

HIGH SCHOOL TO UNIVERSITY TRANSITION RESOURCE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, ST. GEORGE CAMPUS

This guide provides information, practical tips and resources to help students with disabilities navigate the transition from high school to post-secondary education at the University of Toronto, St. George campus. Created in consultation with a team of university students in U of T's Work Study program at Accessibility Services, as well as Accessibility Services staff, this guide empowers students with disabilities to achieve their academic goals and fully participate in university life. An additional resource to consider reviewing is the [Transition Resource Guide for Students with Disabilities](#), specifically the [TRG Next: Post Secondary Prep Course](#). Many sections of this document have been adapted from the Transition Resource Guide.

This guide is divided into three sections:



Key considerations and main differences between accommodations in high school and at the University of Toronto



University of Toronto student transition checklist



Skill development



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

STUDENT
LIFE

Accessibility
Services

Key considerations and main differences between accommodations in high school and the University of Toronto



KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Academic accommodations from high school don't automatically transfer to post-secondary settings.
- Accommodations in university may look different than accommodations in high school.
- Academic Accommodation Plans may differ based on several factors, including program requirements, course specifics and disability-related needs. There is also a wider range of accommodation options compared to high school, so these plans can be more tailored to your needs.
- To access disability-related accommodations, you must register with Accessibility Services. Registering with Accessibility Services is voluntary. It's up to you to take the initiative to register.
- You can register for a variety of reasons including mental health, learning disabilities, mobility-related disabilities or a temporary injury such as a concussion.
- It's your responsibility to provide the appropriate documentation when registering with Accessibility Services. Documents that are in a language other than English require an official translation with the seal and signature of the translator. For specific questions, please connect with the front desk intake team to inquire about these services.



MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ACCOMMODATIONS IN HIGH SCHOOL VS. THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

DEFINING ACCOMMODATION PLANS:

HIGH SCHOOL: In North American high school, plans are called Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plans. Globally, these plans may have alternative names, but the universal purpose of this plan is to provide a personalized educational program that meets the individual needs of students who require some form of accommodation to succeed in the educational setting.

U OF T: These are referred to as your Letter of Accommodation.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION TO OBTAIN AN ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION PLAN:

HIGH SCHOOL: IEPs and 504 Plans are provided based on formal documentation or informal identification through teacher recommendations and parental consultation.

U OF T: Formal documentation must be completed by a health-care provider who is qualified to make the diagnosis. Documentation indicates the presence of a disability, outlining the functional impacts experienced in an academic setting.

INVOLVEMENT IN ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION PLAN CREATION:

HIGH SCHOOL: Teachers and parents are actively involved in the creation of the plan. Teachers often initiate these plans.

