

Monthly tips and resources featured in **What's Next?** are created for young adults, their families, and supporters who are exploring options for life after high school in Indiana.

Postsecondary College Programs

Issue No. 31, March 8, 2023



Thomas loves being independent and learning! He has lots of friends from high school; many of them are going to college. Although Thomas loves learning, lots of classes can be hard for him without help. Thomas wants to move out of his parent's house and live with roommates, but he is still learning how to budget money, pay bills, take care of his personal needs, and keep a schedule. He also needs help with some social interactions with his peers. But Thomas knows that he should be at college like his friends. His parents, friends, and support workers want to help him achieve this goal—but they are not sure how to do this.

Luckily, there are programs at many colleges and universities for students who have higher support needs. Thomas's team can find help learning about these unique opportunities and support programs from [ThinkCollege](#). Their website provides Program Accreditation Standards that Thomas, his family, and his support team can use to help them know what to look for when deciding if a college program is a good fit for Thomas.

What To Look For

This list provides some key questions to ask when exploring possible postsecondary college education programs for adults with higher support needs.

14 Practices to Look for in Postsecondary College Programs	
1.	Can anyone involved in the program, including administrators, state its mission?
2.	Is the program inclusive? Are students with disabilities regularly interacting with students without disabilities in living situations, classes, campus clubs, activities, and employment? Are students who are not in the program aware that it exists?
3.	Is the program held in-person (on campus) with full access to campus facilities and services, including financial aid, admissions, disability support, food, and health services?
4.	Is the program aligned with the college or university calendar?
5.	Are individualized learning plans created and followed for each student? Is there an outlined timeline for program or plan completion?
6.	Is there an established process for student complaints and discipline?

7.	Can students take college courses in a variety of major areas? Are faculty and staff educated about Universal Design for Learning and how to provide accommodations and modifications for students?
8.	Is career development included in the program? Do students receive support to make connections with Vocational Rehabilitation and other community services, such as internships with typical peers in an area of their interest or jobs where they can earn at least minimum wage?
9.	Does independent living skill instruction occur in fully inclusive settings, like in the community with nondisabled peers, at homes shared with nondisabled peers, using community options such as mass transportation, shared community entities like libraries, recreation centers, and businesses like banks?
10.	Do students receive a report at the end of each term about their progress in the areas of academics, socialization, independent living, and career development?
11.	What are the skills of the staff hired to work in the program? Do they receive ongoing training following hire? Is there limited staff and faculty turnover?
12.	Is the program evaluated regularly with changes implemented based on the evaluation?
13.	How is communication handled with families?
14.	Are all staff who work with the students trained to presume their competence and assume they can do things independently? Are students allowed to take reasonable risks such as riding the bus alone once trained properly?

**adapted from ThinkCollege [Program Accreditation Standards](#).*

Resources

- [ThinkCollege](#)— Information about the four Indiana postsecondary college programs.
- [Center On Community Living and Careers](#)—Postsecondary resources and information from the state’s leading academic transition institution.

What’s Next? is a project of the Center on Community Living and Careers and the Indiana Department of Education.

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