# Higher Education Accommodations

## Definitions

Accommodations are reasonable academic adjustments or aids that provide students with disabilities equal access to programs and services. Accommodations help ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to the learning environment and learning activities. Some common examples of accommodations used by high school students with visual impairment include access to braille or audio versions of text, access to a note taker, or extended time to complete assignments. Not all students will use these accommodations. There are many other accommodations available to students, and these should be individualized for every learner depending on their unique needs.

## Guiding Questions

* Have you ever asked for help in school?
* What supports help you most in the classroom or with testing?
* What is your preferred format for your class materials?
* What supports help you most with homework?
* Is there any assistive technology that has really helped you? How did you access this technology?
* How do you think accommodations may be different in college?
* What is your understanding of the role of Disability Services Offices?
* What is your understanding about accommodations in higher education?
* Have you ever had to ask for an accommodation? How did it go?
* Can you think of a time where you did not feel heard or a situation where your approved accommodations were not provided? What did you do?

## Resources

Just like in high school, students with disabilities can ask for accommodations at their higher education institution to ensure equal access to content. However, unlike high school, if a student needs an accommodation in college, it is the student’s responsibility to request the support they need. This is different from high school, where the student’s family or teachers may have initiated a request for support.

To learn more about this topic, we encourage you to take EMPOWER VI’s short course called: Introduction to Accommodations in Higher Education- for Students. You can access this course by visiting: [EMPOWER VI - Student Course Library](https://www.empowervi.org/student-courses). Through this course you will:

* Learn about higher education accommodations and how these differ from high school accommodations.
* Explore the laws that mandate accommodations in higher education.
* Understand the three steps in the higher education accommodation request process.

[Questions to ask the DSO.docx](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets-global.website-files.com%2F64ee5f3d21feaf5ba040092b%2F6621a2f659b67d3ffc220360_Questions%2520to%2520ask%2520DSO%2520.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) is a guide for blind/low vision students on what questions to ask Higher Education Disability Services Offices.

[How to explain disability accommodations to professors – Perkins School for the Blind](https://www.perkins.org/resource/college-preparedness-series-3-how-explain-accommodations/) reviews how to explain disability accommodations to professors over email and in-person conversations and how to ensure that your disability accommodations will be followed.

[10 questions to ask when choosing a college – Perkins School for the Blind](https://www.perkins.org/resource/10-questions-ask-when-choosing-college/) Visiting colleges? Here are some important questions to ask!

[Accommodation Discussion in College (Video Series)](https://www.empowervi.org/resources/accommodation-discussion-in-college-video-series) This EMPOWER VI video scenario focuses on the topic of an accommodation discussion with a Disability Services Office (DSO) in college. The EMPOWER VI Video Series features short video scenarios to model discussions that will likely occur during transition or in adulthood.