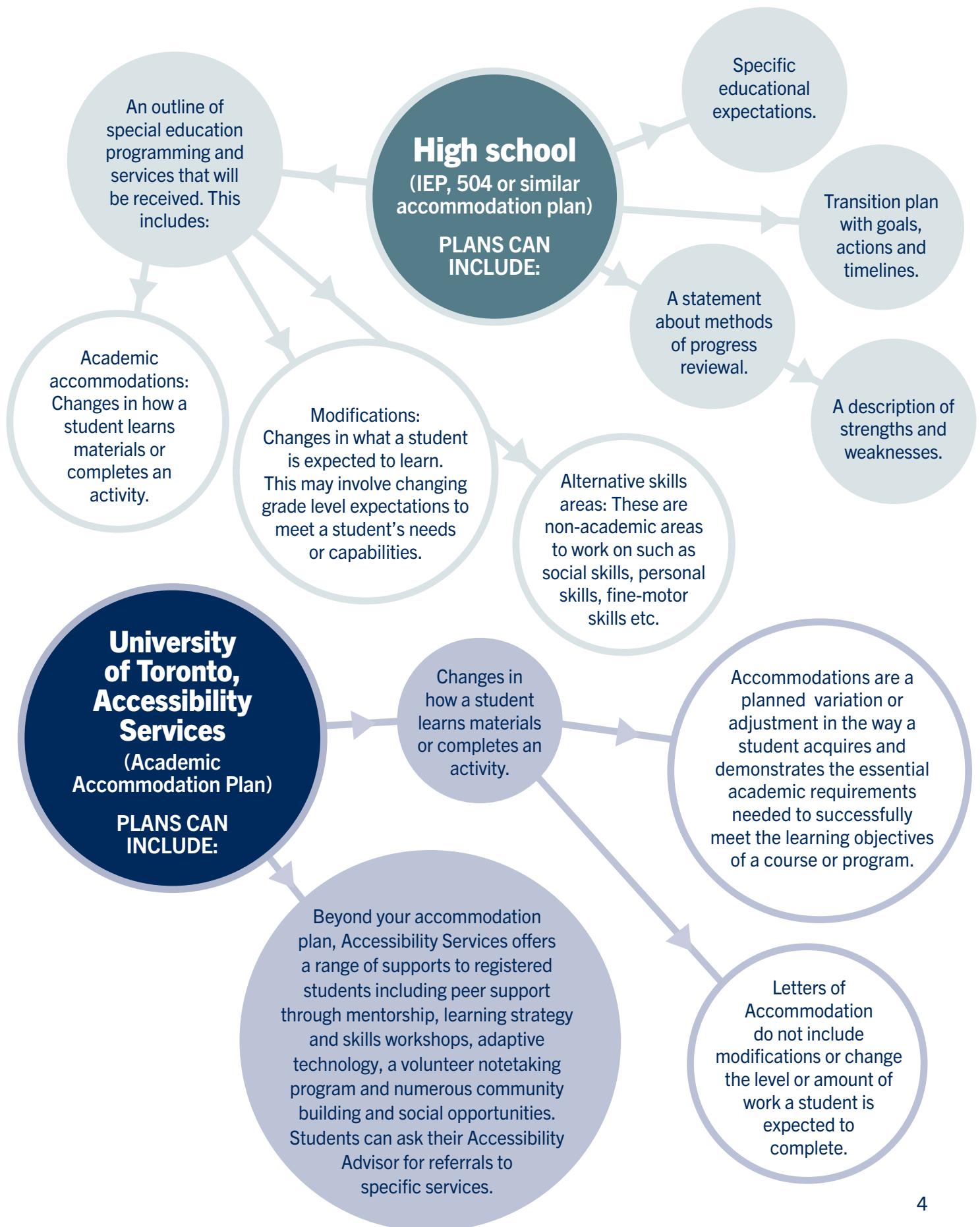
U OF T: Your Letter of Accommodation is created together with your Accessibility Advisor and is initiated by the student through actively participating in the registration process. With your consent, parents may be part of some steps in the accommodations process (e.g. during registration), but their involvement is much more limited compared to high school.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION PLAN RELATED FOLLOW UP AND FOLLOW THROUGH:

HIGH SCHOOL: Teachers and parents often help keep students accountable and support the implementation of accommodations.

U OF T: It's your responsibility to send your Letter of Accommodation to instructors and to keep their accessibility advisor updated about any changes to their disability-related or accommodation needs.

Figure 1: High school vs University of Toronto accommodation plans



University of Toronto student transition checklist



As you prepare for university life, we want to ensure you have all the tools you need to get started. This checklist is tailored specifically for students with disabilities, covering everything from accommodations to campus navigation.

→ TRANSITION CHECKLIST

JUNE: START YOUR JOURNEY

- ☐ Accept U of T offer on [OUAC website](#).
- ☐ Set up U of T email and familiarize yourself with ACORN.
- ☐ Attend a college or faculty welcome event to learn about course selection.
- ☐ Get your TCard (University of Toronto Student ID card).
 - > *Your TCard enables you to activate your UTORid and UTmail+ (official U of T email address).*
 - > *You can get your TCard at any point throughout the summer, but you can avoid line-ups if you get to it early!*
- ☐ Bookmark the [Accessibility Services Handbook](#) for quick access.
- ☐ [Register with Accessibility Services](#) using the online *Student Intake Form*.
 - > **Tip:** Documentation requirements are listed on our website – you may need to book an appointment with your health-care professional to get up-to-date documentation
 - > **Tip:** Questions about the registration process? Refer to our [Undergraduate Student Handbook](#) or [connect with a peer through our online chat](#).

JULY: SET UP ESSENTIALS

- ☐ Begin planning for course selection.
 - > *For more information refer to the [Calendar of Academic Dates and Deadlines \(Arts and Sciences link\)](#) and the [Registration Instructions & Timetable](#).*
 - > **Tip:** Be sure to consider back-up courses in case your first choices are unavailable.
 - > **Tip:** Need help with course selection? Contact your college registrar's office to book an appointment.

☐ In early July, view your course enrolment start time on [ACORN](#).

> *Tip: Add courses to the enrolment cart to plan ahead for your enrolment date. This is a good time to load up your first-choice courses, as well as any back-up options.*

☐ In mid-July, enroll in courses using ACORN.

☐ Participate in an [Accessibility Services information session](#) and/or our two-day orientation session taking place mid-August. This program introduces you to Accessibility Services, accommodations and tips to prepare you for post-secondary learning. There are multiple sessions with some programming days specifically designed with certain populations in mind. Information sessions are two hours in length and offered throughout July and August.

