

Higher Education Options, Accommodations, and Financial Aid

Education Options

Four-Year Universities

A university is an institution that offers undergraduate and graduate degrees. Universities offer graduate programs leading to a master's degree or a Ph.D. These institutions also may have a medical or law school for students wishing to pursue professional degrees. Some universities offer special programs where their students can earn both an undergraduate degree and a graduate degree in a reduced amount of time. Generally, universities have a more diverse offering of classes and programs than a college because of the larger number of students who are enrolled. Some examples of four-year universities are:

Public:	University of Utah Utah State University Weber State University Utah Valley University Southern Utah University Dixie State University
Private:	Brigham Young University

Colleges

A college is a smaller institution that typically offers undergraduate degrees. Some colleges, such as community colleges and junior colleges, may offer only two-year degrees. Many colleges offer bachelor's degrees, and some colleges also have associate degrees. Some examples of colleges are:

Westminster College
College of Eastern Utah
Snow College
Salt Lake Community College

Trade/Vocational Schools

A trade school, also known as a technical school or a vocational school, is an educational institution that exists to teach skills related to a specific job. Some examples of trade schools are:

ITT Technical Institute
Utah College of Massage Therapy
Paul Mitchell Beauty School
Utah School of Phlebotomy
Sage Truck Driving School
Skin Works School of Skin Care

Online Schools

An online college or university is an academic school that offers classes primarily or entirely through the use of an internet-connected computer, rather than attending college in a traditional campus setting. Many brick-and-mortar schools will also offer online class options. Some examples of online schools are:

- University of Phoenix
- Western Governors University

Certificate Programs

Certificate programs offer professional training in a specific field. More than half of the certificate programs take a year or less to complete, which makes them a quick way to gain crucial, practical job skills. These programs are offered primarily at community colleges, but the number of four-year universities offering them is increasing. Some certificate programs at Salt Lake Community College:

- Home Inspector
- Wedding Planner
- Protection Officer
- Child Care

Disability Specific Educational Programs

There are several postsecondary programs available throughout the state of Utah that provide education opportunities specifically for individuals with disabilities. The structure and content of these programs will differ depending on where you go, and you may be able to receive certification. Generally, they will focus on life skills and navigating life post-high. Some examples include:

- Techie for Life
- Scenicview Academy
- Utah State University - Aggies Elevated

Community Education/Adult Education Programs

Community education offers opportunities for local citizens to explore education in diverse areas through local schools, agencies, and institutions. Some classes offered include: cooking, fitness, foreign languages, computer programs (such as PowerPoint or Excel), and parenting. Some examples of community education/adult education programs are:

- Granite Peaks Lifelong Learning
- Community Education through Canyons School District
- Jordan Family Education Center
- Murray Community Education
- Lifelong Learning at the University of Utah

Accommodations

Schools are not allowed to discriminate against an individual with a disability. Furthermore, all public and private schools that receive federal funding are required to provide equal access to their programs, classes, and extracurricular activities, for students with disabilities. These regulations fall under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, in addition to Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and include four-year universities, colleges, trade/vocational schools, online schools, and any certificate program or adult education program that takes place at one of these institutes.

To receive support, students must inform the school of their disability and request any needed accommodations. Schools typically have an office that coordinates and supports students with disabilities, which is usually called Disability Support Services (DDS). If your school or program doesn't have a specified office for disability services, then you can ask the administration who the designated support person will be. This person will help determine what accommodations you will receive. Some examples of accommodations include:

- Providing access to buildings, including residential facilities
- Providing aids and services necessary for effective communication, including sign language interpreters, Braille, and assistive listening devices
- Modifying policies or procedures, such as providing testing accommodations
- Allowing service animal access to school facilities

When requesting accommodations, you'll need to have recent documentation of your disability. This will typically be anything dated within the past three years. Once everything is approved, the next step is to notify your professors or instructors of any accommodations that are in place. For individuals with low support needs, DDS staff or other support staff won't usually communicate your needs directly with your professors or instructors, so it's important that you work on your self-advocacy skills. However, if a problem does arise, they can step in to assist.

Programs that don't take place at one of the above institutions or that don't have a system in place for students with disabilities are still able to provide an adaptive track or reasonable accommodations when requested. You'll have to communicate with program staff to determine what supports you can receive.

Financial Aid

There are several options for financial aid available to students with ASD and other disabilities. Some funding may include the Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, and Federal Work-Study programs. To see what you or your teenager is eligible for, you can submit your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa> or call (800) 433-3243; (800) 730-8913 (TTY).

There are also many scholarships that your or your teenager can receive. Educational institutes will often offer scholarships to select students who are accepted into the program. These are typically merit-based and determined based off of applications. There are also private scholarships available online that you or your teenager can apply to. With this option you'll need to meet specific criteria for the scholarship you want to receive. For example, you can search for speciality scholarships that are available to students with ASD. You can find more information on available scholarships at scholarships.com.

Resources:

- ADA National Network
<https://adata.org/faq/what-are-public-or-private-college-universitys-responsibilities-students-disabilities>
- Federal Student Aid
<https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/eligibility/requirements/intellectual-disabilities>
- Scholarships
<http://www.scholarships.com>

