

Conducting a college search is a daunting task for every family and every potential college student. All students need to think about factors such as the size of the college, its location, and whether or not to live on campus or at home.

For students with intellectual disability (ID), there are some additional aspects to consider. This resource provides guidance to students with ID and their families on the range of questions to ask when gathering information about different programs.

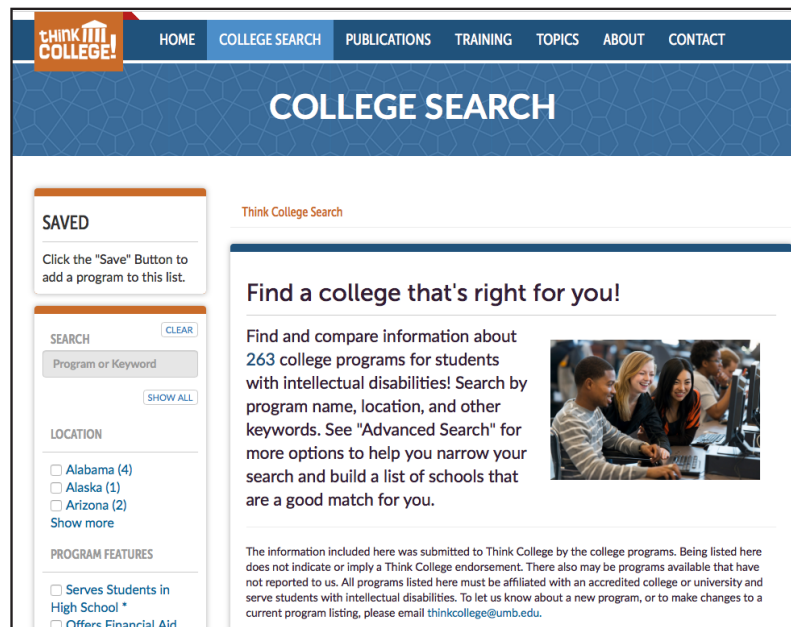
Think College Search is an online listing of postsecondary education programs for students with ID that are affiliated with an accredited institute of higher education. This online tool provides contact information, as well as a direct link to the program website of each college. It also summarizes important features, such as whether a program offers housing, if financial aid is available, and what kinds of academic, social, and employment opportunities exist.

Using Think College Search will help to narrow down the options. But to make sure of a great fit between a college and a student, you'll have to take some other steps, too.

Here are some ways to learn more:

- Set up a phone call to ask questions.
- Schedule a college visit to see the campus and meet the staff, faculty, and students.
- Visit the disability services office to see how involved that office is with the program.
- Connect with alumni and their families to learn about their experiences at college and what they're doing now.

On the following pages are some questions to consider as you begin your college search. Some of these you may be able to answer by reviewing a program's website; in other cases, a phone call or campus visit may be more effective. You can ask all or most of these questions, or just choose a few. The point is to learn what you need to know to make an informed decision!



General Student Information



What kinds of disabilities do students in the program have?

What percentage of students who enroll are students with ID?

How many students apply each year? How many are accepted?

Student Experiences



What is a typical day like for students? Does each student have their own experience and schedule, or are the days similar for everyone?

Can students access everything on campus that other students can, for example, the library, the gym, and the student center? Are there any limits on what facilities they can use or activities they can do?

How does a student find out about and gain access to on-campus activities?

What are some typical things that students do when they have free time on campus?

Are there supports in place to ensure students can participate in extracurricular activities that interest them?

Academics



**Is person-centered planning used to shape the program experience for each student?
If so, how does that process work? If not, how does a student plan their program experience?**

What courses do students take? Are there required courses? If so, what are the required courses?

**What are the requirements for a student auditing a college course, or taking a course for credit?
How are these arrangements made with the college faculty teaching the courses?**

Are students from the program able to take typical college courses (regular courses, not just for students with disabilities)? (Ask to see a list of courses students have participated in.)

How much choice do students have in selecting their courses?

How are accommodations set up for the courses students take?

**How many of the courses students take are separate courses just for students with ID?
Who teaches the separate courses?**

Residential Access



Is on-campus housing available for students in the program? Can they live in any dorm, or are there only certain spaces for them?

Are there special rules for students with ID that do not apply to other students, for example, a curfew or additional room checks?

How is safety and security for the students in campus housing balanced with freedom?

How are roommates assigned for students in the program?

Services and Supports for Students



What supports are provided to students to help them attend courses, take part in activities, and become more independent?

If peer mentors are used, how are they trained and supervised?

How are students matched with peer mentors and support staff?

Who do students go to with questions or to ask for help?

Are students able to move independently around campus, or are they required to have a peer mentor or other support person ?

Fees, Tuition, and Financial Aid



How do students pay for the program fees and tuition? Do students use vocational rehabilitation funds, IDEA funds, community agency funds, personal funds, federal financial aid, scholarships, or other resources?

If the program is approved as a Comprehensive Transition Program, or CTP, students in that program may be eligible for financial aid. If the program has been approved as a CTP, this will be shown on Think College Search. If they are not yet a CTP, ask if they have applied or plan to apply for this designation.

Program Administration



How many full-time and part-time employees are there?

In what department is the program located?

Are staff employed by the college? If not, who do they work for?

Communication with Parents



What communication strategies are used with parents?

What role, if any, does the parent have in the development of the student's program and supports?

Integration with the Campus Community



Are students and faculty on the campus aware of the program? How do you know?

How is inclusion implemented on the campus?

Career Development/Employment



Does the program have a job developer who finds opportunities for students to participate in internships or work experiences?

Are there job coaches? If so, what are their qualifications?

Are students supported to get paid work during the program? What kinds of jobs do they typically get?

What Happens After the Program?



What are the graduation rates? Job placement rates? Rates of job retention after one year?

Is there an alumni organization? Parent alumni?

What certificate or credential do students earn when they graduate from the program?

Does the program help students find a paid job when they graduate?

**Ready to talk to someone in an inclusive college program?
Great! Schedule a phone call or a campus visit so you can ask
the questions that matter most to you.**

**Do you have other questions you would like to ask?
Record them here:**



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