AUGUST: PREPARE FOR ARRIVAL

☐ Pay tuition fees at the bank (keep the receipt!) or defer fees if you are waiting on further funding (e.g., OSAP, scholarships).

> *Students (both domestic and international) with reduced course load accommodations may be eligible to have their tuition fees converted to a per-course fee. Students should seek out advice from their college academic advisors, especially among students who are funded by scholarships on condition to complete their degree in four years.*

☐ Participate in an Accessibility Services information session. Our orientation is a two-day event hosted in August.

☐ Sign up for a [peer mentor](#) through Accessibility Services.

☐ Mid-late August, move into residence if applicable.

☐ Late August, attend undergraduate orientation.

SEPTEMBER: SETTLING IN

☐ If applicable, plan to meet with your Accessibility Advisor to discuss bursary eligibility. Book an appointment through the [front desk](#).

☐ If applicable, register for [peer notetaking](#) before classes start.

☐ Classes begin early September.

> *Tip: Sometimes course instructors will post the syllabus on Quercus before the first day of class, but it's also common for instructors to post material on the first day of classes.*

> *Tip: Consider checking out the buildings and rooms your classes will take place in*

- > *prior to the first day of class. You may not be used to traveling to different buildings between classes and some buildings can be difficult to navigate with varying levels of accessibility. This webpage allows all U of T members to follow any **construction, maintenance, elevator and/or service outage updates**. Please feel free to look at the webpage and sign up for email updates.*

☐ Access your **Letter of Accommodation** online. We recommend that you download your Letter and send it to course instructors as soon as classes start.

- > **Tip:** *Unsure of how to communicate your accommodations with your instructors? Attend a peer drop-in session, book a meeting with your accessibility advisor or refer to our handbook.*

ONGOING SUPPORT

☐ Regular check-ins

- > *Schedule regular appointments with your Accessibility Advisor to review and adjust accommodations as needed.*

☐ Use resources

- > *Consider working with a Learning Strategist to manage your schedule and academic responsibilities, especially around midterms and final exams. You can book with an **Accessibility Services learning strategist** through the front desk and/or register for a **learning skills workshop** on **Folio** hosted by Accessibility Services or the **Centre for Learning Strategy Support**.*
- > *Discuss with your Accessibility Advisor about possible resources or services which may be relevant, given your disability-related impacts.*
- > **International students:** *all newly admitted international students will be automatically enrolled in UHIP. **Check out what's covered under UHIP**. Hoping to connect with other international students? Consider attending an event at the **Centre for International Experience**.*
- > *If you're living far from your family doctor and are wanting to connect with an on-campus doctor for physical or mental health support, connect with **Health & Wellness**.*
- > *Stay engaged with peer support. Engage with **peer support groups** or drop-in sessions to maintain a supportive network. Check out events hosted by Accessibility Services on **Folio**!*





PILLARS OF SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO:

If you're overwhelmed by the volume of resources and support services, keep the following resources at the top of your list as a student registered with Accessibility Services. Both your faculty and/or college and Accessibility Services can act as a guide to direct you to the appropriate resources.

1. Faculty and/or college

- a. Whether you live in residence or commute to campus, you'll have access to the many services provided by your college, including academic advising, library services, student clubs and associations, intramural sports teams, social events and more. U of T's first-entry undergraduate faculties are:
 - i. **Faculty of Arts & Science**
 1. Students accepted into the Faculty of Arts & Science are also assigned to one of seven colleges. U of T's colleges include: Innis College, New College, St. Michael's College, Trinity College, University College, Victoria College, Woodsworth College.
 - ii. **Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering**
 - iii. **John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design**
 - iv. **Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education**
 - v. **Faculty of Music**

2. Accessibility advisors and Accessibility Services

- a. Our team assists in navigating disability-related barriers to your academic success at U of T for your ongoing or temporary disability. You and your Accessibility Advisor will work together to develop your academic accommodations. You can also access supports including learning strategists, adaptive technologists, peer advisors, peer mentors, social opportunities and learning skills workshops. For questions regarding student life, we recommend connecting with our peer team! Simply chat online with a peer advisor or register for our peer mentorship program.

3. U of T websites

a. ACORN

- ii. Academic enrollment
- iii. Accommodated Testing Services (ATS) bookings
- iv. Student Accounts
- v. Transcripts

b. Folio

- i. Sign up for Student Life events and workshops
- ii. Register for Accessibility Services events

c. CLNx

- i. Career resources

d. Accessibility Services Clockwork portal

- i. Peer notetaking
- ii. Documentation upload
- iii. Letter of Accommodation
- iv. Test and exam late request form
- v. Registration for group learning strategy sessions

e. Quercus

- i. Grades
- ii. Syllabi
- iii. Course information (check with instructor if using additional platform)
- iv. Accessibility Services announcements



Skill development

SKILLS INVENTORY CHECK

As you embark on your post-secondary education journey, you'll likely need to rely on your independent living skills. For those moving away from home, these skills will be especially important.

