



Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

Things to think about when choosing a university:

Colleges and universities vary far more widely in curriculum and culture than high schools do and understanding those components of your perspective choices is important. In addition to thinking about what accommodations your student might need, it is important to look at everything from academics and culture to financial aid and careers before your student decides where to commit.

Seattle University (SU) is a Jesuit University, with a strong integrated Core curriculum that emphasizes rigorous philosophical analysis and transformative growth of the whole person. The Core is designed to help students understand where knowledge comes from across areas of study, assisting them to become strong interdisciplinary thinkers who are able to understand, evaluate, and build on the insights of scholars, including scholars outside of their field of study.

All students at SU learn by participating in class and are expected to exhibit strong academic skills (writing, researching, critical thinking, and problem solving) and practicing integrated analysis of information. Each class requires that students actively engage in dialogues produced by broad questions and extrapolate answers from classroom participation. This can be a change from the secondary school experience.

At SU, we are educating the whole person to effect change in the world that has a lasting impact. We call students to do more than find answers. Students are expected to exhibit curiosity, connect with their communities, and take action to help create a more just, compassionate and sustainable world.

Will my student be granted the same accommodations in college as they received in high school?

If your student received accommodations in high school, an important part of the initial meeting with Disability Services staff will be a discussion about those accommodations, whether they were effective, and if the student is requesting similar accommodations in the college setting. While many college-based disability accommodations may transfer, some high school accommodations may not be available or appropriate in a college setting.

For example, if a student received extended testing time in high school, and their disability-related needs support the continuation of this accommodation in college, it is likely that a similar accommodation can be arranged here at SU. The process they will go through to access this accommodation may be a little different, but they may still receive extended time for exams. Alternatively, a student may have received flexible assignment due dates in high school. Depending on the structure of the student's college-based academic program and each specific course and the time in the quarter, it may or may not be possible for them to receive a similar accommodation for college courses. Disability Services will work with the student to develop a

plan for appropriate and reasonable accommodations that will provide access to their academic program and other aspects of campus life.

The laws that govern disability accommodations in the K-12 setting are different from those that govern college-based disability accommodations. You can read more about these differences by going to <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html>

What is considered acceptable documentation of a disability?

<https://www.seattleu.edu/disability-services/new-students/requirements-for-documentation-of-disabilities>

How does the University responsibility for working with students with disabilities in higher education differ from the responsibility of high schools?

The responsibilities towards students with disabilities in higher education institutions are very different from those of high schools. High schools are required under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) to identify the educational needs of students with a disability and provide a free and appropriate education. It is very prescriptive in nature and allows for the modification of curriculum to meet student educational level and ability. Things are done to and for the student. Post-secondary is significantly different.

Higher education institutions are required to provide appropriate academic accommodations to ensure that a student with a disability is not discriminated against and has access. The university is responsible for ensuring equal opportunity, the student is responsible for their achievement. The responsibility for action shifts from the school to the student. The student is responsible for disclosing his or her disability to the institution and making specific accommodation requests each quarter. Also, fundamental elements of programs or course curriculum are not modified.

What does my student need to do to get started?

<https://www.seattleu.edu/disability-services/new-students/>

How can I help my student if they are having difficulty in school or using their accommodations?

Encourage your student to contact the Disability Services immediately to discuss any issues they may be experiencing related to accommodations. DS staff will assist students as needed to ensure that the accommodations are implemented properly. DS also helps student's problem-solve, empowering them to resolve issues independently when appropriate.

If your student is struggling with subject matter, encourage them to utilize their instructor's office hours, ask questions in and out of class, and communicate with their instructors on a

regular basis. Instructors at SU are more than content area experts, they are dedicated educators who value the connection with students and want to see them succeed.

We also encourage students to communicate regularly with their academic advisor about any academic concerns they may have, or their Resident Advisor if there are residential concerns on campus. Academic advisors, Area Coordinators, and Resident Advisors are just a few of the many excellent resources available to SU students, and they can best support your student when there is regular communication.

<https://www.seattleu.edu/disability-services/campus--community-resources/campus-resources/>

My Student has decided to try college without accommodations. How can I convince them to contact Disability Services? Can I apply for accommodations for my student?

It is common for students with disabilities to try college without disability accommodations. They may have developed additional management skills as they go through high school and are asserting their growing independence. This desire is commendable and speaks to your student's transition into adulthood. Students with disabilities are not required to disclose to SU that they have a disability unless they are requesting accommodations. A significant number of SU students have disabilities but do not require accommodations. Your student may fall into this category. Students can self-identify to Disability Services and request accommodations at any point in their college career, including their final quarter.

We strongly encourage students who may need accommodations to contact our office as early as possible so that they can be prepared in case they need them. However, we are happy to start working with them at any time. It is important to note that accommodations are not retroactive.

In order to receive services from our office, students must self-identify as having a disability and request their own accommodations. Under FERPA, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, our office may not set up accommodations for a student based on a family member's request, regardless of their student's disability status. However, if you would like to support your student in making this request, we encourage you to assist them in drafting an email to us or joining them on a phone call with our staff.

What is my role in my student's education now that they are in college?

In the college setting, your role as a parent or guardian changes from advocating for the student to mentoring and supporting your student as they advocate for themselves. This is sometimes the most challenging aspect of the college transition for parents of students with disabilities. Family members are often accustomed to arranging supports and accommodations and tracking daily activities and assignments. Once the college-age adult child is at college,

parents may suddenly feel out of the loop and powerless to provide support. Below are a few key strategies to assist you and your student as you make this transition.

While still in high school:

- Progressively reduce your level of hands-on support so that your student gets used to handling their own schedule and keeping track of workload and assignments.
- Make sure that your student attends and participates in any meetings at school where their disability and accommodations are discussed.
- Help your student become comfortable talking with teachers about learning and accommodation needs independently. This might mean practicing discussions with your student first as they gain confidence.
- Progressively increase your student's level of responsibility when it comes to the developmental tasks of adulthood; setting-up appointments (all kinds), making decisions about accommodations, and disability-specific services.
- Sit down with your student and make a list of the tasks they will have to do for themselves as an adult and gradually start shifting the responsibility for those tasks to your student. Start with the small doable ones, practice if necessary. Do it now.

If your student is already in college:

- Gently coach your student as they follow the process for accessing accommodations. <https://www.seattleu.edu/disability-services/new-students/>
- Urge your student to take advantage of the many resources for academic and other supports at SU. <https://www.seattleu.edu/disability-services/campus--community-resources/campus-resources/>
- Allow your student to try different approaches to challenges other than those you might recommend. If the outcome is not exactly as your student had hoped for, help them reflect on what happened and brainstorm what other options might be available that would lead to a different outcome next time. For example, if your student received extra time on exams in high school but opts not to request this in college classes, explore whether they think the college exam grades are accurately representing their understanding of the material – or if exam performance might be better with the “extra time” accommodation in place.
- DS staff are available to answer general questions about process and assist you and your student at any point.