

College Accommodations With MS



Growing up, every teen is told that going to college is an important part for development, especially if leaving home to attend. You get to experience being in charge of your own schedule and choices. This means having to make sure you are feeling healthy in a mental and physical aspect. to university with a disease like MS adds an extra challenge to finding your independence, but it's not impossible due to the abundant number of resources available.

Choosing to go to a university away from home was a tough and daring decision for my family and me. My family was concerned whether if I would be able to care for myself at a whole different location that I would be new to. Growing up with my MS since 13 had taught me valuable lessons about advocating for myself and keeping up with my health and other activities, but I would usually have my parents if I needed the assistance. By going to college in a different city, that meant I would have to put my lessons learned into action by myself.

I found out thanks to my from my clinic that universities must provide assistance for students with disabilities. Universities have offices dedicated to assisting students, and you can find more information about the services and the process for applying at the university's website and searching for their office for students with disabilities. At my school, it was called Student Disability Services (SDS). Being in contact with this office brought a relief by knowing that they are there to assist you with your academic work and journey.

The first step in getting accommodations for school is to speak with your care team before the semester begins. Talking with my doctor and social worker was an important part to having a better experience at the university. They provided many evaluations to find out

what I would be needing help with; for example mobility and psychological evaluations. After completing the evaluations, they wrote letters, which I sent to the university's SDS office, and I also got in contact with a local retailer for mobility equipment to assist with getting around campus.

Once the SDS office finished reviewing the documentation, I was contacted by an advisor, who was randomly assigned to me, from the SDS office. They informed me about the accommodations I would be allowed and how to proceed if there are any changes in my health that may require new assistance. In my list of accommodations were:

- Extended time during tests
- Testing at the SDS testing center
- Permission for 5-minute tardy arrival
- The use of a mobility scooter
- And many more.

After receiving my list of accommodations from my university, I went to go speak with my professors regarding my accommodations each semester. The professors had received the list of accommodations from SDS, but I went and made sure that we were on the same page over certain accommodations. Fortunately, there were no conflicts regarding my accommodations and the professors/classes.

Speaking with your care team is a valuable asset. They can provide resources that can help with many situations at any stage in life and make living with a disease less of an independent struggle. Being equipped with accommodations and knowing I have support from my care team and university made the experience much better. My family and I thought being away from home at a new environment would have been a challenge, but the experience proved to everyone that even with MS your goals can come to a success. I am fortunate to have the support from my care team, university, and family, and it all started with a conversation.

Editor's Note: [Connect with an MS Navigator](#) for help navigating accommodations in schools.