



Post-Secondary Education for Students with an Intellectual Disability (ID)

Overview

For students with intellectual/ developmental disabilities who, like their peers, dream of going to college, there are increasing numbers of programs that offer inclusive experiences so that students can earn a certificate while developing skills in academics, social settings, employment, and independence to prepare them for adult life.

These programs individualize supports in order to meet students' needs, while fostering growth and independence within a university setting. Access to peer mentors, social activities, internships, courses, and faculty ensure a rich and rewarding college experience.

Getting Started

Begin exploring possibilities while your student is still in high school, as part of the Secondary Transition planning process (which generally starts at age 14).

For more information, please also see [Achieva's Secondary Transition Fact Sheet](#). Make sure that the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team discusses skills that your student will need in order to be successful after they receive their diploma and puts into place goals that will help prepare the student. For example, if a student needs to work on advocating for themselves or if the student needs to improve independence with task completion, then the IEP needs to have a goal to work on these skills.

Some students will be ready to accept their diploma after 12th grade and move into post-secondary programs. For others who have not completed their IEP goals, the school district can hold the diploma so that the student continues to receive IEP services in a transition program; this may continue through the school year in which they turn 21. During this time the student can continue to work on goals to prepare for college.

Ensure the IEP team includes:

A representative from the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), who can look into OVR funding of the program.

The student's Supports Coordinator (if the student is eligible for services through the PA Office of Developmental Programs for Intellectual Disability and/or Autism services).

If the student is not registered for Intellectual Disability/Autism services through the Office of Developmental Programs, contact your county Office of Disability Services or call 844.332.2121 (the myODP Technical Support Line).

The OVR Counselor and Supports Coordinator will help to facilitate the student's access to funding for Post-Secondary Educational programming, once they receive their high school diploma.

Programs

During the final years of school district special education services, families can tour inclusive college programs.

Resources

[DREAM Partnership - Dream. Learn. Live. Earn.](#) – Options and resources for colleges in Pennsylvania

[Think College](#) – Information and programs across the country

[Consortium Members](#) – Pennsylvania Inclusive Higher Education Consortium (PIHEC)

[Rock Life Program](#) – Slippery Rock University

[Integrated Studies](#) – Millersville University Program

[Education | Institute on Disabilities at Temple University](#) – Temple University Program

[Career Studies Program](#) – Penn State Harrisburg Program

[Funding for College](#)

[How to Pay for College for High School Grads](#)

[The Pittsburgh Promise](#) (for alumni of public schools in the City of Pittsburgh)

[DREAM Partnership Scholarship Program](#)

[Federal Student Aid: Home](#)

[Transition from School to Work OVR Programs and Services; Assistive Technology](#) – Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

[Paying for College for Someone with an Intellectual Disability Fact Sheet](#)

[Strategies for Higher Education Success, PA Community of Practice, 2016-17](#)

[Nietzel, Michael. Forbes.com. "More Colleges Opening Doors to People with Developmental Disabilities." Feb. 11, 2019 - Article](#)

Achieva disability advocates provide information, technical assistance and individual advocacy on issues that impact children and adults with intellectual disabilities and autism and their families. We also work with state and federal legislators and policy makers to ensure that the human, civil and legal rights of people with disabilities are protected and that they are afforded services to assist them to be included in their communities. We will provide guidance, information and technical assistance to the best of our ability. Achieva advocates are available to answer questions specific to your situation. Please contact us at 412.995.5000 x486, 888.272.7229 x 486 (Toll-Free) or log onto www.achieva.info/contact-advocacy.