

Dear Student:

As you enter the postsecondary education setting, it is important to note that your legal rights and responsibilities as a student with a disability change. Postsecondary institutions have significantly different responsibilities from those of secondary, high school, programs.

Postsecondary institutions must prohibit discrimination and provide access based on documentation that a disability severely limits an individual's functioning in a major life area. Even though you are considered a person with a disability in high school, you may not be considered a person with a disability in college. Postsecondary institutions are not required to alter the nature of courses and programs. Students must meet the academic and technical standards of their courses and programs. This is unlike secondary institutions that provide an individualized education plan to meet the needs of the student with a disability. In addition, in the postsecondary setting students are expected to advocate for themselves; in the secondary setting, parents and school staff advocate for them.

The philosophy of the Center for Accommodative Services (CAS) is based on independence and self-determination. Learning Specialists are not professional tutors, personal attendants, or resource teachers. Learning Specialists work with each student to determine reasonable accommodations to ensure access to courses and programs. Reasonable accommodations are agreed upon in an interactive process between student and professor (under guidance of the Learning Specialist). Paul Smith's College students must follow the policies and procedures of the Center for Accommodative Services to acquire accommodations for a disability.

At Paul Smith's College, students with a disability are postsecondary students with the same rights and responsibilities as their peers. Postsecondary students are expected to:

- participate independently
- strive to be self-determining
- maintain integrity
- accept their own responsibilities to attend class
- complete assignments
- prepare for exams
- request services
- use accommodations
- keep appointments
- respond to correspondence

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) govern postsecondary institutions; the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) governs secondary institutions. The following chart outlines the differences between responsibilities of postsecondary and secondary institutions under these laws.

Postsecondary	Secondary
Not required to alter the program or lower standards	May be required to provide modifications to the curriculum and lowering of standards
The student must notify the institution of needed accommodations	Must identify the student in need of special education
Impairment substantially limits an individual's functioning in a major life activity compared to average person	Impairment adversely affects educational performance and is often linked to student's potential
Student's responsibility to provide documentation	School district responsible to evaluate
The institution decides who is qualified	A team of qualified professionals including the parent make eligibility determination
Must provide reasonable accommodations to enable equal access	Must provide an individualized education plan to meet the needs of the student
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student must meet academic and technical standards • No outcome expectations • No benefit expectations • No discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services to enable student to meet standards • Calculated to enable student to obtain some benefit • Least restrictive environment
Student must request specific accommodations supported by documentation	School is responsible for ensuring IEP implementation and appropriateness
Students are expected to advocate for themselves	Parents and school staff advocate for their students
Student must follow conduct code	Interventions must be considered when behavior interferes with learning

We can teach you strategies to become a successful student. We are as devoted to your success as you are. More information is available at the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights: Please read "Frequently Asked Questions" at <http://www.ed.gov/print/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html> and "A Letter to Parents" at <http://www.ed.gov/print/about/offices/list/ocr/letter/parents.html>. We want to help you make the best transition possible to your new educational setting.

Sincerely yours,

Roxanne McCarty, M.S.Ed., M.A.
Learning Specialist