-Year Community Colleges or Junior Colleges**

- Wide variety of two-year degrees
- Usually much smaller than four year colleges
- Allow students to adjust to college life easily
- Prepares students for the world of work
- Tuition is often reasonable
- Students are generally able to live at home
- Most have some course transfer agreements or articulation agreements with four year colleges

### **Four Year Colleges or Universities**

- Offer a multitude of degrees
- Offer many special services
- Class size is usually larger
- Most students live in dorms or apartments

### **Questions for college representatives**

- What degree programs are available?
- What core courses are required?
- For what programs is the college known?
- How intense is the academic pressure?
- What activities or organizations exist?
- What kind of events do they sponsor?
- Is the campus residential or commuting?
- What are the admissions, credit, course requirements?