

TIPS FOR CAMPUS VISITS

Blackdisabledandproud.org

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Campus Visits

Plan to apply to at least three campuses: one that you will definitely get into, one that you are likely to get into, and one that is going to be a “reach” for you. Before you make any final decisions, compare financial aid packages, and try to visit campuses to see if they are a good fit. Some campuses also have “virtual” tours if you can’t afford to visit.

When you get there, here are some places to visit if you have a disability. If you can’t visit, consider calling these places with questions.

- **Disability services** (sometimes called “access services”) - see the list of questions on the back of this handout.
- **Health services**, if you may need medical care.
- **Recreation services/athletics**, to see if there are accessible facilities for staying fit.
- **Counseling services**, to see what they offer if you are stressed, need counseling or support, or want a referral to psychiatrists or psychologists off campus.
- **Sexual assault services** or the campus security office, to find out about campus safety, regardless of your gender—and whether campus police have training in dealing with people of different races and disabilities.
- **Career services**, to find out what they can offer you and if they have experience working with disabled students.
- **The dorms** (if you will live on campus—which is highly recommended) - try the food, see the rooms, check out the bathrooms, find out if you can keep a fridge, therapy animal, or other disability-related equipment. Talk to disability services if you will definitely need a single or if you plan to have a service animal or personal care attendant living with you.
- **The bulletin boards**, to see what’s happening socially on campus and in the community, and whether fliers have a statement about offering accommodations to people with disabilities.
- **First-year courses in any majors you are considering**
- **The computer lab and WiFi around campus**—can you get online easily?
- **The student center** because this is where you will spend a lot of free time, and it usually is a good indicator of campus climate. Do you feel at home here? Is the food good? Which student activities are happening?
- **The library** is where you will do research and spend a lot of time studying. Does it seem to be a good space? Are there private rooms available? Do the librarians seem friendly? Ask about orientations for new students, too.



Alternative Campus “Visits”

- Look for online video tours of campus
- Ask the admissions office if you can talk to undergraduates in fields that interest you.
- Talk to offices on the phone or through Skype

Questions to Ask on Campus

Here are a few questions for you to ask as you visit various places on campus. To think of other questions you might want to ask, sit down and imagine your perfect campus. What questions would help you find this place? Also brainstorm with trusted people in your life who know you well. What do they want you to ask? This list assumes you are African American and have a disability, but you could easily adjust this for any identity, being Deaf, different religions, etc. Also know that you do not have to disclose your disability to ANYONE except disability services.



EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS

Is this campus welcoming for students who have disabilities? And students who are African American? In what ways?

What percentage of students have disabilities? What percentage are African American?

Are there very many disabled and/or African American professors on campus?

How much experience does the disability services staff have with students who have my type of disability?

If I need tutoring, can disability services help me get access to the tutoring centers on campus?

Do computers in the computer labs have the access features, equipment or software I need?

If I need a therapist, equipment repair, medical care, a personal care attendant, etc. can disability services assist?

Can I register early for classes due to my disability?

Will you help me communicate with professors about my disability? Or assist if problems come up?

Are there cultural centers on campus for African American students? Is it accessible to me?

Show disability services a list of accommodations you got in high school. Find out if you can get them in college.

If your faith is important to you, find out if the religious programming on campus is accessible to you.



What Will Disability Services Need?

Disability services officials will not look for you—they will expect you to go to them and register for services. They'll want to know about you, including interests, hobbies, and career plans, and they'll ask how your disability will affect your life in college, in classes, dorms, and activities. They will ask if you have any "disability documentation" like a doctor's report, a copy of your special education IEP or 504 Plan, a psychologist's report, or other test results. Get new reports or documentation while you're in high school and it's paid by the school district or covered under your parents' insurance.