

SECTION II: WHAT IS POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING?

What types of postsecondary education and training (PSET) are available?

Many states and local districts have focused attention in the last several years on “college” readiness. Within those discussions, college readiness may be defined as having “attained the knowledge, skills, and disposition needed to succeed in credit-bearing (non-remedial) postsecondary coursework or a workforce training program in order to earn the credentials necessary to qualify for a meaningful career aligned to his or her goals and offering a competitive salary” (National Forum on Education Statistics, 2015). A framework for college and career readiness (Morningstar, Lombardi, Fowler, & Test., 2015) expanded on this definition and other research on the topic.

As noted in Section I, OSEP provides definitions for “*postsecondary education*” and “*other*” PSET [in the Measurement Table](#).

4-YEAR COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY

- Bachelor's degree granting program with or without registration with the office of disability services
- Bachelor's degree granting program through a specialized program for students with disabilities
- Non-degree granting, certificate program for students with ID included within all components of a 4-year college/ university
- Non-degree granting, certificate program located at 4-year college/ university

2-YEAR COLLEGE

- Associate's degree granting program
- Non-degree granting, certificate program for students with ID included within all components of a 2-year college
- Non-degree granting, certificate program located at 2-year college

OTHER PSET OPTIONS

- Non-degree or certification program for students with disabilities located in the setting of a 2- or 4-year college/ university
- 13th year Bridge Programs (usually during last year of high school or semester/ summer before beginning postsecondary education)
- Vocational or technical programs/schools
- Adult education and continuing education programs
- Life skills programs in higher education settings
- Apprenticeship programs
- Employer-provided job-training programs
- Pre-apprenticeship programs (e.g., Job Corps)

Within these definitions are numerous types of programs. Below is a list with some common characteristics.

See Section VII of the PSET Preparation Toolkit for ***additional guidance regarding the various types of programs available after high school.***

Many states have developed their own guidance to navigating the various options for PSET for all students. For example, see:

[Florida's Project 10 Guidance on Postsecondary Options](#) – This website provides various guidance documents to assist students and families as they plan.

[Minnesota's Postsecondary Enrollment Options Reference Guide](#) – This guide provides definitions, eligibility information, and planning documents for students and families as they plan.

[Next Steps New Hampshire](#) - This website provides resources on college, apprenticeship, and trade school options and planning resources for New Hampshire students. It includes resources regarding the roles of vocational rehabilitation services, as well as tips on important skills to develop in preparing for postsecondary education and training.

[North Carolina's Postsecondary Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability](#) – This document provides a list and basic information on the PSET programs in North Carolina for college-age students with intellectual disabilities.

[Get Ready for College: A Resource for Teens with Disabilities](#) – This virtual course for high school students interested in college may satisfy virtual credits toward a Virginia diploma, but is relevant for students with intellectual or developmental disabilities in any state. While self-paced, it is recommended that course completion be facilitated.

[Wisconsin's Opening Doors to Postsecondary Education and Training Handbook](#) – This handbook is intended to assist students and families in Wisconsin (and other states) with their plans for postsecondary learning.

What services are available to support students in PSET?

Services available to support young adults with disabilities in PSET are as varied as the programs. However, there are some generally accepted types of support that may assist an individual as they plan including (a) basic, (b) coordinated, and (c) comprehensive services. Traditionally these may be services available to students pursuing an associates or bachelor's degree, whether online or in a traditional campus setting, or other vocational certification, without modifications.

BASIC

- Most colleges and universities fall into this category
- Supports (i.e., accommodations) offered are the minimum necessary to comply with the law – frequently may include extended time or separate test location, use of speech to text supports, note-taking, technologies for students with physical or sensory disabilities
- Services are coordinated through a disability services office
- Most appropriate for students who are effective self-advocates and who are independent
- Overview of Legal Obligations for Accessibility (from CAST)

COORDINATED

- Often inform faculty of student's needed accommodations, but students will also need to be moderately active self-advocates
- Offer a "Learning Center" (or similarly named program) with additional services for students with disabilities
- Offer a disability specialist and professionals with some specific experience and training with specific learning disabilities (most common)
- "Learning Center" will usually operate on a drop-in basis with part-time staff and peer tutors who may be undergraduate or graduate students. There is not necessarily a single service provider who will work with the same students routinely.
- May provide group workshops to assist students with learning strategies, advocacy training, note- or test-taking skills, managing stress
- No additional cost for services
- May offer such as accommodations as organizational supports, course substitutions, pre-enrollment preparation

- Offers most support and may be a program designed for students with a specific disability, such as autism or specific learning disability
- May have separate admissions process from the college or university
- Will employ several learning specialists, as well as peer tutors in some cases
- Provide an assigned advisor with whom the student will meet with on a regularly scheduled basis
- Usually require development of a support plan (a contractual agreement) the student takes an active role in developing with program staff
- Greater opportunity for 1:1 attention and support and usually paired with the same tutors consistently
- Often a fee is involved for this level of service; though students may wean themselves from this level of service to less structured, coordinated services
- Assistive technology is readily available
- May require participation in specific classes, workshops, or organizations
- Writing and math labs are typically available to all students
- Additional services may include monitoring grades, classes taught at the center/ program office, crisis/ stress counseling, and notification of faculty for the student

Additionally, many colleges and universities, including online degree programs, provide supports for all freshmen, such as freshman transition programs, which may include writing instruction, study skills, and campus/resource orientation. Additionally, most colleges have writing and math centers available to all students at no charge. It is important for an applicant to become familiar with the supports offered for free through a college's disability supports services and those which may require additional fees. In Section VII of this Toolkit, view an example of a planning tool a student and their IEP team might use to assess the levels of support available in different PSET programs being considered.

Students, parents, school counselors, teachers, or transition coordinators should also consult [the National Database, assembled by the National Center for College Students with Disabilities \(Avellone & Scott, 2017\)](#) and the college or university disability services offices directly for the most accurate information. Additionally, VR can assist a high school student or college student as they plan for accommodations they may need to access in any PSET program, as an important step toward employment.

