

**Students on the Spectrum  
and their Families:  
10 Key Questions to Ask Your  
Post-secondary Institution  
Service Providers**

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Before we begin:

<http://achieveprogram.siuc.edu/10Questions.pptx> or at

<http://achieveprogram.siuc.edu/10Questions.ppt>

You can download a literature review and more detailed analysis of the questions we cover tonight at:

<http://achieveprogram.siuc.edu/10QuestionsASD.doc> or at

<http://achieveprogram.siuc.edu/10QuestionsASD.pdf>

Students with ASD:

Non-homogeneous group

The “umbrella” includes:

- “Classic” Autism

- Asperger’s Syndrome

- Pervasive Developmental Disorder (NOS) (referred to as atypical autism)

- PDD

  - includes Childhood Disintegrative Disorder

  - Rett Syndrome

Students with ASD:

General Characteristics:

Communication

both verbal and non-verbal

Social interactions  
pragmatics

theory of mind, social

Stereotypical behaviors

both actions and routines

Students with ASD:

Comprise a growing segment of the population

Prevalence rising 10% to 17% each year over the past decade

Current estimates place prevalence in the population at close to 1 in 100 individuals (higher for boys, lower for girls)

About 50% of students with ASD but without Intellectual disabilities (ID) pursue post-secondary education

The numbers of students with ASD (with or without ID) who choose some kind of post-secondary option is growing every year.

Students with ASD encounter problems with

## Transition

- in high school

- as they prepare for post-secondary education

- once they are in post-secondary education

- when they leave post-secondary education

## Accommodations

- few specialized post-secondary programs

- services are not comprehensive or integrated enough

- lack of research on best practices

## Coordinated services

- lack of coordinated transition services from H.S. to P.S.

- few joint policies

- insufficient training and support

- poor communication and interagency cooperation

So, good luck with that!

Let's take a second and review:

Educational systems struggle with

Transition

Services

Communication

So, good luck with that!

Let's take a second and review:

Educational systems

Transition

Services

Communication

Students with ASD

Routines

Social Pragmatics

Communication

It is no wonder that families of and students with ASD get frustrated with what choices you have. You have seen this set of problems before!!!



What next?

Campus climate

Five stages of grief applied to colleges looking at students with ASD:

Denial

Anger

Bargaining

Depression

Acceptance

What next?

Things are getting better!

Five stages of grief applied to colleges looking at students with ASD:

Denial

Anger

Bargaining

Depression

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Add to it: Recruitment

which is where we are now!

# QUESTION 1

What are we doing right now to prepare for the transition to post-secondary education?

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Transition IEP team ----develop a list of realistic and attainable goals

Remediate executive functioning skills, develop cognitive strategies, follow behavioral plans, implement technology for accommodations

Build self-regulation, efficacy, and advocacy skills----reinforce skills across settings

Research all options that are available to you

Coordinate your students' aspirations and goals with your school counselor, IEP team, community service providers, and potential college matches

# QUESTION 2

What can I do, myself, personally, now, to ready myself for this transition?

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Self-regulation

Self-efficacy

Self-advocacy

Independence

Involvement

# QUESTION 3

What are my options for post-secondary education?

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Life skills training programs

College living experience programs

Trade or technical schools

Junior colleges

Four year colleges or universities

Specialized schools or programs



# QUESTION 3

What are my options for post-secondary education?

Variety of options:

Exclusive to inclusive models

Center-based to campus-based models

Independent service to integrated service models

Publically-funded to privately-funded models

# QUESTION 4

Why, how, when, and with whom should I schedule a visit?

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No substitute for firsthand experience---really soak it in. You will get a feel for the campus climate we talked about earlier

Through the new student admissions or campus visit office

During your junior and senior years

See a representative from the disability office, the specialized program, the departments you are interested in, housing, financial aid, and if possible, a student who perhaps has a similar background and can speak to his or her experience.

Get all of your questions answered. After all, you might be investing a hundred thousand dollars with these people!

# QUESTION 5

What is the application process like for most colleges? Is it any different for students with ASD? What information is typically needed in order to process an application for admission? What information is typically needed to process an application for the office of disability support services or for a specialized program?

# QUESTION 5

Application?

Open or selective admissions

Academic or holistic criteria

Process the same for all students, EXCEPT.....

Specific requirements for documentation vary

Contact in advance

# QUESTION 6

What are the admission criteria? Are there any circumstances in which students with ASD may still be eligible even if they do not meet the admission criteria?

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Traditional admissions criteria:

- ACT

- High School transcript

- Class rank

Conditional admissions

Specialized recommendations for admission

# QUESTION 7

What kinds of services/programs are typically offered for students with ASD? Is there a fee for Student Support Services at most colleges?



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Services vary---there are a few, but growing number of programs.

Typical offerings:

Braille or enhanced print texts, electronic texts, audiobooks, notetakers, assistive technology, wheelchair accessibility, sign language interpreters, test proctoring, housing access, personal attendants for students with mobility impairments, access to available on campus resources, and referrals for counseling, tutoring, and other campus services.

Specialized programs may provide many of the previously listed services, and:

Supervision, mentoring, social skills training, counseling, tutoring, advocacy, remediation, organizational assistance, and other services.

# QUESTION 8

What other questions should I ask my college provider?

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How many students total are served by your disability office?

How many students with (your specific disability) are served by the disability office?

How many full-time staff are employed at the disability office?

Does your school provide an additional or separate program of specialized services for me?

How do you provide or DO you provide (list the accommodation: test proctoring, tutoring, audiobooks, notetaking, remediation, supervision, computer resources, advocacy, organizational help, counseling, other services)?

# QUESTION 8

What other questions should I ask my college provider?

What are your hours of operation?

What information specifically do I need to provide to receive services through this office?

Does the school allow for substitutions or waivers for certain academic requirements?

What is the average class size?

What is the student to staff ratio on this campus?

# QUESTION 9

What are my choices for housing?

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Some schools are commuter schools

Most four year colleges and universities are residential schools

On and off campus choices

On campus

- A variety of housing areas

- Single or roommate

Specialized programs

- Unique housing environments

# QUESTION 10

In my experience, what is the biggest challenge for students with ASD at the college level?

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# TRANSITION



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