

Youth Leadership

Disability Disclosure in Postsecondary Education

Accommodations at the postsecondary level (after you exit high school) are provided only when a student discloses his or her disability and requests reasonable accommodations.

It is not essential to divulge specific personal information about your disability. What is most important and helpful is to provide information about:

- how your disability affects your capacity to learn and study effectively
- the environment, supports, and services you'll need in order to access, participate in, and excel in your area of study

YOU decide what and how much information is necessary to reveal in order to obtain the needed accommodations. Keep the disclosure conversation focused on your abilities, not on your disability.

Who do I talk to?

Most universities, community colleges and vocational schools have a disability office or coordinator who provides support services to students with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act both provide protections for students with disabilities at the postsecondary level.

When do I disclose?

If you expect to have accommodations in place at the beginning of the semester, then you will need to talk to the Disability Office either prior to enrollment, or at the time of enrollment. If you decide to wait until classes begin, you may not immediately receive the needed accommodations. **YOU** decide when and if you want to disclose.

Adapted from National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth. (2005).
The 411 on Disability Disclosure Workbook.
Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership.

PARTNERS RESOURCE NETWORK
PRNTexas.org
1.800.866.4726



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