

# ► TYPES OF ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE ◀

Colleges provide many kinds of assistance to help students with LD or ADD succeed. The descriptions in the College Profile Listings section of this guide identify the assistance provided by each college. In this section of the guide, the kinds of assistance provided to students with LD are explained in detail. Most colleges that offer assistance to students with LD also offer the assistance to students with ADD.

## WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COLLEGES WITH COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMS AND THOSE WITH SPECIAL SERVICES?

This guide distinguishes between colleges that offer comprehensive programs designed specifically for students with LD/ADD and colleges that make a number of special services available but do not offer comprehensive programs.

The typical components of a comprehensive program are diagnostic testing, tutoring, remediation, advisement, special courses, counseling, and a range of auxiliary aids and services. The keys to such a program are that its components are provided in a manner specifically designed to meet the needs of students with LD/ADD and that it is staffed with personnel with appropriate training and experience.

Colleges without comprehensive programs may offer many of the same services as those offered by comprehensive programs, but there are two important differences. First, these colleges generally do not offer quite as wide a range of services as do programs. Second, colleges offering services do not typically have staff members who have significant training or experience working specifically with college students with LD/ADD. Nevertheless, these services can often be very helpful and may be all the assistance some students with LD/ADD need to succeed in college.

Generally, students whose learning disabilities were diagnosed early and who spent much of their school career in special programs or classes might need a comprehensive program, while students who were successful in regular high school classes with some outside assistance might find special services sufficient. Students and their families should examine colleges' offerings and then compare them to the student's needs to find the best fit.

### Diagnostic Testing

Diagnostic tests are given to assess cognitive abilities, academic skills, language abilities, perceptual-motor skills, social development, emotional development, and study

habits. Information from diagnostic tests is used to prescribe services for the student. This information is used to develop an educational plan, which specifies the assistance that will be provided to a student with LD/ADD.

### Remediation

College students with LD/ADD often need remediation to improve their basic skills and assistance in developing compensatory strategies that will minimize the impact of their LD/ADD upon their achievement in college courses. A student's need for remediation depends upon two factors: the severity of the academic and learning deficits and the level of proficiency in the academic skills needed for success in the student's program of studies. Remediation is typically provided in individual or small-group sessions by trained professionals.

### Tutoring

Tutoring is designed to help students understand and master the content of their courses. The major objective is to help students pass their courses. Because they see immediate results, students frequently report that tutoring is the most helpful form of assistance. It is most often provided in English, mathematics, physical sciences, and social sciences. It is usually given individually or in small groups by professional tutors who are experts in their subject areas. Sometimes students without LD/ADD who excel in a subject are used as peer tutors.

### Special Courses

Frequently, special courses are offered for students with LD/ADD. These courses provide the prerequisite skills and social and emotional awareness necessary to succeed in college. They may be credit or noncredit courses and may or may not count in a student's overall grade point average. Examples of special courses are:

- Developmental reading
- Fundamentals of oral communication
- Study skills
- Note-taking techniques
- Writing research papers
- Memory improvement
- College survival
- Social relationships
- Career planning
- Learning strategies
- Computer skills
- Self-advocacy
- Stress management
- Test taking
- Time management

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### Auxiliary Aids and Services

Colleges provide a number of auxiliary aids and services to help students with LD/ADD succeed.

#### Tape Recorders and Taped Textbooks

Students with LD/ADD often have difficulty taking notes from class lectures. The tape recorder becomes a valuable auxiliary aid for them. They are able to tape-record a lecture at the same time they take notes. Later, they can replay the tapes to check their notes for completeness and accuracy. Variable speech-control tape recorders allow students to play back taped material at slower or faster rates than the rate at which the material was originally recorded. The use of a tape recorder reduces the heavy demands upon their auditory memory, language processing, and writing skills. Because of the value of tape recorders, professors are encouraged to allow students with LD/ADD to use them in their classes.

Taped textbooks are used by students with LD/ADD who have difficulty reading college-level materials. College personnel help such students obtain taped textbooks from Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic. The role of staff members is primarily a facilitative one. They familiarize students with the services of Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic and help them complete the necessary application forms. They also help students determine the textbooks needed for future courses to enable the students to submit applications for taped textbooks in sufficient time to receive books prior to the beginning of a new term.

#### Technological Aids

The expansion of technological aids has produced many benefits for students with LD/ADD. Technological aids that are frequently available to these students are:

- Scientific calculators
- Personal computers
- Personal spelling devices
- Scan and read programs
- Screen-enlarging programs
- Screen readers
- Speech recognition programs
- Personal organizers

#### Note-takers

Typically, note-takers are students without LD/ADD who are in the same classes as the students who do have LD/ADD. They have been identified as good note-takers who are reliable, are competent in the subject, and have legible handwriting. A duplicate set of notes is given to the student with LD/ADD. Usually the note-taker does not know the identity of the student receiving the notes.

#### Alternative Examination Arrangements

Alternative arrangements are provided for students who have difficulty taking examinations in the usual manner. Often, students with LD/ADD have difficulty completing a test within a specified time limit, accurately reading test questions, and writing answers. Arrangements are made

with professors to allow students to take course examinations with one of a number of alternatives:

- Extended time limits
- Questions dictated onto an audiotape
- Questions read by a proctor
- Responses dictated to a proctor
- Responses dictated onto audiotapes
- Responses typed on a word processor rather than handwritten
- Questions presented in a different format, e.g., multiple choice in place of essay
- Take-home examinations or projects in place of written examinations

#### Advocacy

College staff members often serve as advocates for students with LD/ADD. They work with professors to ensure that students are given every reasonable opportunity to succeed in their courses. The goal is to have students become their own advocates. Ideally, the activities and roles performed by staff members are phased out as students develop increasing independence. Some of the advocacy activities performed include:

- Requesting lists of required textbooks for taping
- Obtaining permission for students with LD/ADD to tape-record lectures
- Obtaining permission to use a non-class member as a note-taker
- Requesting opportunities for students to take examinations in alternative ways
- Arranging for incomplete grades when students need more time to complete a course
- Arranging for withdrawal from a course without a grade penalty when extra time is not the answer
- Helping professors understand the needs of students with LD/ADD

#### ADD Services

In addition to the services described for students with LD/ADD, some services are uniquely designed for students with ADD. Students with ADD may be provided with distraction-free study or examination environments, medication management, a personal coach or mentor, or a support group.

#### Advisement

College students with LD/ADD need careful and ongoing academic advisement for these reasons:

- They frequently enroll in courses that are too difficult for them
- They tend to enroll in the wrong courses
- They often misperceive the progress they are making in courses
- They rarely seek out services they need to overcome academic and social difficulties
- They frequently are overwhelmed by the registration process

- They tend to accept poor advice from well-intentioned peers

It is important for advisers to ensure that such students do not end up with overly difficult course loads, courses out of sequence, or a poorly planned schedule. It is essential that advisers be familiar with the assistance available to students with LD/ADD and the characteristics and needs of these students.

### **Counseling**

To meet social needs, counseling is often necessary. It offers students with LD/ADD a sounding board for their

feelings and provides an opportunity for them to develop self-understanding and more effective peer relationships. Counseling available may include group counseling, individual counseling, and career counseling. The major goals are to help college students with LD/ADD reduce anxiety, increase self-confidence and socialization, learn life skills, understand their disability, become better organized, and achieve a sense of normalcy. At many colleges, students with LD/ADD have begun their own support groups.