Please review the items below. For each skill listed, indicate whether you agree or disagree that you excel in this area. If it's a skill that needs improvement, you can check the middle box. This checklist is designed to help you identify areas for improvement before starting college or university. This resource is adapted from the [TRG Next: Post Secondary Prep Course Skills Inventory Check](#).

Home living & budgeting

I can...	Agree	Disagree
Do laundry 		
Keep my living space clean 		
Create and follow a budget 		
Pay bills, tuition, rent etc. on time 		
Learn how to get around the city 		

Healthy living

I can...	Agree	Disagree
Choose and plan healthy snacks and meals 		
Manage my health needs (book appointments, show up) 		

Academics

I can...	Agree	Disagree
Create and stick to a homework/ studying schedule 		
Know when and how to ask professors for clarification on assignments 		
Know when and how to access academic support (writing centers, learning strategists) 		

RESPONSIBILITY, INDEPENDENCE AND TIME MANAGEMENT

RESPONSIBILITY, INDEPENDENCE AND TIME MANAGEMENT

In high school:

- Typically, your schedule is structured with classes from morning to afternoon, and teachers often remind you of assignments and deadlines.
- Teachers will also often conduct review sessions before tests, going over the most important concepts before a test.
- Teachers may let you complete make-up assignments for poor project or test grades.
- You are generally at school for five hours a day, from morning until mid-afternoon.

In university:

- You have more control over your schedule, with classes spread throughout the day or week. You're responsible for managing your time, keeping track of assignments and seeking help when needed.
- Course instructors may not remind you of deadlines or remind you to complete missed assignments. Usually, these important dates will be communicated to you at the beginning of the semester through the course syllabus.
- Instructors rarely offer review sessions in class. Sometimes there will be an optional review session where they will go over questions that students ask.
- If you fail a project or test or even the whole course, you will likely not be able to re-do the project or test or change your grade in any way. Please speak to your college registrar about next steps.
- Your classes can be at any time of the day (including in the evening) and you may have several classes on one day and none on another day.



Skill-building opportunity! Consider the following:



How will you build your own schedule?



How will you implement reminders in your schedule?



How will you learn to manage your own time?



How will you review course material and prepare for tests and exams?



Tips

- *Reflect: Ask yourself when you feel most productive during the day, consider medication or disability-related impacts, consider when you're able to focus best and build your schedule around your natural productivity peaks, if possible.*
- *Meet with a Learning Strategist either through [Accessibility Services](#), [The Centre for Learning Strategy Support](#) or your [registrar's office](#).*
- *Attend [learning skills workshops](#) offered by Accessibility Services, The Centre for*

Learning Strategy Support or other offices and departments on [Folio](#). Workshop topics include time management, procrastination, test and exam strategies, organization etc.

- *Connect with [a peer mentor](#) or a [social group](#) to learn from your peers about how they've developed responsibility, independence and time management skills*
- *Visualize your calendar - invest in a physical calendar or build a digital one*
- *Read your syllabi!*

CLASS SIZE AND INTERACTION

In high school:

- Classes are typically smaller, with around 20-30 students, allowing for more personalized attention from teachers.
- Teachers typically approach you if they notice you're struggling.

In post secondary:

- Classes can range from small seminars to large lectures with hundreds of students.
- Interactions with instructors may be limited. You'll be required to take initiative and seek out office hours if you need assistance.

Skill-building opportunity:



How will you take initiative?



How will you ask for help and/or follow up with instructors?



Where will you be able to focus best in large classroom settings?

Tips



- *Take note of your instructor's office hours at the beginning of the course and remember to attend when you have a question. If you're unable to attend during scheduled office hours, email your course instructor to arrange a time outside of office hours. Show up prepared with your questions.*
- *Some students prefer to occupy the front few rows of the class to ensure that they can pay attention. Sitting at the front, you can remove distractions such as people arriving late, people in front of you scrolling through social media/not paying attention, etc. Course instructors may also get to know you better if you sit in the front, as they begin to recognize you. Sometimes, if there is time at the end of the session, you can quickly approach the instructor with any questions you may have. You may also be more inclined to participate in class discussions when located at the front of the class.*
- *Connect with a peer mentor or a social group to get tips from your peers on how to navigate the classroom and interact with instructors*